The Daśanāmī-Samnyāsīs: The Integration of Ascetic Lineages into an Order

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ABSTRACT

This thesis examines the history and practices of the Daśanāmī-Saṃnyāsīs, one of the largest sects of Indian renunciates, founded, according to tradition, by the famous advaita philosopher Śaṅkarācārya, who may have lived in the eighth century CE. It is argued that it is highly improbable that Śaṅkarācārya founded either the sect or the four (or five) main Daśanāmī monasteries, which are the seats of reigning Śaṅkarācāryas. The locus of identity for the Daśanāmīs (meaning ‘ten names’) lies in several short texts, known as mathāmnāyas, which were most probably produced around the time the Daśanāmīs became organised as an order, in the late sixteenth or seventeenth century. The political and religious circumstances of the time provide an adequate—though not definitive—context for the production of a distinct Hindu identity for the sect. The process of forming an identity integrated several lineages of ascetics, some of which had no previous connection to each other. There are two main branches of the order: one being what might be called the Brāhmaṇical monastic advaita tradition, extensively promoted for the first time by the early Vijayanagara rulers in the fourteenth century; the other being the military branch of nāga-s, who have a non-orthodox, semi-Tantric background, and who were particularly conspicuous when they served in the standing armies of various north Indian regents during the eighteenth century. Initiation procedures illustrate the merging of the two branches. The contribution of this thesis to the study of religions is to provide, for the first time, an account of the history of the Daśanāmīs that is an alternative to that espoused by the orthodox tradition, and to illustrate the various and complex roles that Saṃnyāsīs have played—and continue to play—in Indian religious history.

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ABBREVIATIONS used in the thesis
(see the Bibliography for the editions of texts)

ADh: Āpāstambha-dharmasūtra (see Olivelle 1999)
ARE: Annual Reports on Indian Epigraphy
ARIMAD: Annual Report of the Mysore Archaeological Department
ARSIE: Annual Report on South-Indian Epigraphy
ASI: Archaeological Survey of India
AV: Atharva-veda (see Griffith 1985)
B: born
BG: Bhagavad-gītā
BSB: Brahmasūtra-bhāṣya (of Śaṅkara)
BDh: Baudhāyana-dharmasūtra (see Olivelle 1999)
c: circa
CSV: Cīvilāsa-śaṅkararājasa-vijaya (see Antarkar 1973)
d: died
EC: Epigraphia Carnatica
EI: Epigraphia Indica
f: floruit
GDh: Gautama-dharmasūtra (see Olivelle 1999)
HDS: History of Dharmaśāstra (see Kane 1977–1990)
l: line
MBh: Mahābhārata
MS: Manusmrti
r: reigned
Ram: Rāmāyana
RV: Rg-veda (see Griffith 1973)
ŚDV: Śaṅkara-dīg-vijaya (see Mādhava-Vidyāranya 1986)
SV: Śāma-veda (see Griffith 1986)
UVAT: Uttankita Vidya Aranya Trust (1985)
VDh: Vaiśeṣika-dharmasūtra (see Olivelle 1999)
v: verse
YV: Yajur-veda (see Griffith 1927)

TRANSLITERATION

Transliteration of Hindi terms generally follows Parikh (1996); for Sanskrit, Monier Williams (1994 [1899]), with the exceptions: 'r' instead of 'ṛ'; 'ṣ' instead of 'śh'. Personal, place names and other terms that occur in both Hindi and Sanskrit registers are not always transliterated consistently. For example, places such Allahabad occur in the Hindi register as 'Prayāg', and in Sanskrit as 'Prayāga'; 'renunciate' is usually transliterated as samnyāsī, as accords with the Hindi register and the Sanskrit nominative singular, in distinction from the common rendering of the Sanskrit, as samnyāsī. 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 thesis, of adding a hyphen before the 's' of plural Hindi and Sanskrit 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.

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INTRODUCTION

0.1 Introduction to the Dašanāmī-Saṃnyāsīs

This thesis presents an account of the history and practices of Dašanāmīs,1 or Dašanāmī- Saṃnyāsīs, one of the largest of the orthodox2 sects3 of South Asian sādhus. Sādhu 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 pandit-s, the candidate passes through the samnyāsa 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. Samnyāsa 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 Dašanāmīs (meaning ‘ten names’), a śaiva sect,6 the neophyte is given a new dīkṣā (‘initiation’) name, the ‘surname’ being bestowed by an initiating guru with that particular Dašanāmī surname.6 The ten names are:

Giri (‘hill’), Purī (‘town’), Bhāratī (‘learning’), Vana (or Ban) (‘forest’), Parvata (‘mountain’), Aranya (‘forest/widerness’), Sāgara (‘ocean’), Tīrtha (‘pilgrimage-place’), Āśrama (‘hermitage’), and Sarasvatī (‘knowledge’).7

The samnyāsi acquires a new religious identity and is initiated into a parallel social

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 thesis, 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 sādch, meaning ‘accomplish’, sādhu also means ‘good’ or ‘virtuous’ in both Sanskrit and Hindi.
5 Most śaiva sects, including the Daśanāmīs, perform the samnyāsa rite for initiates, while in most vaisnava renunciate sects, instead, a relationship is forged between the initiate and the redeeming deity.
6 The initiates of the Agni akhāda are an exception: they who do not take one of the ten names, but one of the four brahmacārī names (see Ch. 2.1).
7 The most common of the names are Giri, Purī, Bhāratī and Sarasvatī. The meaning of Bhāratī and Saravatī, given as ‘learning’ and ‘knowledge’ respectively, is but the symbolic meaning attributed to those names by Dašanāmīs.
world, with its own heirarchies 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 *matha-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 who founded or organised the Daśanāmī-Saṃnyāsīs and established four *matha-s* (known as *pīṭha-s*) under the authority of his four main disciples, in the west, east, north and south of India at, respectively: Dvāraka, in Gujarat; Jagannāth Purī, in Orissa; Jyōśimāth, near Badarīnāth in Uttar Pradesh; and either Śrīgerī, in Karnātaka, or Kāṇḍīpuram, in Tamil Nadu. The seats (*gadcfF s*) of these *pīṭha-s* 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, no one has yet proposed any alternative explanation for the origin of the order.

The aim of this thesis is, firstly, to provide the most comprehensive account of the current structure and organisation of the Daśanāmī 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.11

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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 *matha-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.
11 Unless otherwise stated, all dates in this thesis are CE.
0.2 Locating ‘the samnyāsi’

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 samnyāsi, 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 samnyāsīs. 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.

Another related issue, also considered in this section, is the lifestyle of the samnyāsi. 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 (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 samnyāsi, 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 Daśanāmī-Samnyāsīs who are settled as a caste in various regions of India.

From the early centuries BCE, the Brahmanical textual tradition provides us with an image of the Brahmanical ascetic. In works on Dharmāśāstra, the Samnyāsa Upaniṣads and mediaeval texts on renunciation, we typically find a lone Brahmanical ascetic wandering from one Brahman household to another, typically collecting food from the womenfolk in his hands or other designated receptacles, when the pestles are

12 Samnyāsi is often translated as ‘monk’, and matha as ‘monastery’. These terms derive from the Greek monos (‘alone’) and 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.

13 See Ch. 3 for further details.

14 See Findly (2002).
silent and the cooking fires are but embers. Open a typical 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, *samnyāsa*. The Śaṅkarācāryas consciously identify themselves with ancient Vedic tradition and the four-fold *varṇa* and *āśrama* systems. As is well known, *samnyāsa* 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 Kāṇchi, for example, commenting on *samnyāsa* (Candraśekharendra Sarasvatī 1995:539), comments 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 samnyāsa*-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 power politics of India for many centuries, instances of which are explored in the latter part of this thesis.

The *samnyāsa* conceived in the stereotypical image of the lone Brahmanical renouncer is often supposed, in various ways, to represent an ancient ‘individualistic’

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16 Probably the earliest available evidence to be found in the Brahmanical tradition for codes of conduct for ascetics is in the *Aṣṭādhyāyī*, the grammatical treatise of Pāṇini, usually assigned to the fourth century BCE. Pāṇini (V.3.110–111) refers to the *bhikṣusūtras* (codes of conduct for mendicants) proclaimed by Pāraśārya and Karmandin (see Pāṇini 1987). The earliest clear formulation of a Brahmanical renunciate’s lifestyle is in the *Dharmasūtra*-s of Āpastamba (II.21.7–17), Gautama (3.11–25), Baudhāyana (II.17–18), and Vasiṣṭha (10.1–29), texts dated from around the third to the second centuries BCE (see Olivelle 1977:21; 1999:xxvii–xxxiv). For details of renunciation procedures in these texts, see Chapter 3.1. For a summary of the lifestyle and rules for the ‘ideal’ Brahmanical renunciate, see Shiraishi (1996:27–135), and Appendix 8.

17 The Sanskrit term *samnyāsa* 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 *samnyāsa* (renunciation) occurs rarely in the *Yuddha*-s and *Brahma*-s, and only appears once in the classical *Upaniṣad*-s, in the *Mundaka Upaniṣad* (III.2.6: liberation through “*samnyāsa-yoga*”), one of the later classical *Upaniṣad*-s, composed in the last few centuries BCE (Olivelle 1984:127; 1996:xxxvii).

18 The *āśrama* system became fully formulated within the Brahmanical tradition by around the beginning of the Common Era, only incorporating *samnyāsa* as the ‘ideal’ fourth *āśrama* in the final phase of its development (Olivelle 1978:28; 1993:103). Both Manu (VI.33–36) and earlier *dharmaśāstra* commentary—for example, Baudhāyana (II.11.16–27)—emphasise the importance of producing children before renouncing. The stage of forest dweller (*āranyaka* or *vānaprastha*)—also, like *samnyāsa*—a relatively late development—was incorporated into the scheme as an *āśrama*, but seems in practice to have had relatively little import in the general organisation of the ideal stages to be passed through. It seems to have become obsolete in the first few centuries of the Common Era, its memory only preserved in legend, poetry, drama, and works on *dharma* which still discussed it up to mediaeval times. A modification of the system, as seen in the *Yajñavalkya Dharmaśāstra* (III.56), permitted a man to renounce without passing through the third *āśrama* (Olivelle 1993:174). For references in Manu, see Doniger and Smith (1991); for *Yajñavalkya Dharmaśāstra*, see *Yajñavalkya Smṛti* (1913) and Dutta (Vol.1, 1987).

19 See, for example, Candraśekharendra Sarasvatī (1876; 1995).
ascetic tradition receding into India’s remote past. References to what appear to be ascetics (though this is disputed)\(^9\) 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*\(^20\) and *yati*\(^21\), 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, Pātañjali (the grammarian) refers\(^24\) to the *yati* (3.1.97.82), *mundin*
(1.1.1.42, ‘shaven-headed’) and śramanāś" (2.4.12.2, p. 476), without distinguishing them. Another term for an ascetic that occurs in the Brāhmaṇa-s and Āranyaka-s is vāṭarasāna (‘living on wind’ or ‘girdled with wind’),26 a person who is described as both ādīrṇvamantiṁś and śramana. 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,69 munī,96 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, samnyāsa 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 samnyāsa 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 Dharmashastra author to use the term samnyāsin (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 Dharmasūtras. It is this characterisation of what the samnyāsi35 represents that seems to have cast an

25 The term śramana (‘ascetic striver’) has the same root as ‘shaman’ (Blacker 1999:23–24), and by the time of Aśoka (mid-third century BCE) is generally used to designate all non-Brahmanical ascetics, particularly Jainas and Buddhists (Olivelle 1993:11).
26 In the Ta ṭīrīya-āranyaka (II.7) (of the Black Yajur-veda, vāṭarasāna denotes a śramaṇa wearing coloured clothes, who has control over the senses, leads a chaste life and practises austerities. The TA is also the first Brahmanical text to use the term śramaṇa (Olivelle 1993:13).
27 The term ādīrṇvamantiṁ may refer to an erect penis (as a synonym for ādīrṇvamanta) or to the control of sperm (Olivelle 1993:13).
28 Rām, l.1.46; l.13.8; III.69.19; III.70.7. MBh, XII.150.18; XIII.135.104.
29 MS, 5.20, 11.218.
30 MS, 1.58-60, 1.110, 3.272, 3.257, 5.54, 6.5, 6.11, 6.25, 6.43, 7.29, 8.91, 8.407.
31 MS, 4.4-5, 10.116.
32 MS, 1.114, 2.97, 3.245, 4.17, 5.89, 5.108, 6.33–34, 6.38–39, 6.78. Concerning terminology, it seems that in Brahmanical sources the older terms for renunciates, such as parivrāja and parivrājaka (‘wanderer/circulator’) eventually became replaced with the cover-all term, samnyāsa (Olivelle 1984:140).
34 See, for example, MS, 1.114, 5.108.
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.
interpretative shadow up to the present day. 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. For example, it is generally assumed that once someone has renounced, then the condition is permanent. However, in the Yama-samhitā (Dutta1987, Vol.2:282) there is a penance prescribed for a Brahman mendicant who wishes to become a householder, indicating that, historically, samnyāsa 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 samnyāsa, and that specific sectarian identification is a crucial component of the samnyāsa's identity.

From the Brahmanical perspective, samnyāsa is, by definition, to enter a non-ritual state, and only possible for those twice-born (non-śūdra-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

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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 (1999:21–63), 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 samnyāsa supplied by Brahmanical texts). Although these scholars have a sophisticated understanding of the Hindu tradition, nevertheless 'the renouncer' is generally presented divorced from the context 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 samnyāsa 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 samnyāsa 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 mathas is almost the antithesis of the lifestyle of the traditional ancient Brahmanical ascetic. See Pagborn (1976:117) for the establishing of Advaita Ashrama mathas.

37 A similar idealisation by Dumont of the role of the Brahmā and the king (juxtaposed with the samnyāsa 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."  

38 He should perform three prājāpatiya and three candrayana penances, becoming again purified with the jīta-samskāra and other samskāra-s, previously referred to in the text. See Appendix 8 for an explanation of the penances.

39 For details of upanayana, see Prasad (1997).
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, brahmans and śramaṇas. 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 brahmans, following the brahmaṇa ritual life, and the śramaṇas, the ‘strivers’ for liberation. Both kinds of ‘philosopher’ practised asceticism, the brahmans less extremely, “undergoing active toil, and by the endurance of pain being able to remain motionless the whole day”. Patañjali (the grammarian) noted the extreme and innate hostility between the brahmans and śramaṇas. 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, Hsuan Tsang (seventh century CE); and by Alberuni (eleventh century CE). According

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40 This is theoretically discarded during samnyasa, 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 śramaṇas. 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.
44 Zysk’s research (1998) reveals how Indian medical knowledge was also developed between 1,000 and 200 BCE by wandering śramaṇas uninhibited by Brahmanical restrictions on contact with such things as ‘impure’ dead bodies.
45 1.2.4.2 (Kielhorn edn., p. 476, line 9). Here, Patañjali, citing one of Pāṇini’s rules, provides the phrase śramaṇa-brahmaṇa 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 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 Brahmans and Shamaniyya (Buddhists), even though they are akin (Sachav 1996, Vol. 1:21).
to Brahmanical norms women are not entitled to renounce\(^9\)—having not passed through the samskāras, they are technically equivalent to śūdra-s—yet there is ample evidence of the existence of female ascetics,\(^6\) whether or not they had ‘renounced’.\(^5\) Pāṇini,\(^5\) Megasthenes\(^5\) and Strabo,\(^5\) who wrote in the period of the compilation of the Dharmasūtra-s, refer to both male and female śrāmana-s (ascetic ‘strivers’).\(^7\) 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 purposes. However, some Brahmanical commentary also provides evidence in support of the eligibility of women renouncers. In the Jīvanmuktiśākha (a fourteenth/fifteenth century text attributed to Vidyāranya, but see Ch.6.4 of this dissertation), 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 trident (a form of the mendicant’s staff), and exhibit all the marks of samnyāsa. References from Vedas, Upaniṣads and the Mahābhārata are cited in support of this position (see Vidyāranya 1996:6-8). In his Yatidharmaprakāśa (61.39-44), Vāsudevārama (c.1625-1800) cites Viśṇuśvāra (c.1100-1120), who cites Yājñavalkya Smṛti (which in turn cites a sūtra attributed to Baudhāyanasvāru, “striṇām caika...”) to the effect that, in some circumstances, a woman may renounce. Vāsudevārama states that the yati should not associate with women renouncers (samnyāsinī-s), even though some (such as Baudhāyanasvāru) 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 Brhadāraṇyaka 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, Vāsudevārama and other orthodox commentators (see Kane HDS Vol.2:948; Olivelle 1977:24, 175; 1984:115). Although these days women do not become samnyāsinī-s in the Śrī-Vaiṣṇava order (see Appendix 4), there is evidence from the thirteenth century that they did so (Narayan 1999:282). For discussions of women and renunciation, see also Young (1987:68-70); Leslie (1989:318-321).

\(^5\) However, some Brahmanical commentary also provides evidence in support of the eligibility of women renouncers. In the Jīvanmuktiśākha (a fourteenth/fifteenth century text attributed to Vidyāranya, but see Ch.6.4 of this dissertation), 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 trident (a form of the mendicant’s staff), and exhibit all the marks of samnyāsa. References from Vedas, Upaniṣads and the Mahābhārata are cited in support of this position (see Vidyāranya 1996:6-8). In his Yatidharmaprakāśa (61.39-44), Vāsudevārama (c.1625-1800) cites Viśṇuśvāra (c.1100-1120), who cites Yājñavalkya Smṛti (which in turn cites a sūtra attributed to Baudhāyanasvāru, “striṇām caika...”) to the effect that, in some circumstances, a woman may renounce. Vāsudevārama states that the yati should not associate with women renouncers (samnyāsinī-s), even though some (such as Baudhāyanasvāru) 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 Brhadāraṇyaka 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, Vāsudevārama and other orthodox commentators (see Kane HDS Vol.2:948; Olivelle 1977:24, 175; 1984:115). Although these days women do not become samnyāsinī-s in the Śrī-Vaiṣṇava order (see Appendix 4), there is evidence from the thirteenth century that they did so (Narayan 1999:282). For discussions of women and renunciation, see also Young (1987:68-70); Leslie (1989:318-321).

\(^9\) Women tapasvinī-s and śrāmanī-s, such as Vedavatī, Śabari and Svayambhūbā, appear in the Rāmāyaṇa (VII.17.2; III.74.7; IV.50.38) and also in the Mahābhārata, where several devoted themselves to life-long austerities and remained unmarried (see Bhagat 1976:206, 263). They wore deerskins, matted locks and bark garments, kept their ‘senses restrained’, and practised righteousness.

\(^9\) Nothing, to my knowledge, is revealed anywhere in the Brahmanical tradition, about how women who were permitted to renounce did so. It would seem reasonable to surmise that they took samnyāsa from a male preceptor, as is frequently the procedure these days (see Ch. 1.1).

\(^9\) Aṣṭādhyāyī II.1.70; VI.2.26 (trans. Katre).

\(^9\) Strabo XV. 60, citing Megasthenes (McCrimble 1877:103).

\(^9\) Strabo (Sec.II, 60, 70) refers to women who study philosophy with the ‘Sarmānes’ (śrāmana-s) and remain celibate, and also (Sec.II, 66) to women philosophers whom live austerely among the ‘Brāhmaṇes’ (McCrimble 1979 [1901]:67, 76; 72).

\(^9\) Women were admitted into the Ājīvika order (Basham 1951:106) and early Buddhist order (Hüsken 2000).
nefarious activities, including spying and assassination.68

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 thesis is to examine the roles that samnyāsīs 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 samnyāsi 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 saiva, 59 usually covered with ashes, and renowned for the practice of austerities and the acquisition of extraordinary powers. Saiva 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, Ājīvikas and Carvakas, 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

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68 In Kautilya's Arthasastra, one of the recommended articles of state policy is to attempt to control all aspects of society, including ascetics. Olivelle (1987:42–59) notes that the Arthasastra (2.1.30–31) and Mahābhārata (12.63.11–15) both state that government permission is required for entry into the ascetic life (only for vāyās and śātras in the MBh). It is apparent from these texts that their authors considered wandering ascetics (particularly 'fallen' renouncers) to be the ideal spies: they should exhibit austerity (but may secretly eat), and events should, if possible, be arranged to make it seem that their predictions have come true, thus enhancing their status as visionaries and magicians. Ascetic spies (including women) were to be used by kings to infiltrate monasteries, provide a secret service, initiate conspiracies, and carry out assassinations. Ascetics are one of five kinds of people mention by Manu (7.154) to be used as spies. The dangers of ascetic spies, who are regarded with suspicion, are also evident in the Arthasastra. They are to be removed from the road the king is travelling along (1.21.26); they should only be granted an audience in the company of trusted armed guards (1.21.24); the queen was forbidden contact with ascetics, who were also notorious as go-betweens for lovers (1.20.18). Ascetics were to be arrested at state borders should they not be wearing or carrying the proper emblems of a renouncer (2.28.20); a close watch is maintained over their movements, and any kind of suspicious behaviour could lead to arrest (2.36.13–14); they are subject to a night-curfew (2.36.39). See Olivelle (1987); Paranjpe (1991).

69 The evolution of sectarian Saivism 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. 2:397) refers to śivabhagatīs, whom he describes as itinerant ascetics wearing animal skins and carrying an iron lance.
tradition by a preceptor within a lineage.\textsuperscript{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 initiating 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 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 and often more influential than the image of the archetype might lead us to believe.

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 sādhus are avowedly celibate, other sects, such as the Dādū, Gauḍiya, Rāmānandī and Vallabhaścārī panth-s ('paths/sects') also have married initiates. Within the Daśanāmī order, lifestyles range from that of the poor sādhu undertaking austerities,\textsuperscript{62} to the privileges enjoyed by some of the Mahamedalāśvaras and Śaṅkarācāryas (jagad-gurus, 'world-gurus'), who (on occasions) display royal insignia.\textsuperscript{63} A typical Daśanāmī mahānt, an owner or proprietor of an āśrama or matha, 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 Matha-s are run as businesses, expanding to establish branch matha-s, and successful operations are sometimes the object of intense jealousy from other local landlords.\textsuperscript{64} In general, even poor sādhus much closer ties with the world than the ideal

\textsuperscript{61} Thapar (1996:56–93) has commented that there are essentially two types of renounce: one is the relative 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.

\textsuperscript{62} Depending on predilection and social factors, samnyāsīs may be more or less involved in the institutional life of matha-s or āśrama-s. Some sādhus are referred to as viṣṇu (meaning 'detached' or 'indifferent'): they shun āśrama-s and other such institutions, believing them to be contrary to the aims of samnyāsa (Viṣṇu is also a generic name in south India for renunciates who belong to the Viśāvīva sect.)

\textsuperscript{63} Such as at the great festivals of Navaratī and Śrī Śaṅkarājāyantī: see Sawai (1992:170).

\textsuperscript{64} See Morinis (1984:89–96) for an account of the affairs of the mahānt 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.
might lead one to suppose.65

Since the seventeenth century, another term that has been used to refer to Daśāṇāmī samnyāsīs is gosain.66 Daśāṇāmī gosain-s (non-monastic ascetics) are often but not always married, and many lead the lives of householders (gharībāī-s), pursuing a variety of business, priestly and working activities. In the Daśaṇāmī context, the term gosain usually refers to samnyāsī-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 dissertation, the activities of samnyāsī nāgā gosain-s in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries will be discussed. Many thousands of militant nāgā samnyāsīs (also known as gosain-s) 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-s, mostly in the Gangetic delta and several places in the Himalayas. Some Daśaṇāmī gosain-s migrated and settled in south India.

Ethnographic accounts dating from before Indian Independence typically treat Daśaṇāmī (or samnyāsi) gosain-s as a caste or an order engaged in a wide variety of activities, not only as mendicants (śādhu), but also as priests, bankers, farmers, traders and mercenaries, thus illustrating the complex relationship that samnyāsi-s have had with their social environment. Historically, it seems more accurate to consider the Daśaṇāmīs

65 Formally, samnyāsi-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 śādhu-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 āśrama-s (1.6%), dubious devices (1.0%), and miscellaneous sources (26.2%).

66 Gosain (or gosain-gosain-gosay-gosaeen) is also the name for heads of monasteries of the vaisnava Bairagi/Vairagi/Rāmānandī order, and of the followers of Vallabhaśārya (1479–1531). One of the earliest recorded uses of the term is in the memoirs of Emperor Jahāṅgīr (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 gosvāmī, perhaps meaning ‘the master or possessor of a cow or cows’. Sadānanda Girl (1976:57–59) suggests that gosain may derive from go (‘sense-organ’) and savāmī (‘master’). The first six disciples of the vaisnava Bengali mystic, Caitanya (1485–1534) are referred to as the six gosvāmī-s—of Vṛndāvan—(see De 1986:111–165; Dimock 1963:110–113), later followers being referred to as gosayi (Followers of Caitanya constitute the Gaudīya panth) Certainly by the nineteenth century, the term gosain was used locally and by British commentators to refer to both śāhī and vaisnava mendicants, fakīrs and yogis (Pinch 1996:43–44). Gosain-s are also referred to as attī (‘beyond’).
as a caste or a sect with many facets, rather than as lone individuals. Writing on the castes of Mysore, Ananthakrishna Iyer (1930:256–258) remarks that one of the chief peculiarities of the Gosāyis is that they constitute not only a religious order, but also a caste. Besides the caste’s natural increase from within, Brahmans, ksatriyas and women are also recruited (via initiation) to the order, which then excludes them—via rules of commensality—from their previous caste. Concerning the Saṃnyāsīs 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”. Initiation into the Daśānāṁs, whether the initiate subsequently becomes a gharbhārī, a celibate living in a matha, or wandering sādhu, requires the performance of the viraṇā-homa, the samnyāsa rite (see Ch. 3.3), which is theoretically irrevocable, yet there are counter-examples.

Samanta (1997:115) lists the thirty major castes of Ujjain, which include Gosains. Maclagan (1911:304–305) provides an account of the Gosāins of the Punjab and North-
West, who are divided into celibates and others who “form a separate caste, as well as
an order, and are known as Sannīṣīs or Daśnāmīs, because they are divided into ten
schools...and may be regarded as a semi-secularised offshoot of the Sannīṣī order”. Sherring (1879, Vol.2:339) describes the Dowri 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 Śivarātri is known in many places as gājan or ghambirā.
Amongst the votaries of this cult of Śiva are bhakta-s known as samnyāsīs (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 (vṛata) and are initiated
dīkṣā into the lineage (gotra) of Śiva as samnyāsīs. They follow preliminary dietary
restrictions, are adorned with sectarian marks and shaved. A mūla-samnyāsi, who is the
chief votary, is also required during celebrations. Those castes participating are often
known in west Bengal as samnyāsīs, 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 samnyāsi gosain-s who settled at
Kangra and Shīmla in Himachal Pradesh (in the foothills of the Himalayas). In some
places they became cultivators, gradually accumulating much wealth from both trade

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7 The celibates are described as being of one of three kinds: first, the māṭhadārī ('head of a
monastery'), whose dwelling (māṭha) 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 aవdहत ('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 māṭhas keep
women.

72 Sadānanda Giri (1976:57–59) comments that, besides celibate gosain-s, there are a large number of
gharbāri (i.e. married) gosain-s—who are also religious teachers—in the Gaḍhvāl and Kullu areas of the
Himalayas where, generally, they either own temples or work in the fields as manual labourers. They are
also to be found in Gujarat, where many own their own māṭha-s, and also in Maharashtra, where they
are very rich and own large properties. Such married Gosāins dress in white, maintaining only the turban
in the traditional ochre colour. Their sons and daughters are married within their own society. Married
gosain-s are generally regarded as 'outcaste' by celibate Daśnāmī-s, who do not dine with them. Daśnāmī māṭha-s and akhādā-s usually have rules expressly forbidding the association of celibate
samnyāsīs with women.
and usury. Maclagan notes that, in theory, the Gosāins were celibate and recruited to the order by adopting chelas from pure castes who may have been willing to dedicate their sons to them. However, in practice marriage was usual, married Gosāins being known as gharbhārī, and sons succeeded to the order by becoming celās. At Sirsa, there is a separate caste of gosain-s, founded by Shimbu Acharj, most of whom are either ‘Girl’s or ‘Puri’s. Marriage in these Himalayan sub-orders is still usually endogamous. Steele, whose information was obtained in Nāsik, Maharashtra, also maintains (1868:444) that a gharbhārī gosain of the “ten sects” may only marry a female ‘Gosawnee’ if he wishes to remain a gosain. Exogamous marriage results in exclusion. While there are exceptions, most gosain communities enjoy a relatively high caste-status, and are frequently amongst the largest land owners wherever they live.

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

73 “The hill people, including their Rājās and Rānas, 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 Gosāins of Kāṅgrā, who are principally found in Nādeun 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).

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

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

76 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 dudra 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.

77 ‘Divorce is said to be permissible only as a consequence of impotency, formalised by a divorce document (chor citthi). Interestingly, a childless wife—who is not a widow—of an absent husband may enter into what is known as a ‘left-handed/verpervese’ (vām) 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 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. Sudras are also said to be recruited in the south.

78 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 Rājputs in terms of land ownership. Bhattacharya (1973:307) also comments on the grhastha gosain-s as a very respectable caste.
The temple of Ujjain is that of Harsiddhi mātā, one of the fifty-two Śaktipitha-s. The priests of the temple are grhastha Daśanāmīs who have served the temple for many generations. At Janakpur in Nepal, near the border of India, a succession of ‘Giri’ mahānts of the Daśanāmīs has long managed the Rāma temple, said to have been founded by Catūrbhūj Giri (Jha 1978:116–121). However, in general, gosa/n-s do not perform any priestly functions, most probably as many do not have a Brahman background. In gosa/n households, the functions of the purohit are generally performed by Brahmans who are not of their order. Also, in distinction from samnyāsī-s, many grhastha samnyāsī-s (gosa/n-s) wear the sacred thread.

In some areas of Nepal there are many householder samnyāsī-s, who are recognised in official surveys as being a caste. (In Nepal the term samnyāśī is usually understood to refer to a caste, rather than a renunciate, the term yogi generally being used to refer to a sādhu.) 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 Nārāyana Giri, a samnyāśī with a ksatr/ya 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 samnyāsī-s. 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 samnyāśī customs, concerning initiation and

79 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 second largest caste—after the Tamangs, constituting 41.4% of the population—are the samnyāsī-s. In the mountainous areas surveyed—which only include a few of the mountainous districts—Giris (one of the lineages of the Daśanāmīs) numbered 21,816 persons.

80 Kattike has a population of 2,895, of which there are 335 Giris in thirty-five houses. 90% of the Giris are descended from Nārāyana Giri, and the samnyāsī-s are a dominant caste in the village, in status slightly inferior to Upādhyā Bāhun (Brahmans) and Chetri (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.

81 Formal initiation into the caste of Giris is in two stages (see Bouillier (1978:96–101). The first is the upanayana (brata-bandha), 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 samnyāśī-ś. In Kattike three people are considered ‘guru’ for the men, while there is one woman guru in Kattike for the women. Initiates receive the Śivagāyatrī mantra, a trident (tīrūṭ), a staff (dandha), fire-tongs (cīmāśa), a water-pot kamandal, a small drum (daman), a seed (rudrākṣa) necklace, and Daśanāmi samnyāśī 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.
Bouillier (1978) has also examined the Articles of the Nepalese penal codes (Muluki Aiti) concerning ascetics, those of 1853, 1935 and 1963. The term jat is used in two senses in the codes, one 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; mathdharīs, 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 mathdharīs and gharbārīs are subject to the punishments proscribed for transgressions under the code. Trangressing ramtā-s, 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 mudinya), 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 jats 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

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82 Technically, the renounser is automatically liberated at death from the rounds of rebirth, and does not become a spirit or ghost (pīsā), 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 (Boullier 1976); see also Parry (1982:84–85); Prasad (1995).

83 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 Aiti of Jang Bahadur Rāna, promulgated in 1853, is the first code to legislate for the whole population of Nepal.

84 In the codes, ascetics are generally referred to either by the Persian term phakīr; or as bhes dhāri (a wearer of ascetic’s clothes), and specifically as samnyāsī, bairāgī, udāsī, jaingam and sevādī, terms which refer to, respectively, Daśānāmī, Rāmānandī, Udāsīn (Sikh), Vīraśāiva and Jaina orders.

85 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 (gharbāri or mathdharī) 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 forceably initiated may be readmitted to his or her caste, with appropriate rites.
The revised penal code of 1935 contains many of the earlier provisions but also some changes. Only two categories of ascetic are mentioned, the rama and the mathdhari: the ghari 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 Dasanami matha-s are not only the seats of celibate samnyasis, and that in South Asia, the distinction between the gosain-s as a ‘caste’ and as a religious sect is often not as clear as might be imagined. 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

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65 In the hierarchy of castes, at the top are (’pure’) Upadhyay Brahmans, under which, respectively, are Thakuri and Raja, then Jaisi, Tagadhari (kshatri), and Indian Brahmans. In sixth place, regardless of renunciate order, are the aforementioned renunciate jati-s, ranking just under Jaisi. The bhes dhari are considered as quite high caste and treated as such according to the law. The code specifies that if a Dasnam (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).

66 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 years old may be initiated. In this code it is also stated (p. 146) that a husband of a woman initiated into renunciation by a bhes dhari still has the right to sleep with her, so long as she has not committed adultery, for which appropriate punishments are specified. However, a man of a lower caste who seduces a woman renunciate is liable to punishment. A husband may kill a samnyasi who seduces his wife, but not if the renunciate is a Brahman (Bouillier 1978:149).

67 The 1963 Muluki Ain contains only one Article concerning ascetics, in contrast to the several contained in the two previous codes. Initiation is still limited to those over eighteen, but there is no mention of sexual prohibitions (or discriminatory punishments related to the degree of caste-rule violation) nor of a restriction on initiating men and women from lower castes, discrimination concerning caste having been abolished not only for renunciates but for all sections of society. In the new code the justice system only intervenes concerning the initiation of those under age. Bouillier (1978:150) remarks that, “En effet, ce nouveau code, fortement inspiré par les conceptions du droit occidentales, marque une nette rupture avec les codes antérieurs; dorénavant l’accent est mis sur l’individu, en tant que citoyen népalais, et sur l’égalité des droits de tous.”

68 There have been several legal cases in the Bombay area (Kane Vol.2:952), wherein it was decreed that a samnyasi who inherits a matha, as a disciple of a deceased mahant, does not forfeit his rights to the trusteeship of the property—which is invariably attached to a temple—should he subsequently marry. Bouillier (1978) examines a dispute that first arose in 1929, concerning the rights and property of the Kwathando (Baneśvar Mahācēv) matha, a Daśanāmi samnyasi matha in Bhatgaon, near Kathmandu. The long-running dispute between the Kwathando matha and the state concerned rights to the property and the surrounding fields, but Bouillier discerns that central to the claims of the various protagonists was the issue of whether entitlement to the matha and its benefits should pass to another samnyasi or to the son of the mahant.
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. Also, while a general distinction may be made between married, semi-secularised gosain-s and celibate samnyāsī-s, who do not usually inhabit the same social milieux, it is apparent from current and historical evidence that distinctions between gharbhārī gosain and celibate samnyāsī-s become frequently blurred when the various contexts of the Daśanāmīs are examined.

0.3 Sources for the thesis

Of necessity, a wide range of textual (including hagiographic), ethnographic and epigraphic sources are drawn upon throughout this dissertation. 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 thesis 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 century, 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 sādhus who made these available. Research was further informed by

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90 Gnanambal (1973:199), for example, observes how some of the castes of south Indian have substituted Sanskrit names for low-caste names, tracing their mythological origin to ancestors like Sāgara, Vālmīki and Jambava.

91 For nearly five years (from 1986 to 1990) I lived and travelled with Yamunā Giri, originally of German descent. She has lived in a cave with several Nāth sādhus since 1991, and took her preliminary initiation into the Junā ākhādā in 2002. When we met in March 2002, she generously supplied me with several Hindi pamphlets available to Daśanāmī initiates. I would also like to thank the mahānt of the Mahānirvān ākhādā in Khankal, who kindly allowed me to photocopy a book written by mahānt Lāl Puri, Daśanām Nāgā Samnyāsi evam Śri Pancāyati Ākhāda Mahānirvāna (see Bibliography).
fieldwork conducted in 2001 and 2002.\[92\]

An ethnographic overview of the Daśanāmīs is presented in Chapters 1 and 2, considering the subdivisions, hierarchies, caste and functional positions within the order. The Daśanāmī order has two main wings, one being what might be called the monastic tradition, represented by the *dandīs*, who are 'staff-carrying' *samnyāsīs*, the preeminent representatives of this tradition being the reigning Śāṅkarācāryas. The other main wing within the order is represented by *paramahamsa* ascetics and militant *nāgās*\[93\] ('fighting ascetics'), the latter being organised in quasi-military divisions, known as *akhādās* ('wrestling ring'). While considerable use has been made of the work of other scholars' work in the ethnographic domain, my 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 *akhādās*.

The rites of renunciation and initiation are analysed in Chapter 3. References are made to the *Dharmaśūtra-s*, the *Samnyāsa Upaniṣad-s* and several mediaeval texts on renunciation. The details of contemporary initiation procedures were derived from a video, filmed at the Haridvar Kumbha Melā in 1989 by Rām Puri,\[94\] who patiently talked me through a couple of hours of edited footage, explaining the details and significance of procedures.\[95\] What is not apparent from a reading of *dharmaśāstra* texts—on which commentators on the Daśanāmī tradition generally rely for their understanding of *samnyāsa*—is that initiation into the Daśanāmīs via an *akhādā* transpires in two stages. The first is the *pāric-guru-samskār*, wherein the neophyte acquires five gurus. The

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\[92\] Thanks to generous grants from the Jordan Fund (SCAS) and the AHRB, I was able to attend the Kumbha Melā in 2001, and the Ādhā Kumbha Melā in 2002, both held at Allahabad (for details of the Kumbha Melā, see Appendix 3). These *mela-s* ('festivals') being the preeminent calendar event for the Daśanāmīs, it was particularly convenient for conducting interviews (in Hindi and English) and lengthy inquiries into the hierarchies, lifestyles and organisation of the various branches of the Daśanāmīs. I was also able to inspect various Hindi publications found in libraries in Banaras, and others kindly provided by Daśanāmīs from *matha-s* and *akhādā-s* in Allahabad, Banaras and Haridvar. Before embarking on post-graduate studies, I also attended Kumbha Melās at Allahabad (1986), Haridvar (1989) and Ujjain (1992). Between 1982 and 1996 I also spent around seven years visiting Hindu holy places (a total of around 250 religious complexes) in nearly all states of India, on several occasions travelling with *śādhu-s* of various orders on pilgrimage, particularly to holy places in the Himalayas, where more than 2,000 miles was covered on foot.

\[93\] From the Hindi *nāgā*, meaning 'naked'.

\[94\] Originally of American descent, Rām Puri is a *mahant* ('leading person') in the Daśanāmī Jūnā *akhādā*, one of the seven Daśanāmī *akhādā-s*, from which he took *samnyāsa* in 1971, to become the first foreigner to be initiated into the *akhādā*. As a rule, initiation rites are performed privately, and I was informed that this was the first time that all the procedures of the *samnyāsa* and *nāgā* rites had ever been filmed.

\[95\] During many conversations over several weeks, in Allahabad, Delhi, the Himalayas and London, he was also most helpful in explaining many aspects of Daśanāmī history and organisation, from the unique perspective of someone who is not only familiar with western academia and scholarship, but who has spent over thirty years in India as a Daśanāmī initiate.
second stage of initiation is the performance of the samnyasa rite, usually performed at Kumbha Melās, 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 performance of the samnyāsa rite. A third initiation rite is performed for samnyāsi-s who wish to become nāgā-s.

A series of short Sanskrit texts are the main source and focus of Chapter 4. Generally known as (Śrī) Mathāmnāya-s,95 these texts were supposedly, but highly improbably, written by Śaṅkarācārya. 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 samnyāsi-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 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 saiva, 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 Śaṅkaravijayavilasa, 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. The first references to the term daśanāmī appear in a couple of late mediaeval texts on

95 These texts, also variously known as Mathāmnāya-stotra, Mathāmnāya-setu, Mathetvrrta, Mathāmnāyaśāsanam and Mahānudāsanam are contained, together with translation, in Appendix 2.
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 *advaita matha* at Śrīnerī (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 advaita* tradition, though this had nothing 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 *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 of this thesis, extrapolated in Chapter 7, lies in the exploration of 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 (*akhāḍās*), 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 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 *samnyāśīs*; even though this cannot be conclusively proved. 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 (advaitā) 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. 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. 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 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 Daśanāmīs and others who find their way into this thesis—whether as mendicants, mahants, mecenaries, scholars, philosophers, political envoys, traders, raiders, property-owners or bankers—are those who by their actions have found their way into

97 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).

98 For studies in Indian hagiography, see Snell (1994); Granoff (1984, 1988a, 1988b); Schober (1997).
history. Those who live more closely to the ideals of *samnyāsa*—as lone renunciates undergoing austerities, far removed from worldly, economic and political life—and who constitute a significant proportion of *samnyāśi*-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 *samnyāsa* would be simply an empty account.
CHAPTER 1: 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 sādhus. Although there are traditional Brahmanical restrictions that deny women the option of taking samnyāsa and renouncing, it is evident that amongst Daśanāmīs and some other renunciate sects there are 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 renunciate sects

As noted in the Introduction, there are three subdivisions of the Daśanāmīs, namely: 1) the danda-s, who carry a staff (danda; 2) the paramahamsa-s; and 3) the naga-s (sometimes referred to as āstradhārī-s, ‘weapon-holders’), who belong to one of the seven Daśanāmī akhādā-s (‘wrestling rings’ or ‘military formations’). Danda-s may be recognised by the danda that they carry, a stick that may be plain or embellished and usually has a piece of saffron cloth wrapped around it, under which is tied an axe-head and the sacred thread. Unlike danda-s, paramahamsa-s and naga-s do not carry the mendicant’s staff. Although the tripartite division of dandi, paramahamsa and naga is recognised within the Daśanāmī order, the foremost means of self-classification is primarily in terms of the parampara of the initiating guru, in one of the ten lineages supposedly deriving from Śaṅkarācārya. All the three branches of the Daśanāmīs have a large network of matha-s, spread throughout India,

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1 See also Ghurye (1953); Tripathi (1978); Sinha and Sarasvati (1978); Dazey (1990).

2 See Ch. 2.1

3 Many danda-s carry either a small līnga or a śāilagrāma. Śāilagrāmas are ammonites found in two or three places in the bed of the Kāli Gaṇḍaki river in eastern Nepal, which are the one of the most important emblems of Viṣṇu. 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 paramahamsa-s during the samnyāsa rite, but it is subsequently discarded (see Ch. 3.3).

5 Amongst the danda-s, the names used are Tīrtha, Āśrama and Sarasvatī. Some few are called Bhāratī. Amongst the naga-s of today, the names attributed are Giri, Puri, Bhāratī and Sarasvatī, though not all samnyās-s with that name are naga. Aranyas are rare, while Vanas, Sāgaras and Parvatas have practically disappeared.
though most concentrated in north India, particularly in Banaras, Allahabad and Haridvar. Most of even the largest āśramas and mathas began as a simple dwelling of a sādhu who had ceased travelling and settled, frequently after many years of pilgrimage to holy places⁶ throughout the Indian subcontinent.⁷

Several scholars provide a general overview of around sixty sects of sādhus⁸ functioning in India in the last decades of the twentieth century.⁹ The greatest concentration of sādhus, 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 sādhus are the vaiṣṇava Rāmānandīs and the śāiva sects of Nāths and Daśanāmīs.¹⁰ There are currently, perhaps, around one hundred thousand Daśanāmī sādhus in South Asia.¹¹ Examples of female ascetics and renunciates in ancient India were referred to in the Introduction, and census reports from the nineteenth and early twentieth century reveal that women samnyāsinīs¹² then constituted up to forty percent of both the general sādhu,¹³ and Daśanāmī population in certain regions of India. These days, however, women samnyāsinīs, who are usually referred to as ma(or mā-tā-jī, constitute between approximately five and

⁶ Many samnyāsinīs (including the akhāda-s) begin the year at the melā (in January) at Gaṅgā Sāgar, east of Calcutta. Proceeding west, Pāśupatināth and Banaras are popular for Śivaratri (in February/March), after which many follow the Gaṅgā to tīrthas in the Himalayas, for the summer. Autumn and winter are the seasons when samnyāsinīs may go south, occasionally visiting some of the twelve jyotirlīngam-s en route, finally reaching Rāmeśvaram and Kānya Kumārī.

⁷ Before the introduction of passports in the early twentieth century, some sādhus also travelled widely in Central Asia and the Middle East. See Duncan (1799) for a samnyāsi who went to Russia and the Middle East. See Bennett (1965) for an account of a samnyāsi who walked right round the world.

⁸ Some of these sects also have a substantial lay community.

⁹ Sinha and Sarasvati’s (1978:51) study was based in Banaras; Tripathi’s (1978:156) study conducted in Uttar Pradesh. Tripathi was initiated into both Daśanāmī (śāva) and Nimbārki (vaiṣṇava) sects (sampradāya) 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 sādhus, the two largest sects are the Daśanāmī and Kāṁphaṭa (Nāth), each of which comprises around 12% of the sādhu 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 orders, the Daśanāmīs having 610 initiates and the Rāmānandīs 253. Statistics on sādhus are notoriously hard to obtain, because where records are kept in mathas and akhādas, information is rarely divulged.

¹¹ See Appendix 1.3 for the calculations for this estimate, based on Hartsuiker (1993:122); Briggs (1982:4–8); Bedi and Bedi (1991:85).

¹² Hindi: samnyāsinī, the term is Sanskritised by some commentators as samnyāsinī, though this term is rarely used in classical sources.

¹³ Female sādhus are also referred to as sādhi.
ten percent of both the general sadhu and Daśanāmī populations.14 Although there are still a significant number of women ascetic renunciates in South Asia, there are very few orders where the guru-parampara is handed down from woman to woman.16 Most of the orders and matha-s that comprise women are dependent on male preceptors, who in several instances are Daśanāmīs.

There have been several studies of Hindu women saints, some of whom are ascetics,18 though relatively few devoted to female Hindu renunciates.17 Caplan (1973) describes a small group of Daśanāmī mai-s, all Giris, living in Duari in western Nepal. In this area most ascetics are unmarried women, samnyāsīs usually being a settled caste, only distinguished from other castes of a similar rank by particular customs of initiation and funeral rites.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 mai-s of Duari live together in a monastery (kutir) which has a temple of Bhairava. They survive by begging, donations, on the produce of the attached land, and sometimes by lending out money or grain. The head mai 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 kutir.19

[Clémentin-Ojha] has published several studies of women sadhvis in Banaras, the first (1981) being of forty-five individual women ascetics, another (1984)20 examining three

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14 Table XVII of the Imperial Census of India for 1931, cited by Briggs (1982:4-6), shows, under the heading of Aghori, Faqir, Sadhu and Sannyāsī, a total of more than one million persons. According to the Censi 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 Sarasvatī's (1978) general survey of 1284 sadhu-s in Banaras included 97 women (i.e. approximately one in twelve).

15 Ramaswamy (1992:134) briefly mentions an example of a female preceptor: Venābāī, a disciple of Samanṭha Rāmādāsa (17th century), became head of a matha at Mīrāj (in Karnataka). Also, it seems that the followers of the saint Mīrābāī (15th-16th century) once constituted a sect of 'Mīrābāīs'. See Sethi (1979) and Alston (1980c) for brief resumes of Mīrābāī's life.

16 See Ramanujan (1973:111-142; 1982); Gupta (1991); Ramaswamy (1992; 1997). Very few women saints married, and almost all were initiated by males.

17 For the position of (women) sadhu-sīrāvīkā-s within Jainism, see Jaini (1991); Shāntā (1997); Balbir (2002); Vallely (2002).

18 One such caste of samnyāsī-s is discussed in the Introduction (see Bouillier 1976; 1979).

19 Similar to the settled samnyāsī castes of Nepal, the women are not of Brahman caste, but the slightly inferior Jaisi caste. Despite being samnyāsī-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 bereaved.

20 See also Clémentin-Ojha (1985; 1988).
communities of female samnyāsinīs in Banaras, most of whom are Bengalis. Two are communities of Nimbārkaśīns (also known as the nīmāvat or Sanaka-saṃpradāya),21 the Śobha Mā and Gaṅgā Mā.22 Around a dozen women ascetics live at an āśrama which Śobha Mā founded in 1950. The third community is of followers of Ānanda Mayī Mā23 who live at the Kānya Pītha, 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 Nimbārka order denies renunciation to women, so they undergo an initiation ceremony that contains fewer syllables of the sacred mantra than either householders (lay followers) or male renunciates (vīrāktā).

The order of Ānanda Mayī Mā is ‘heterodox’—having a woman as preceptor—yet the women are initiated by male Daśanāmī priests, under the name of Ānanda Mayī Mā (Ojha 1984:208). It is believed that, during the ceremony, the sakti of Ānanda Mayī Mā is transmitted to the initiate, who becomes a disciple of the guru. The women become brahmacārīnī but are not fully ‘samnyāsī’ as they do not perform the second stage of initiation, the vīrajā-homa.26 Nevertheless, the samnyāsinīs 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

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

22 One of the four vaisnava sampradāyas (see Ch. 2.1 and Appendix 4).

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


25 Clémentin-Ojha also presents (1986) 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 Jainas, see Shāntā 1997:189). The female gurus (who are generally referred to as “Mātājī”) are from the Daśanāmī, Rāmānandī, Nimbārka and Vallabha sampradāyas. All were initiated by male preceptors. After Ānanda Mayī Mā’s demise, Śobha Mā became the most important female guru in Banaras, with around 1,000 disciples. The female guru from the Vallabha sampradāya, Śāradavallabhā Betī-jī, runs a temple and an educational institution, and can perform initiation (dikṣā) into the sect.

26 See Ch. 3.
Śāradā Maṭha, and those of the Rāmakṛṣṇa Śāradā 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, Sai Bābā of Śīrdi, Brahmā Kumārīs, and Liṅgāyats. C. S. J. White (1989) describes dārśana (‘vision/spiritual presence’) and an interview with Her Holiness Sadguru Śrī Jñānānandasarasvatī of Madras, a woman who was previously married, raising five children. She renounced the world, most unusually taking samnyāsa personally from the Śaṅkarācarya of Kaṅčipuram, the first time he had performed the samnyāsa rite for a woman. More recently, Khandelwal (2004) recounts the life of several female renouncers, focussing mainly on two female Daśānāmī samnyāsinīs, Ānand Mātā and Baijī, both of whom run āśrama-s in Haridvar.

While the Daśānāmī paramahamsa subdivision has some female ascetics, there are fewer amongst the dāndīs and very few who are nāgās. Amongst the akhāḍās there is only

27 The Śrī Śāradā Maṭh, the largest of these female orders, was founded in 1954, and in 1981 had six centres, at Madras, Trichur, Pune, Bangalore, Banaras and Haridvar. Women must be over thirty years old to be initiated into the order; novitiate (brahmācarīṇī) vows may be taken after two years, and the full samnyāsa rite of renunciation after another five years. Then, (theoretically) irrespective of previous caste affiliations, the women initiate may perform Vedic rites. Founded in 1960, the Rāmakṛṣṇa Śāradā 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 samnyāsinī, Aranā Mā (b.1928) of the Rāmakṛṣṇa order, who has a large āśrama in Calcutta, inherited, unusually, from her male guru. 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 Matri Mandir and then Śāradā Mandir) was opened by Suchitra Basu (c.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 samnyāsa was not given to women until 1947, in the first western Vedānta convent, founded in Hollywood in 1940 (King 1984:77–78).

28 See Babb (1984) for comment on the role of women in the Brahmā Kumārīs.

29 The few female ascetics of the Svāmī Nārāyaṇ order are called Sāmkhya Yogīṇīs; they live in a separate temple and follow their own guru. Śrī Upasani Bābā, a disciple of Sai Bābā founded a nunnery, the Kanyā Kumārī Sthān in Maharashtra, in either 1917 or 1932, another branch being subsequently established in Nāgpur. The women study and perform Vedic sacrifices. In 1940, the Brahma Kumārīs āśrama for women ascetics was founded in Sindh. The founding ethos of female asceticism has been replaced by āśrama-s catering for both men and women. In 1966, aged twenty, Mathe Mahādevī took samnyāsa, to become the first female jagadguru of the Liṅgāyats, a śāiva sect founded in the twelfth century in Karnatak. The Vishva Kalyan Mission was established in Bangalore (and then Hubil and Darwar), where women ascetics live (King 1984:79–81). See also Llewellyn (1995) for a profile of another female renouncer, Mīrām (b.1929), who was from an Arya Sāmāj family background, and wrote an autobiography, subsequent to renouncing in 1979.

30 Ānand Mātā is said to have been initiated by a “prominent swami” (p. 49), and Baijī by a Daśānāmī samnyāsinī (p. 80).

31 See below for the dāndī, paramahamsa and nāgā branches of the Daśānāmīs.
one order of maṣs, who are affiliated to the Jūnā akhāḍā, the largest of the seven Daśanāmī akhāḍās. While most of the women come from eastern Nepal or the adjacent Kumaun district of Uttar Pradesh, some few come from West Bengal. They have their own Mahāmaṇḍaleśvara (similar to an abbot), and the current mahānt of the maṣs is Mīrā Puri. Around eight hundred maṣs attended the 2001 Allahabad Kumbha-Melā, camping in an area adjacent to the camp of the Jūnā akhāḍā. During the Magh Mela, in January 2002, as per custom, many women camped alongside men in the dāndī camps. This is in sharp distinction from practices in the akhāḍās where there are usually no women, except in the case of the Jūnā akhāḍa which has a separate camping area for the women samnyāsīs.

Daśanāmīs usually refer to only themselves as samnyāsīs, distinguishing themselves from other sects of sādhu-s who generally refer to themselves by their sectarian names, as for example, Nāth (Kānphaṭa), Udāsin (Sikh-affiliated), Bairāgī/Vairāgī (Rāmānandī), et cetera. Sādhu-s are typically dressed so as to indicate, in some manner, their sectarian affiliation. Samnyāsīs usually wear orange, ochre, saffron, or salmon-coloured cloth, the traditional colour of the samnyāsa. Sectarian affiliation is also shown by the kind of necklace (māla) worn, and often more distinctively by sectarian marks that adorn the face and body. Hair may be shaven, short, long, or in dreadlocks (jaṭā) but, unlike the custom in some other sādhu sects, the top-knot (coṭī) is not worn by the Daśanāmī-Saṃnyāsīs. It is removed during initiation, as is the sacred thread (janeū) if it was previously worn. While Daśanāmīs usually apply the tripundra (or tripūnd) to the forehead, a

33 Even though the other akhāḍās do not generally admit women, Sinha and Saraswati (1978:98) note that at one time the Nirvāṇī akhāḍā had a female ascetic raised to the position of Mahāmaṇḍaleśvara, causing a boycott by the other akhāḍās. Sinha and Saraswati (1978:68) report the presence in Banaras of two female ascetics who are members of the dāndī subdivision of the Daśanāmīs. One was residing with her male counterparts (gurubha-s) in the Daksinamūrti maṭha, and the other, Gaurī Ma, was a mahānt who had succeeded the gaddī of the Pūranānanda Svāmī Āśrama maṭha. She was the only resident ascetic.

34 See Ch. 2.4 for an account of their role in the Daśanāmīs.

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

36 Vaiṣṇavas wear tūsi beads, which are beads carved from the wood of a basil plant (oocimum sanctum) which grows all over the subcontinent. Śaivas wear rudrākṣa seeds, which come from a tree (elaeocarpus 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 Purāṇa (Vidyeśvara Samhitā; Padma Purāṇa (oh. 57); Śrīmaddevībhagavat (11th Skanda, oh. 3–7); Rudrākṣajabalopanisad. See Rai (1993a); Majupuria (1982:223).

37 Dāndī-samnyāsīs keep the janeū concealed under a cloth that is attached to their dāndā.
sectarian mark of three parallel lines of holy ashes (vibhuti), it is usually only nāgā-s who cover the body entirely with ashes. The equipment carried by itinerant Daśānamī sādhu-s usually consists of fire-tongs (ciṃṭā), blankets, sometimes a deer or tiger skin, a water-pot (kamanḍal) made from coconut, wood or metal, sometimes a trident (triśuḷi), and a small bag (holi) for a few belongings such as religious pamphlets, identity papers, money, holy ash, soap, and for members of some akhāda-s, 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 heat39 that is associated with spiritual and creative powers, and in the later context of the Purāṇa-s, liberation.40 While most Daśānamī-s periodically perform limited regimens of austerity (tapas / tapasyā), such as taking a vow (vratā) to fast on a particular day or during a certain period,41 or of limiting their diet,42 some few also perform hātha-yoga postures. A few sādhu-s practise more radical forms of tapasyā, not infrequently for a period of twelve years.43 There is a general public

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38 The most sought kind of coconut used is the extra large variety from the Seychelles Islands.
39 On tapas in a Vedic context, see Knipe (1975); Kaelber (1989).
40 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 Vedas 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; 1.101.26; 1.166.8; 1.208.15–20; 1.38.8–19; 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 1987:8–13). 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 Holl 1869). For psychological interpretations of austerities, see Masson (1976); Cantlie (1977).
41 Vratā-s ('vows'), particularly to fast on a particular day, are a general feature of traditional Hindu culture. See Kane (HDS Vol. 5, pt.1: 255–462) for an exhaustive list of around 1,500 different vratā-s. See also Dutt (2002). On women householders' religious vows, see Babb (1975:110), who describes the sālmom somvar vrat (the 'sixteen Mondays vow'); McGee (1991); Itis (1996); Pearson (1996).
42 The most common form of limiting diet is phalaḥarī, technically fruitarian, but usually also consisting of milk, fruits, nuts, and—if a grain is consumed—tālmāna, a kind of reddish millet. The important point about a phalaḥarī diet is that all foodstuff may 'fall' into the recipients hands.
43 Practices include not lying down or sitting (khāḍēśvar), usually supported by suspended sling, or keeping one arm permanently in the air (ūrdhva-bāhaḥ). Some permanently wear a metal chastity belt (a practice more common amongst Vaṟāṅgo); while others lie on a bed of nails (a practice far less common today than even in the 1970s). Particularly at mālas, sādhu-s may be seen supporting large weights (usually rocks) tied to the genitals; while some Daśānamī-s hang upside-down (ūrdh-mukh) for some time on a wooden contraption that supports the feet. Long periods of immersion in water (jāl-śayānī), particularly the river Ganga, are undertaken on a regular basis by some sādhu-s. Another, and it seems ancient, form of tapas is the pafic-agni-tapasyā. For performing 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 (māla) hidden under a cloth. In the following stage the number of smouldering fires is then increased to seven, twelve, eighty-four, and 'innumerable' fires. In the third and 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 tapasyā is usually performed for three consecutive summers. For pictures of these activities, see Hartsulker (1993).
perception that a sādhu's powers, accumulated from tapasyā, are real—and they are feared—though attitudes to sādhus vary widely. While in north India sādhus are generally revered—particularly by villagers—sometimes almost as a form (mūrti) of deity, sādhus 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 samnyāsī dies he is usually buried in a grave (known as a samādhi), facing east or north-east, supported on the wooden 'T-shaped' frame (baragan) that is used for meditation, which maintains the corpse in a seated posture. He is usually buried with some cannabis leaves (bhang) and a water-pot gourd. Salt and spices are thrown in to hasten putrefaction. Some time after the burial the samnyāsī's disciples will organise a meal (bhandara) for associated ascetics and Brahmans. Tombs and sometimes temples are erected over the graves of important heads of monasteries (mahanats and mahāmāndāśvāras) and worship of the samādhi continues. Mahanats are occasionally entombed in stone coffins (taṅka) which are thrown into the Ganges, notably in holy places along the river, such as Haridwar, Banaras and Prayāg. Poorer ascetics are sometimes merely thrown into the river Gāṅgā with stones attached to their limbs.

1.2 Caste

Regarding the Brahmanical textual tradition, according to the Brhadāranyaka Upaniṣad (4.4.22; 3.5.1), the Mundaka Upaniṣad (1.2.12), Manu (4.38; 6.97), and the Kurma 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) and Yajñavalkya Smṛti (3.61) maintain that all twice-born (dvija), (brāhmaṇa, ksatriya, vaśyā), may renounce. In the mediaeval period, Brahmanical commentators were still

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45 A number of castes use a method for burials similar to that of samnyāsīs; for example, the Pisharotis, a settled caste of Kerala (see Ananthakrishna Iyer 1912:143).
46 Thurston (Vol.2, 1909:299) reports that a dead samnyāsī'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 samnyāsī's head is also said to be so broken, but his body is buried.
undecided as to whether only Brahmans or all twice-born were eligible to renounce, an ambivalence also apparent amongst more recent commentators. The majority view is that the three higher varnas are entitled to samnyasa. However, in the Visnu Smriti (5.115) and Yajñavalkya Smriti (2.241) a punishment is specified for those who entertain a śūdra parivrajaka in rites for the gods or manes, indicating that, disregarding varna prescriptions, there were instances of śūdra renunciates, which seems to also pertain in more recent times. In a landmark ruling in 1980 by the Supreme Court, which is frequently reiterated, a śūdra has the right to become a samnyāsi. The judgement on this case was reached primarily on the basis of custom within a community, which was interpreted to take legal precedence over the proscriptions of dharmasāstra 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 samnyāsi.

Three of the four dangā lineages, namely the Tīrtha, Āśrama and Sarasvati, initiate

49 See Olivelle (1977:33–34). Vāsudevāśrama, for example, in his Yatidharmaprabāśa (composed between 1675 and 1800), expressed both views.
51 See Killingley (1991) for a useful discussion of varna, jāti and caste, and how these categories have been interpreted by several influential commentators.
53 Sinha and Sarasvati (1978:180) report that an Ācārya Mandaleśvara, Narsimha 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, if discovered he is branded with a hot coin and expelled. However, Thurston (1909 Vol. 2:299) notes that ‘Gosāyis’ never marry, and that brahmānas, ksatriyas, vaisya-s and śūdra-s may all become Gosāyi. Crooke (1896, Vol.2:260, citing Maclagan, Panjab Census Report 1891:112, states that some lineages of Daśānāmīs have lower-caste initiates. Rose (1914 Vol. 3:358) believes that originally only Brahmans were admitted, and that Rāpūts were subsequently admitted in the recruitment of nāgās. Vaśya-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.
54 The case (Krishna Singh v. Mathura Ahir) ran from 1951 to 1980, and originated from a dispute over a śūdra samnyāsi’s right to inherit property (see Narayanan 1993:286–291).
55 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.
only Brahmans and regard themselves as superior to the paramahamsa-s and nāgā-s. Bhāratī-s are to be found amongst both dāṇḍī, paramahamsa-s and nāgā-s, while the non-dāṇḍī lineages appear to also admit lower-caste initiates. It is seems probable that when the akhādā-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 arms. Many of these may have been recruited from lower castes (see Chapter 7).

Amongst the akhādā-s, my research has made clear that it is 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 akhādā-s, such as the Nīrāñjani, 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 dāṇḍī samnyāsī-s, many sādhus, particularly those wandering, are from lower castes.

1.3 Subdivisions within the Daśanāmī order: Dāṇḍī  

Dāṇḍī-s are sometimes referred to as śāstradhārī-s, ‘scripture holders’, or as dāṇḍadhārī-s,  

56 See Wilson (1861:197); Oman (1903:161); Anantakrishna Iyer (1930:255); Kane (HDS Vol.2:951); Tripathi (1978:64-67); Sinha and Saraswati (1978:69). Hartsukker (1993:31) claims that Āśramas are of solely Brahman backgrounds, and that Brahmans predominate in the Tirtha, Bhāratī and Saraswati sub-sects. There are five main southern divisions (Panc-Dravida) 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-Gauda). There are numerous further sub-divisions, and yet further sub-divisions of those. In the south are: Mahārāṣṭra (12 sub-divisions), Tailāṅga (or Āndhra) (8), Drāvida (6), Karnāṭak (7) and Gūrjara (84). The five northern divisions are the Sāravat (4), Gauḍ (15), Kāṅkūbja (or Kanaulja or Kānyakubja) (5), Maṭhila (4) and Uṭkala (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).

57 See Chapter 7.

58 See Sarkar (1958). Many nāgā Giris figure in Sarkar’s account; also mentioned (p. 266) are three battalions of Purī-s and one of Bhārati-s, in the service of the Jodhpur state in the latter half of the eighteenth century.

59 Tripathi’s (1978:88) survey elicited a figure of 8.4% for sādhus with disabilities.

60 The openness of renunciate orders to low-caste initiates varies from order to order. Rāmnāmī sādhus, for example, are almost exclusively low-caste, while one branch of the usually strictly Brahmanical Śrī Vaiṣṇavas, the sāttā ekākā-s were an order of celibate sūdṛa-s 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 (dāṇḍī) samnyāsī-s are high-caste, many nāgā-s and other wandering sādhus are low-caste.
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 (rūdhivādī), and often maintain deep caste prejudices. They generally disassociate themselves from the Daśanāmīs of the akhāḍās, tending to regard themselves as the ‘true samnyāsīs’. Dandīs take initiation from a guru from a dandī mātha, while paramahamsa-s usually take initiation from a Mahāmanḍāleśvara of an akhāḍā. Common to both the monastic and nāgā 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.

Dandī mātha-s are nominally affiliated to one of the four (or five) main mātha-s (piṭha-s) supposedly established by Śaṅkarācārya. Although dandī-s generally acknowledge the affiliation of their mātha to a piṭha with some pride, apart from branch-mātha-s of the main piṭha-s, dandī mātha-s function independently, with no connection to the piṭha to which they may be nominally affiliated. The greatest concentration of dandī-s is to be found in Banaras

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61 During the Māgh Mela at Allahabad in 2002, I visited camps of dandī-s for around ten days, interviewing numerous sādhus.

62 See Sinha and Sarasvati (1978:70): dandī-s from one of the five main northern Brahmanical castes neither eat nor reside in the same mātha-s with those from the five main southern Brahmanical castes. Tamils and Keralites do not associate with members of either group of Brahmins. Further, amongst the gauda Brahmans of Uttar Pradesh there is a further sub-division, the Kāṇyakubj—from Kanauj, one of the five main divisions of northern Brahmins, see Sherring (1872:23)—and Sarypari, who do not dine together in the mātha-s. Dandī mātha-s also maintain certain rules about the succession of the gaddī. At the Machilibandar mātha, only a Saryupāri/Sarjupāri (one of the five main divisions of Kāṇyakubj Brahmans) can accede, whereas the dandī mātha at Pushkar only appoints Kāṇyakubj ascetics.

63 I have even heard dandī-s remark that “we are not Daśanāmīs”, emphasising their non-identification with the akhāḍās.

64 The dandī-s whom I have interviewed regard the southern piṭha of Śrīgeri as genuine and do not recognise the Kāñcipuram piṭha.
where they have many mathas, and where between approximately twenty-five and fifty percent of all dandi-s are to be found (Sawyer 1993:159), forming approximately one fifth of the ascetic population. At the Māgh Mela in Allahabad in 2002, around seventy dandi mathas were camped, the largest camp being that of the Machlibandar ('fish-monkey') Math which was represented by the six mathas it owns in Banaras, where it has its headquarters.

Dandi-s have usually been householders before becoming samnyāsī-ś, and on initiation to the order—but before the final rite of samnyāśa—they are given one of four brahma-cāri names; either Svarūp, Prakāśa, Ānanda or Caitanya. The name given usually depends on which of the four main pītha-s the matha—via which the candidate was initiated—is nominally affiliated to. Dandi-s will have been initiated by a dandi guru, usually a Mahāmanḍalēśvara, but in rare cases directly by a Śaṅkarācārya at one of the four important pītha-s.

Sinha and Saraswati (1978:68-72) report 37 dandi mathas in nine of the districts of Banaras, 23 affiliated to the Śrīradā pītha, of Dwārakā, and 14 to the Śrīgeri pītha. Surprisingly, none of the Banaras dandi mathas are associated with the Govardhan pītha of Puri or with the Jyotī pītha of Jyōśimath. According to the scheme presented in the normative texts of the Daśanāmis, the Mathānāyā, Mahānūsāsanam etc., the mathas of Banaras should be under the jurisdiction of the Jyotī pītha of Jyōśimath. Four of the mathas claim to have been established before the fifteenth century, whereas 27 were most probably built between 1800 and 1968. Only three dandi mathas have been built since independence, whereas the number of paramahamsa mathas 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 śāiva samnyāṣīs constitute 48.8%. Dandi-s, numbering 239, form approximately one fifth of the ascetic population. According to Tripathi (1978:67), in Banaras there are twenty-eight mathas managed by dandi-s and fifteen managed by paramahamsā-s. The two groups are said not to be on good terms and do not take meals together.

Sawyer (1993:163), notes that mathas 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 mathas included in Appendix 2 of Sinha and Saraswati's book no longer exist, while new institutions have arisen since the time of their study. Sawyer (1993:171) maintains that the largest dandi 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 dandi-samnyāṣīs in India today.

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

The name 'Machlibandar' derives from a story about the land which is the headquarters of the matha in Nagwa, 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, Sītāpur, Citrakūṭ, Dādri (Haryana), Karnal (Haryana) Kurukṣetra and Kānpūr. The current chief guru is Kailāśa Bhusār Āśrama.
Like all Daśanāmīs, \textit{paramahamsa-s} acknowledge that Śaṅkara founded four \textit{pīṭha-s}, yet, similarly to the \textit{danda-s}, their affiliation to a \textit{pīṭha} has virtually no practical relevance. However, their affiliation to an \textit{akhāḍā} is significant, as it derives either from their own \textit{sannyāsa} initiation—performed by a Mahāmāndalesvara of an \textit{akhāḍā}—or from a historical connection, via the \textit{paramparā} of their guru, whose own guru or guru’s guru may have been in an \textit{akhāḍā}. \textit{Paramahamsa-s} generally reside in \textit{matha-s} that have little connection or no connection with the life of the \textit{akhāḍā}, and apart from some few \textit{paramahamsa-s} who may participate in the life of an \textit{akhāḍā} with a view to becoming \textit{nāgā}—which requires a further initiatory rite—the inclusion of \textit{paramahamsa-s} in the ‘military wing’ of the Daśanāmīs simply stems from their initiation from an \textit{akhāḍā}. Although not usually involved, \textit{paramahamsa-s} may actively participate in the life of the \textit{akhāḍā} on certain occasions, such as during \textit{bhandāra-s} (communal feasts with the distribution of alms), which may be for a single \textit{akhāḍā} or for several together. They take place on particular holy days and when an ascetic succeeds to the \textit{gaddī} of the \textit{matha}, during which rite the successor is presented with a scarf (\textit{cādar}) by the \textit{sādhu-s} present.

The \textit{paramahamsa-s} have the greatest number of ascetics and \textit{matha-s} in Banaras, the \textit{matha-s} comprising one fifth of all the \textit{matha-s} there (Sinha and Sarasvati 1978:72–81). Seven of the \textit{paramahamsa matha-s} admit women \textit{sādhu-s} (also known as \textit{avadhūtīn}), two of which are exclusively female, five being mixed male and female. All the \textit{matha-s} are reported to come from Bengal and Nepal. The author’s fieldwork has established that some also come from the Kumaun area of Uttar Pradesh. In contrast to the \textit{danda-s} of Banaras, who run only one educational institution, the Dharma Saṅgha Śikṣā Mandala,

\textsuperscript{69} In a number of classical texts, \textit{paramahamsa} is a term also used, in an idealised sense, to refer to the highest category of renouncer (see Appendix 8).

\textsuperscript{70} Sinha and Sarasvati found that the 296 \textit{paramahamsa-s} of Banaras are affiliated to three \textit{akhāḍā-s}, the Jūnā, Nirāṭsanī and Nirvāṇi (or Mahānirvāṇi), over 50% belonging to the Nirvāṇi \textit{akhāḍā}.

\textsuperscript{71} There are fifty-seven \textit{paramahamsa matha-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 \textit{paramahamsa} is the fastest growing, a new \textit{matha} being founded, on average, every two years.

\textsuperscript{72} This term is sometimes used derogatorily, as an \textit{avadhūtin} is traditionally the female partner of a Tantric practitioner.
which is in decline, the *paramahamsa*-s run five Sanskrit *pathashala*-s.\(^{73}\) 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 *akhaḍa*-s, and the curtailment of their activities. It seems that some individuals who had been actively involved in the mercenary activities of the *akhaḍa*-s had accumulated considerable 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 *paramahamsa*-s and the *akhaḍa*-s, particularly in the Gangetic heartland of their activities. At that time, some of the *paramahamsa*-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.\(^{74}\) They also note that *mahant*-s often have histories of affiliations and initiations into more than one *akhaḍa*,\(^{75}\) sometimes as a consequence of internal disagreements. Kane (HDS Vol.2:972–973) also records several of the numerous legal disputes that have engaged *samnyasī*-s over the centuries.\(^{76}\) 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...*

\(^{73}\) The oldest and most efficient is the Samnyāsī Sanskrit Mahāvidyālaya, run by the Aparnāth *matha* and established in 1906 by Svāmī Gobindāndandaś Maharāja Maṇḍaleśvara. The students who have passed through this institution include not only *samnyāsī*-s but also students from the Sikh-derived Udasī and Nirmāla orders. Many of the *samnyāsī*-s have become eminent Maṇḍaleśvaraś. Sinha and Saraswati (1978:78) note that in 1957, when the institution celebrated its Golden Jubilee, it emerged that practically all the Maṇḍaleśvaraś of that time had been its students.

\(^{74}\) 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.

\(^{75}\) Confirmed by the author.

\(^{76}\) Derrett (1974:67) also comments on the frequency with which disputes over the property of *matha*-s end up in court. Kane (HDS Vol.2:810–911) 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 *devata* (the technical owner of the temple or property) and the *sebait* (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.
1.5 ‘Paramahaṃsa’ and ‘Daśanāmī’ as categories

A tripartite division amongst the Daśanāmīs has been discussed. However, it needs to be considered that in some instances there are branches of samnyāsīs and Daśanāmīs that are but tangentially connected with the core Daśanāmī tradition. By way of illustration, there are other matha-s in Banaras founded in the name of well-known paramahamsa-s, notably Tailangā Svāmī and Harihār Bābā, but disciples of those orders are not recognised as either Daśanāmīs or as paramahamsa-s. Similarly, the final initiation—leading to his nirvikalpa-samādhi—of the famous Bengali Tantric, Gadādhara Caṭṭopādhyāya (1836–1886), who was given the name Rāmakṛṣṇa Paramahamsa, was performed by Tōta Purī, who belonged to the Mahānirvāṇī akhāḍā. However, the order of samnyāsīs 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 ‘paramahamsa’.

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 the guru-paramparā. As an example, we might consider the Daśanāmī samnyāsīs of the Handiya Baba Yogalaya. When asked about which kind of sādhu they are, they will usually say “Daśanāmī” or “samnyāsī”, invariably qualifying the remark that...
they are devotees of Handiya, who died in 1954. Further, some, but not all, informed me that they were "Jūnā akhāḍā". The current disciples of Handiya Bābā took direct initiation into samnyāsa from their guru, Bīṣṇudevānand, who in turn was initiated by Handiya Bābā. It seems most probable, though I was unable to establish this, that Yogānandsarasvatī (the guru of the Mahārājā of Darbāṅga) was initiated into the Jūnā akhāḍā, and hence the current identification with the Jūnā akhāḍā, even though the current disciples of Handiya Bābā have not been initiated by, nor do they have anything to do with, the Jūnā akhāḍā. Thus, in terms of their own self-identification, the samnyāsīs will say that they are Daśanāmī and, perhaps, Jūnā akhāḍā, as their lineage traces back through the Jūnā akhāḍā. However, the disciples of Handiya Bābā, were not initiated via an akhāḍā or a dandī matha, nor are they Daśanāmī dandīs, paramahamsās or nāgās, criteria outsiders may use for identifying Daśanāmī samnyāsīs. Yet the disciples' claim to being Daśanāmī is, in their view, legitimised through lineage.

Another example, of which there are many, of a samnyāś lineage which traces its ancestry to Śaṅkarācārya, and which might be similarly described as Daśanāmī, is the lineage of the Kailāś 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 Mahāmanḍaḷesvara 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 samnyāsīs, and many have one of the 'ten names'.

Sarkar (1958:94) mentions several Daśanāmī institutions, including the Gītā Mandir, established at Ahmadabad, Baroda and other cities by Svāmī Vidyānanda, who was a nāgā

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Handiya means 'small clay pot', which Handiya Bābā always carried and in which he collected alms. By all accounts he was a great yogī who lived simply for around fifty years near Trivenī Bandh, feeding people when he could and teaching hatha-yoga techniques for curing the sick. For an account of his life and legacy, see Bishnudevanand, 1977.

His samādhi was erected in that year, around which an āśrama has been constructed. The resident samnyāsīs of the āśrama perform daily observances and meditation at the samādhi. Handiya Bābā learned yoga from Yogānandsarasvatī, who was guru to the Mahārājā of Darbāṅga, Bihār, and had four disciples, Bīṣṇudevānandsarasvatī, Bhagavatānandsarasvatī, Sāhajānandsarasvatī and Pumyānandsarasvatī. Bīṣṇudevānandsarasvatī is said to have initiated twenty-five men, five of whom were his main disciples. Two of those, Sadānand 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.)

Interview with Brahmacārī Uttamananda, 4.03.02. For information on the traditions of the Kailāś Āśram, see Vidyānanda Giri (1983).
of the Nirvāṇī akhāḍā; a matha at Amritsār, founded by Svāmī Kṛṣṇānanda, and a matha founded at Kankhal by Svāmī Bhagavatānanda, who joins the nāgās of the Nirvāṇī akhāḍā at Kumbha Melās. The main connections that tie all these institutions together are linkages of guru-parampara-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, Daśanāmī-s are usually given one of the ‘ten names’.

Paramahamsa-s may then take a further initiation to become a nāgā of an akhāḍā. Akhāḍā is a technical name for the institutions governing the nāgās, and also has the sense of ‘wrestling ring’ and ‘military formation’, where nāgās train for fighting. These arenas are separate from the large network of traditional wrestling akhāḍā-s which are training institutions with their own history, gurus and organisation. A distinguishing feature of life in several of the nāgā akhāḍā-s, notably the Jūnā akhāḍā, 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 bhang, a preparation of the leaves of the plant.

At Kumbha Melās, Mahāmāndalesvaras and usually one or more of the reigning Śaṅkarācāryas preside over samnyāsa initiations at large formal ceremonies. However, many Mahāmāndalesvaras are not affiliated to the seven akhāḍā-s of the Daśanāmī order. Most are the heads of āśrama-s located in north India. Around two hundred

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83 The organisation has a press, Gītā Dharma Press, at Banaras.
84 However, an exception are Daśanāmī-s from the Agni akhāḍā, (one of the seven nāgā akhāḍā-s), who do not ever take one of the ‘ten names’. Similarly to the danḍī-s, they are given one of the four brahmacārī names (Svarūp, Prakāśa, Ānanda or Caitanya), depending on nominal pītha affiliation.
85 See Alter (1992) for an account of Indian wrestling. There are around 150 akhāḍā-s in Banaras, and around 20 to 30 in surrounding areas. The larger akhāḍā-s have 50 to 60 members, most wrestlers being relatively low-caste. Akhāḍā-s specialise in different techniques, such as weights, clubs or maces. The wrestlers’ patron deity is Hanumān.
86 The cannabis is smoked either in the form of dried buds of the female plant (gañjā), which is grown in many regions of the subcontinent, or in the form of a resin (caraś), rubbed by hand from the buds of the female plant. Caraś 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 begin smoking heavily at 4.00 or 5.00 a.m. After noon, they usually rest for few hours, resuming smoking in the late afternoon, until evening or the early hours of the morning. Usually, they do not smoke for a couple of hours after eating.
87 A survey of most of the camps of the Mahāmāndalesvaras at the Allahabad Kumbha Melā in 2001 revealed that their main āśrama-s are most commonly situated in Delhi, Haridvār, Kaṅkhal, Rṣīkeś, Banaras, Allahabad, Ujjain and Chitrakoot.
Mahāmāndalesvaras attended the 2001 Kumbha Melā but only four or five dozen are affiliated to the Daśanāmī akhāḍās. Several informants maintained that there were more than thirty Mahāmāndalesvaras affiliated to the Mahānirvāṇī akhāḍā, the largest number for any of the akhāḍās. Those Mahāmāndalesvaras who are affiliated to the akhāḍās, 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 akhāḍās, only being consulted in extreme or unusual circumstances. Many, however, will have spent time as a sādhu in an akhāḍā before becoming established as a Mahāmāndalesvara in charge of an institution.

Traditionally, nāga initiation was three years (but sometimes between two and twelve years) after the samnyāsa initiation. After samnyāsa but before being nāga, a samnyāsi within an akhāḍā is known as a vastradhāra ('wearer of cloth'). This is in distinction from the nāga-s who are traditionally naked, only covered with ash from the dhūni. These days, however, most wear loin-cloths in public, and many wear cloth of the traditional samnyāsi orange, or sometimes black. The vibhūti from their dhūni is one of the most common offerings to visiting devotees or pilgrims, who generally believe in its magical and restorative properties. These days, nāga initiation usually occurs a day or two after the samnyāsa initiation. It is performed, usually at a Kumbha Melā, by a mahant belonging to the akhāḍā to which the nāga will be affiliated. Nāga-s train, to a limited extent, in weapons, fighting and wrestling in an akhāḍā. The occasion of the Kumbha Melā is the preeminent event in the calendar of the Daśanāmīs, particularly for the akhāḍās, when initiations and important meetings take place and decisions relating to the activities of the akhāḍā are made. During a crisis, such as when a mahant dies, the members of the akhāḍā will meet and attempt to

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

89 The ‘holy ash’ worn by nāga-s is known as vibhūti (also meaning ‘majesty’, ‘dignity’ or ‘superhuman power’), or bhabhūti, or bhasm(a). Besides its religious associations, ash protects against the cold and wards off insects. Although nāga-s may use ash straight from a dhūni 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.

90 Martial training also has a long history in Kerala. The art of kalari-payattu was first systematised by Brahmans and ksatriya-s around the eleventh century, during a period of wars between the Ceras, Cōḷas 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 Bhadrakālī or Bhagavati), Śiva-Śakti combined, Ganapati, past gurus who go back to Paraśurāma and Drona, Hanumān, Ayyappan, and local heroes or ancestors (Zarrilli 1998:67–78).
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 (akhādās), which are found to house ninety-one ascetics, who are members of one of the seven major akhādās. The akhādās 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, Gūdaḍa (two). A total of six female nāgās are reported, three belonging to the Jūnā akhādā and three belonging to the Ānanda akhādā. Five of the female nāgās (or avadhnūṭins) are reported to have come from Nepal and one from Bengal. All were aged over thirty-five, and in the akhādās of Banaras they were residing with the males.

The akhādās are organised according to what is called the pancayatī system, meaning that the organisation is run by elected representatives. One may see at the gateway of all akhādās throughout India the prefix ‘Śrī pañc ... akhādā’. Although Sinha and Sarasvati (1978:196) acknowledge that succession to the leadership of the akhādā is through lineage—being in accordance with the mutual madhī (lineage) of the guru and successor—they also make a substantial claim about the democratic nature of the akhādās, 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 thānapati is opened only in the presence of two other ascetics.

According to Sadananda Giri (1976:27), in the akhādās the relationship between nāgās and their gurus is described as the relationship of siddha-sādhaka. He claims that it

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91 Fourteen were founded between 1800 and 1968, five trace their origin to the sixteenth or seventeenth century, and five to between the ninth and eleventh century.

92 The Gūdaḍa akhādā is recorded as having two male ascetics. The mention of this akhādā is anomalous as I have found no record of it in either other published sources or during interviews conducted in the field. It is not currently a recognised Daśānāṁī akhādā. Its identity is analysed in the following chapter.

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

94 Female membership of the Ānanda akhādā is not in evidence currently. Contemporary female nāgās belong exclusively to the Jūnā akhādā.

95 Sinha and Sarasvati report, somewhat confusingly, that one akhādā is occupied exclusively by female nāgās, but supply no further information. It is most probable that females referred to are those in the female branch of the Jūnā akhādā.

96 Madhī is a technical term for a subdivision within the akhādā (see Ch.2.2).

97 One of the more important officials within the akhādā with a responsibility, amongst others, for the welfare of the tutelary deity of the akhādā (see below).
differs somewhat from the guru-celā relationship found in some other sects, whereby the disciple is exclusively devoted to the guru, also claiming that in the Daśanāmī ahaḍas no one is formally a disciple of anyone else. Dansṛ-s, who are outside the ahaḍā, and those of the Agni Akaṭā (one of the seven ahaḍas), specifically maintain the guru-celā relationship, and the usual hierarchy of guru and disciple. In the other ahaḍas, however, the initiating samnyāsī does not, in the technical terminology employed by the ahaḍas, become the guru of the initiate, the term ‘guru’ being reserved for the presiding deity of the ahaḍā. A nāgā is usually attached to a senior ascetic who becomes his sādha-kṛ-guru. The siddha-sādha 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 organisations for the democratic election of mahānt-s and other officials—which takes place during Kumbha Melās,⁹⁸ and which is a distinguishing feature of nāgā social life—the important social structures within the ahaḍa-s are hierarchical.⁹⁹ While paramahamsa-s and junior nāgā samnyāsī-s or mahānt-s may serve other nāgā samnyāsī-s or mahānt-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.)¹⁰⁰ 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 renunciate path. Although several commentators have been cited who claim that

⁹⁸ Witnessed by the author at the 2001 Kumbha Melā.
⁹⁹ Dazeys (1987:557; 1990:309) also endorses Sinha and Saraswati’s suggestion that relationships within the ahaḍa-s are democratic and non-hierarchical, noting that the nāgā-s are guru-bhāj-s (‘brothers’) under a guru, but the real guru of the ahaḍā is the presiding deity of the ahaḍā. However, Dazeys (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 ahaḍā 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 ahaḍā to see both the clear hierarchical ordering amongst nāgā-s and mahānt-s and also the enormous respect accorded to the human gurus within the ahaḍā.
¹⁰⁰ Digambara (lit. ‘sky-clad’) is an epithet of Śiva and also the name of one of the two main branches of Jainism (see Dundas 2002).
the akhādās function, essentially, in a non-hierarchical way, it is evident that clear hierarchies of both spiritual and practical authority operate between nāgās and within the akhādās.

In general, nāgās 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 nāgās and that stipends are paid to all nāgās, usually by the thānāpati of the nāgā's akhādā. As a consequence of a combination of mercenary, banking, smuggling and other mercantile activity—which is outlined in Chapter 7—the samnyāsi akhādās had, by the middle of the nineteenth century, accumulated extensive properties and large sums of money. Many princely states, such as Kacch, Jodhpur, Baroda, Indore and Gwalior used to pay money to the akhādās 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 akhādās, the structures of which are the main focus of the following chapter.
CHAPTER 2: AKHĀDĀS AND DAŚANĀMĪ FUNCTIONARIES

2.1 The akhādās

While Daśanāmī dandēs are affiliated to their own monastic matha-s, the other wing of the Daśanāmīs (comprising paramahamsa-s and nāgā-s) are affiliated to one of the seven extant Daśanāmī akhādās. In this chapter, the overall hierarchy of the Daśanāmī akhādā-s will be considered, and some brief comparisons with akhādā-s of other orders will also be noted. It is apparent that the Daśanāmī akhādā-s 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 akhādā members are nāgā, the formation and functioning of the akhādā-s being fully evident at Kumbha Mela-s.² At the Allahabad Kumbha Mela, 2001, a total of thirteen akhādā-s were represented. These are the extant akhādā-s of the subcontinent.³ Seven of these are the śaiva Daśanāmī akhādā-s, namely the Nirajjana, Jūnā, Mahānirvāṇī, Ānand, Āvāhan, Atal and Agni.⁴ Besides these, there are three vaisnava anī-s:⁵ the Digambara, Nirvāṇī⁶ and Nirmohī, all of which are of the Rāmānandī order.⁷

¹ See Ch. 7 and Appendix 6.
² The Kumbha Mela, the largest festival on earth, is attended by the majority of sādhus 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 Kumbha Mela (Haridvar, Ujjain, Allahabad and Nāsik), it seems that the linking of the four sites (as sites of the Kumbha Mela), 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; 2002). Appendix 3 of this thesis reviews the work of these and other scholars.
³ Sarkar (1958:107) cites a report by Mr. T. Benson, on the Kumbha Mela of 1882. He describes six “sects” of akhādā-s that were present: 1. Nirvāṇī nāgā gosain-s; 2. Nirajjanī, associated with the Jūnā; 3. Three sects of Vairāgī; 4. Choṭā Udāsin; 5. Barā Udāsin, with the Bandhua (?) akhādā. 6. Nirmala, with the Viṃḍāvānī (?)).
⁴ Members of some of the akhādā-s may sometimes be identified by hairstyle, the Nirajjana-tying their jata (dreadlocks) in the middle, the Jūnā on the left, and the Nirvāṇī on the right.
⁵ In vaisnava terminology the equivalent of a Daśanāmī akhādā is referred to as anī (“army corps”), akhādā referring to a sub-division of an anī.
⁶ This akhādā should not be confused with the Mahānirvāṇī Daśanāmī akhādā which is also sometimes referred to as the Nirvāṇī akhādā
⁷ The Rāmānandī sampradāya is constituted of both lay and sādhu communities, and is one of the four current vaisnava sampradāyas (catuḥ sampradāyas), a classification of four vaisnava orders that has changed twice during the last four centuries. Since 1938, when the Rāmānandīs split from the Rāmanujas, the four vaisnava sampradāyas have been constituted as follows (confirmed during fieldwork in 2001. For a brief resumé of the history and structure of the catuḥ sampradāyas, see Appendix 4):
   1). Śrī (or Rāmānuja or Nāthamuni) / Caudah [=14] Bhāī Mahā-Tyāgī.
   2). Rāmānandī (or Dakor).
(Rāmānandī nāgās are also referred to as Bairāgī or Vairāgī). The other three (of the thirteen) extant akhādās are affiliated to the Sikh tradition. Two of these are Udāsin akhādās, the Barā (large) Udāsin (or Barāpāficayati Udāsin) and the Choṭā (small) Udāsin (or Nayāpāficayati Udāsin). The other Sikh-affiliated akhādā is the Nirmala akhādā. Both the Udāsin akhādās and the Nirmala akhādā are sects which have historical connections with the Sikh movement but which nowadays function as independent organisations. Besides the thirteen, previously militant, akhādās so far mentioned, the Nāths are another sect which had political and military liaisons with various akhādās in different periods. The Nāths, however, camp at a distance from the other akhādās at Kumbha Melās, and bathe later than the other ‘orthodox’ akhādās. Despite the military background of all the akhādās, 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.

The nāgās of each Daśanāmī akhādā revere the bhālā (a fifteen to twenty-foot-long javelin), which is engraved with the signs of the respective deities of the akhādās and carried at the front of the arrival and bathing processions (syāh) at the Kumbha Melās by the chief mahant or by nāgās. The bhālā is usually kept in the headquarters of the akhādā it represents, but during Melās it is planted in the ground near the temporary

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8 Rāmānandī nāgās are generally known as tyāgīs, and have a lifestyle and appearance almost identical to that of Daśanāmī nāgās: see van der Veer (1987:688). A Rāmānandī disciple wishing to enter an akhādā has to pass through seven levels before he becomes a vaśīnava nāga, who is known as nāgā-atīt: 1. yatī, collects neem-sticks for his superiors, and wanders alone or with the Jamāt; 2. chora, serves, draws water and makes leaf-plates; 3. banāgīdār, looks after food stores, serves food and cleans nāgā-atīts’ utensils; 4. hucdānda, cooks, offers food to the deity, calls “Harīnār” (hence hucdānda), carries the insignia and flag of the akhādā, masters weapons; 5. mureṭhiyā, worships deities, supervises savak-s, calls “jay” (a sequence of calls uttered before undertaking any work), and is experienced in the use of weapons; 6. nāga, administers the akhādā, worships the deity, protects the sampadāya’s property, leads the Jamāt, and prepares for the Kumbha Melā; 7. atīt, decides important issues for the order and guides nāgās. It takes twelve years to become nāgā, after which he may vote in the akhādā, as a member of the parīc (see Sharma 1998:128–135). Nāgās are organised in four divisions (selli), according to where they were initiated, the divisions being: Haridvārī (at Haridvār), Ujjainīya (at Ujjain), Sāgarīya (at Gangā Sāgar, near Calcutta), and Basantīya (other places) (van der Veer 1988:139).

9 See Appendix 5 for further details.

10 An article appeared in an Allahabad newspaper (Dainik Jāgraṇ, Ilāhābād, 12 January 2001, p. 3) announcing the coming into being of the Akhand akhādā, a new akhādā instituted by Śvāmī Paramāṇand, who, along with ten others was made ‘Mahāmāṇḍalāśvarā’. The svāmī has an ever expanding aśrama on the outskirts of Haridvār, and is quite well known internationally. Whether the akhādā attracts many samnyāsīs remains to be seen.


12 See, for example, Purī (2001:198–210) on educational programmes fostered by the Mahānīvārī akhādā.
shrine for the tutelary deity, at the centre of the akhādā’s camping area. During processions, the current chief mahant of the akhādā is followed by, respectively, other mahants, old nāgās and recent nāgā initiates (tāṅg tōḍa).

According to Sarkar (1958:82), the earliest available information concerning the formation of the Daśanāmī akhādās comes from an oral tradition that can be dated to around 1750, and derives from Rajendra Gīrī who became famous in the affairs of the Delhi Sultanate. All the akhādās have a hereditary bard (bhāṭ) who can recite the oral history of the akhādā. Sarkar inspected a manuscript in the possession of the bhāṭ of the Nirvāṇī akhādā, detailing the foundation of the akhādās, the succession of pontiffs (mahants) and the battles that the akhādās fought. He estimated that the manuscript could not have been much more than fifty years old, and while admitting that the information is unreliable, gives the dates for the foundation of the akhādās, as below. Sarkar (1958:83) further cautions that the record (poṭhī) is from but one akhādā and that other akhādās may possess quite different records.

Notwithstanding Sarkar’s caution, his publication (1958:82–85) of the putative dates of the founding of the akhādās has entered many accounts, albeit inaccurately (see scheme below). 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. While it is probable that ascetic lineages do indeed go back to the seventh century or beyond, firm evidence for the founding of akhādās, and their identity with

13 Each Daśanāmī akhādā 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 sādhus do, then the recipient was regarded as friendly, but a refusal to do so was a sign of enmity. The shape of golā is round for the Nirājanī, līṅga-shaped for the Jūnā, four-cornered for the Nirvāṇī and octagonal for the Atal. Many of the sources, previously referred to for information on the Daśanāmīs, record this historical tradition. Purī (2001:137) provides mantras for the golā. However, from various inquiries made by this author, it is clear that the custom is not current and but vaguely understood by contemporary Daśanāmī samnyāsīs.

14 Nāgās initiated at Ujjain are known as khūnī (killer) nāgās, those initiated at Haridvār as barfānī (icy) nāgās, and those initiated at Prayāga as ṛajāṛā ṣavāṛī (lord of the king of kings) nāgās.

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

16 Purī (2001:83–90), a mahant of the Mahānirvāṇī akhādā, also gives the founding dates of the akhādās, citing evidence from hand-written poṭhīs. He claims that the first akhādā to be founded was the Āvāhan, in 603 Vikram (V. S.), the other akhādās 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 Śāṅkara was born in 44 BCE.) However, having provided precise dates for the founding of the akhādās and a list of the founding samnyāsīs, he remarks (p. 89) that some people are doubtful about the founding dates. But, he maintains, it is certain that the Mahānirvāṇī akhādā was established by the sixteenth century, even though according to his earlier account it was founded in 805 V. S. by eight mahapurūṣas connected with the Atal akhādā. In evidence, he cites a battle in Bihār in 1664 CE between Aurangzeb and the Mahānirvāṇī akhādā, who had come from Banaras.
lineages organised by Śaṅkara, cannot be found before the sixteenth century. Concerning the question of when orders of fighting samnyāsīs 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 akhādās of fighting ascetics, including the Udāsīn, Nirmala, Dādū, Bairāgī (Rāmānandī) and Daśanāmī orders, notwithstanding the latter’s claims to greater antiquity. It is suggested that during this period when the akhādās formed, the Daśanāmīs also formed their own distinct (and orthodox) identity, comprising ten lineages formed 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 akhādās, most frequently between Daśanāmī-samnyāsīs and Bairāgīs over bathing priorities at melās and rights to collect taxes from pilgrims. Despite rules being fixed concerning bathing priorities in the early twentieth century, fierce conflicts have persisted.

17 Intriguingly, all the akhādās 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 akhādā.

18 A conflict between samnyāsīs and Sufis is also recorded (see Dabistān 1843, Vol.2:231).

**AKHĀDĀS**, supposing founding dates *(Vikram Samvat - V. S.)* and Tutelary Deities

1. **Nirāñjani**, 960 V. S. [1904 CE]*, (Karttikēya), founded in Māṇḍavī (Kachh, Gujarat), Head Office in Prayāga (Dārāgaṇj), affiliated to Ānand, contains perhaps 3,000 *samnyāsīs* and 500 *nāgās*. Branches in Nāsik, Oṃkareśvar (Madhya Pradesh), Haridvār, Ujjain, Udaipur, Jvālāmukhī (Himachal Pradesh), Kāśī.

2. **Jūnā**, 1202 V. S. [Dattātreya [previously Bhairava]], founded at Kārn Prayāga (Uttaranchal), affiliated to Āvāhan, Head Office in Kāśī (Hanumān Ghāt), containing perhaps 4,000 to 5,000 *samnyāsīs*, mostly *nāgās*. Branches in Nāsik, Ujjain, Oṃkareśvar, Jūṅgādadh (Gujarat), Haridvār, Rāmēśvaram, Prayāga, Śrīnagar (Kashmir), Sri Lanka, Kathmandu (Nepal).

3. **Mahanirvāṇī**, 805 V. S. [1749 CE] (Kāpila Muni), founded at Garhkuṇḍa (Palāmāu Dist., Bihar), affiliated to Ātal, Head Office in Prayāga (Dārāgaṇj) contains about 1,000 *samnyāsīs* and 200 to 300 *nāgās*. Branches in

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20 The author visited the headquarters of all the Daśanāmī akhādās in Allahabad and Banaras for inquiries (during January and February 2002), and other branches in Haridvār, Oṃkareśvar, Jvālāmukhī and Jūṅgādadh. The information concerning the regional branches of the akhādās 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 akhādās relates to the most important branches. There are also many small mathās or temples owned by the akhādās that may be administered by a single functionary of an akhādā, which are not mentioned. From a number of quite unsatisfactory enquiries, an approximate estimate of the number of initiates is also given.

21 Dates according to Sarkar (1958:82-90).

22 To convert traditional (Vikram Samvat) 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.

23 Sarkar's scheme combines traditional dates, and in the case of some akhādās, 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 Niranjanī akhādā, given as 960 V. S., would, according to Sarkar's calculation, be 1903 CE, yet the presence of the Niranjanī akhādā was reported at the Kumbha Melā of 1840 by a Protestant missionary (Sinha and Saraswati 1978:86). See also Sadananda Giri (1976:22); Tripathi (1978:70); Sinha and Saraswati (1978:85); Dazey (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, *A/ Mahākumhha Viṣeṣaṇk, 14 January 2001*, the founding dates (CE) of the akhādās are Āvāhan, 547, by Miśā Giri and Dīnānāth Giri; Ātal, 647, by Vankhandhārātī, Sāgarbhārātī and Śvīnārvānābhārātī; Nīrṇaṇī, 649; Ānand, 855, by Kethā Giri and Rāmēśvārā Giri; Nīrṇaṇī, 904, by Māunī Sinh and Sarajūnāth Purusottama Giri; Jūnā, 1060, by Mōhāmā Giri, Sundar Giri and Māunī Digambār; Ātāl, 1149 [no founder mentioned]. Keemattām (1997:83) cites dates from *Pāvan Tittha Ḫriskeś* by Vamśidhār Pokuṁyāl (Rṣīkēś: Śrī Bhāratmandir Prakāśān 1986:35): Jūnā 1202; Āvāhan, 1547; Ātāl, 1646; Mahānirvāṇī, 1749; Ananda, 1856; Nīrṇaṇī, 1904.

24 Kāśī designates the Old City, around which the larger town of Banaras (Varanasi) has developed.

25 No specific place is mentioned.

26 The akhādā is usually referred to as the Mahānirvāṇī to distinguish it from the vaishnava Nīrṇaṇī akhādā which is one of the three nāgā akhādās of the Rāmānandi order.

27 Other sources give the founding place of the akhādā as Bajjānāth, Bihar.
Tryambakeśvara (Nāsik), Oṃkareśvar, Haridvār, Ujjain, Udaipur, Jvālāmukhī, Bhar (Akola), Kurukṣetra (Haryana), Kāśī.

4. **Ānand**, 912 V. S. (Sūrya), founded at Berār, Head Office in Kāśī (Manikarnika Ghāṭi),\(^{28}\) contains several hundred samnyāsīs, with perhaps 500 to 600 nāgās. Branches in Tryambakeśvar (nr. Nāsik, Maharashtra), Pune, Satara (Maharashtra), Bareli (Uttar Pradesh), Rāmpur (Uttar Pradesh), Gvalior, Mirzapūr (near Banaras), Betul (Madhyya Pradesh), Barabanki (near Lucknow).

5. **Āvāhan**, 603 V. S. [1547 CE] (Siddh Ganesa),\(^{29}\) Head Office in Kāśī (Daṣaśvamedha Ghāṭ), containing several thousand samnyāsīs, mostly nāgā. Branches in Bhuj (Kach, Gujarat), Bodh Gayā (Bihar), Jvālāmukhī, Haridvār.\(^{30}\)


7. **Agni**, 1426 V. S.\(^{31}\) (Gayatrī), Head Office in Kāśī (Rāj Ghāṭ). Branches in Jūnāgadh, Bareli, Ahmadābād, Jhānsī, Haridvār, Samastipur (Bihar), Bhopal, Indore, Ujjain, Jāmnagar (Gujarat) and Tryambakeśvar, containing 1,000 to 2,000 samnyāsīs.

The Daśanāmīs akhādās have particular ties with each other, though they are not historically invariable.\(^{32}\) The leading akhādās, in terms of members and property, are the Nirafijānī and Jūnā, the Jūnā being the oldest and having the largest number of nāgās. The other two akhādās that have a high percentage of nāgās are the Nirafijānī and the Mahānirvāṇī. The seventh akhādā, the Agni akhādā, is supposed to have been founded in 1368 CE and has fifteen branches. As the other akhādās, it is nominally śaiva in orientation. All members are life-long celibates and refer to themselves as brahmacārī, distinguishing themselves, by that name, from the other akhādās. (Dandīs also refer to themselves as brahmacārī to distinguish themselves from other Daśanāmī samnyāsīs.)

\(^{28}\) While the Kāśī branch is officially the headquarters of the Ānand akhādā, the branch at Bareli (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.

\(^{29}\) It is unclear where this akhādā is supposed to have been founded.

\(^{30}\) Sinha and Saraswati add to this list, “sundry centres in South India”, without being specific.

\(^{31}\) This date is supplied by Sadānanda Giri (1976:42) with no reference, but maintained by several samnyāsīs in the akhādā.

\(^{32}\) Sinha and Saraswati (1978:84) note that after the 1954 Kumbh Mela the Jūnā and Nirafijānī came closer together. Relations between the Nirvāṇī and Ātal are said to have become somewhat distant owing to a dispute concerning the selection of a female Mandāleśvara. The current ties between akhādās are: Āvāhan and Jūnā; Ānand and Nirafijānī; Ātal and (Mahā) Nirvāṇī. The Agni akhādā always functions independently.
themselves as brahmacārī to distinguish themselves from other Daṣanāmī samnyāsīs.)
Being known as brahmacārīs means, also, that members of the Agni akhādā come, at least theoretically, from a Brahan caste. Unlike the other akhādās, which are comprised largely of nāgās, none of the members of the Agni akhādā are nāgā. The Agni akhādā is not connected to the madhī33 network of the other akhādās and only attained equal status with the other samnyāsī akhādās in 1971 when, during the Ādhā Kumbha Meḷā at Prayāga, Brahmacārī Prakāśānanda was installed as the Mahāmanḍaleśvara of the akhādā. There are currently three Mahāmanḍaleśvaras affiliated to the Agni akhādā, the ācārya-guru residing in Āmarkantak (Madhya Pradesh).34 Unlike in the other akhādās, a guru will take only one celli, in the manner common to many other renunciative lineages. Samnyāsīs of the Agni akhādā do not take one of the usual Daṣanāmī ‘ten names’, instead taking one of the names of what they describe as brahmacārī gotra-s, namely Ananda, Caitan, Svarup or Prakasa.

Besides the seven akhādā-s mentioned above, some commentators discuss other akhādā, none of which are now recognised amongst Daṣanāmīs. These akhādā-s have been either confused with another branch of the Daṣanāmīs, are now defunct, or are what seem to have been branches of Nāths. Ghurye (1964:106–108) states that besides the usual six akhādā-s, there are four other akhādā-s: the Agan, Alakhya,35 Śūkhaḍa and Gūḍaḍa akhādā-s, all of which are said to be attached to the Jūnā akhādā. He also considers it is possible that three ‘akhādā-s’, the Śūkhaḍa, Ükhaḍa and another so-called akhādā, the Rūkhaḍa, mentioned by Wilson (1861:148-149)—who also mentions the Bhukaḍa and Kukaḍa akhādā-s but gives no details—are perhaps all to be considered as just one akhādā, the Śūkhaḍa, which seems to have been an order of

33 See following section.
34 The Agni akhādā is nominally under the jurisdiction of the Dvārakā pītha, and traces its origin to the four sons of Brahmā: Sanaka, Sanatkumāra, Sanandana and Sanatana, dividing its members (theoretically) between three areas: Narmadākhand (Narmada), Uttarākhand (northern), and Naisthika (‘faithful’). Some dāndi-samnyāś-s reported to the author that the Agni akhādā functions as the akhādā for the dānd-s. However, this is denied by the samnyāś-s of the Agni akhādā.
35 The Agan akhādā (recognised by Ghurye as a cognate of the Sanskrit term agni) is said not to be connected with “proper” Daṣanāmīs or nāgā-s. Even though the Agni akhādā did not gain full status as an akhādā until 1971, it seems highly unlikely that the Agni sub-branch did not consider themselves as Daṣanāmīs at the time Ghurye was writing, in the early nineteen-fifties. (Sinha and Saraswati (1978:86) note that the Agni akhādā was built in Banaras in 1957.) Ghurye admits puzzlement over the Alakhya akhādā, noting that they beg for alms and carry long tongs. By way of clarification: the Alakhiyas may be seen at any large assembly of akhādā-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 Daṣanāmīs. A particular role they have is to sing and drum at melā-s, sometimes proceeding from one dhunī to the next, collecting flour and money for the akhādā in skull-shaped coconuts (kapa/d), singing on such themes as samnyāś-s life, God, and the delights of cannabis intoxication.
Nāths. Sinha and Saraswati (1987:82–83) also include in the list of Daśanāṁśī akhāḍās the Gūḍaḍa akhāḍā, said to have been founded in Kāśī in 1617, on the evidence of an inscription. This brings Sarasvati and Sinha's total number of Daśanāṁśī akhāḍās to eight. However, the Gūḍaḍa akhāḍā also appears to have been a sect of Nāths.

Several scholars have suggested that some of the nāgā lineages of the akhāḍās 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 samadhī of Bhatṛhari, in the fort at Chunār, Nāths and samnyāsīs from the Jūnā akhāḍā take turns officiating as priests and mahanśs. They mention the common worship of both Bhairava and Dattātreya by the Nāths and the Jūnā akhāḍā (who previously worshipped Bhairava, but now Dattātreya), the use of and reverence for the dhūnī (sacred fire) by both nāgās and Nāths, the common but not universal use of earrings, and the fact that many names that occur in the list of madhīs contain the ending 'nāth' (see Appendix 7). While it seems probable that Nāths and the Daśanāṁśī lineages of the akhāḍās 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 Daśanāṁśīs, 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

36 Grierson (1916:866–867) also discusses the Rūkhada, Sūkhada and Úkhaḍa divisions, believing them to be branches of the Kānpaṭa order of yogīs (Nāths or Nāth-Siddhas). For accounts of the Nāths, see Briggs (1982); Gold and Gold (1984); Bannerjea (1983, 1988); Vilēnāṭ (1988); Šrīvāstav (1994); Gold (1986, 1999); White (1996, 2001). See also Chapter 7.

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

38 Wilson (1861:148–149) and Briggs (1938:10–11) state that the Gūḍaḍas wear the earrings or a piece of wood passed through the lobe of the ear, as worn by the Kānpaṭa. Briggs adds that in one ear they may also wear a flat copper plate with the imprint of Gorakhaṅnath. They carry a small metal pan in which they burn scented wood. This is carried when begging. They are said to belong to the Āughar sect of Śaivism founded by a Daśanāṁśī named Brāhmaṅgiri, through the favour of Gorakhaṅnath. Dazey (1990:303), for example, comments that the nāgās were most likely a separate sect of śaiva ascetics who were converted to advaita philosophy and incorporated into the Daśanāṁśī fold early in the mediaeval period. However, he does not expand on this point.

39 See also Dazey (1990:305–306); Rigopoulos (1998:97). Visuvalingam (1989:159, 213 fn. 16) incorrectly attributes the view to Lorenzen (1972:46) that the Daśanāṁśīs may have been Kāpālīkas converted by Śāṅkara. Lorenzen castes doubt on that claim, first made by Ghurye (1964:104), particularly on the issue of the putative transition from the Kāpālīka faith (śā) to Vedānta. There are also connections between the Daśanāṁśīs 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 Daśanāṁśī samnyāś Bhakta Giri was the first to take initiation from Śrī Cand, the founder of the Udāsin panth (Sinha and Sarasvati 1978:138).
the adoption of Dattātreya to supplant the previous tutelary deity, Bhairava,\(^{41}\) represented the integration of radical ascetic lineages within a newly constituted and orthodox Daśanāmī order.

### 2.2 Madhī-s and dāvās

Six of the seven Daśanāmī akhādā-s (excluding the Agni akhādā) are essentially the main organisational bodies for the Daśanāmī nāgā-s, and comprise a network of a total of fifty-two madhī-s (a 'small hut' or 'temple' in Hindi), which function as lineages within the Daśanāmī akhādā-s. There is some inconsistency in the available literature concerning the identity of individual madhī-s and their significance.\(^{42}\) Dandīs, being outside the akhādā system in terms of allegiance and organisation, do not recognise the madhī 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 is constituted within the madhī-s of the akhādā, comprising the nāgā-s, many of the paramahamsa-s and associated samnyāsī-s. The other set of lineages is represented in the monastic traditions of the dandī-s. The lineages of the akhādā-s are also known as nād vamsē ('sound' lineage), as it is the mantra-guru who initiates the samnyāsī into the akhādā.\(^{43}\) The other lineage is known as the virajā vamsē. 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 madhī may have derived from the term matha,\(^{44}\) and it has been suggested by some commentators that there were fifty-two principal matha-s before the six nāgā akhādā-s were formed. Purī (2001:58) claims that the fifty-two (or fifty-one) madhī-s are based on fifty-two centres (kendra) that were adjacent to the fifty-two sākta-pītha-s,\(^{45}\) but that precise information connecting the pītha-s to the madhī-s is not available. He also comments that in colloquial langage, a sākta-pītha is referred to as devi ki madhī (madhī of the devi). While acknowledging the Vedānta philosophy of

\(^{41}\) Most commentators agree on the change of tutelary deity, but I have been unable to establish exactly when that took place.

\(^{42}\) See Appendix 7 for lists of madhī-s and dāvās.

\(^{43}\) See Ch. 3.2.

\(^{44}\) Ghurye (1964:106) maintains that madhī is a vernacular diminutive of matha.

Śaṅkara, Purī also maintains that Śaṅkara worshipped Śrī-vidyā (Tantra), and wrote related works. These days also, particular samnyāsīs are said to “worship the devī”, in other words, engage in some kind of Tantric practice.46

The fifty-two madhīs are further divided into either four or eight divisions (dāvā).47 each of which has several mahantīs. Dāvā means ‘claim’ and derives from voting procedures within the akhāḍā where the madhīs within a dāvā have equal voting rights during the process of electing officials and mahantīs within the akhāḍā. This takes place at Kumbha Melās, for all akhāḍās, every three or six years, when all official positions within the akhāḍā are subject to election. This is the only time when the dāvās have a practical significance.

Nāgās and the other samnyāsīs of the akhāḍā trace their lineage through the mahantīs of the dāvās, who belong to a particular madhī. Unlike the complete account of fifty-two distinct madhīs and eight dāvās, presented by several commentators, not all madhīs are currently represented at Kumbha Melās. Whereas the madhīs represent ‘real’ lineages of gurus and disciples, the dāvās are units of administration that function at Kumbha Melās for voting purposes. The madhīs are lineages of gurus, mahantīs and sādhus 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 to both subdivide and also, in some cases, 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-dāndī Daśanāmī māthā is headed a mahant whose lineage will be traced, at least theoretically, to a madhī.48 The madhīs are usually referred to by number, thus, for example, as the fourth or thirteenth madhī. Initiates know from the

46 In a recent personal communication, this was confirmed by a westerner who was initiated into the Juna ākāśa in March 2001. His nāgā guru and associates perform Tantric rites at their Himalayan āśrama.
47 See Appendix 7.
48 However, Purī (who is affiliated with the Mahānirvāṇī akhāḍā) also accounts (2001:58–59) for all the ‘ten names’ within the madhī scheme, despite the fact that the specifically dāndī lineages, namely Tīrthās, Āśrama and Sarasvatī (and half of the Bhāratīs) are usually not classified within the madhī system, as the dāndī tradition is distinct. According to Purī:
1. Tīrthas merged with two madhīs of the Girls.
2. Āśramas merged with two madhīs of the Girls. Thus, the original twenty-three madhīs of Girls were augmented by four madhīs, comprising Tīrthas and Āśramas, giving rise to the twenty-seven madhīs of Girls.
3. Aranyas merged with four madhīs of the Purīs. Thus, the original twelve madhīs of Purīs were augmented by four madhīs of Purīs.
4. Parvatas, Sāgaras and Sarasvatīs have no madhīs.
number which madhī and hence lineage is being referred to.49

It can be seen at a Kumbha Melā how the arrangement of the madhīs and dāvās is represented spatially. (It has been described to the author as representing a yantra.) When camping at the Kumbha Melā, there are four ropes attached to the roof of the small, temporary temple housing the mūrti of the akhāḍā. The ropes lead in the four cardinal directions, each divided sector (dāvā) representing groupings of the various madhīs. Representatives of the madhīs are put forward during election to offices within the akhāḍā. At Kumbha Melās, the dhūnīs of the sādhu-s are arranged in lines, all dhūnīs being positioned in one or another of the four (or sometimes eight) sections (dāvā) of camping area of an akhāḍā. (The dhūnīs are also referred to as madhīs.) Sādhus belonging to a particular madhī will be camped in an area alongside sādhus from that madhī or a related madhī. The related madhīs constitute a particular dāvā or

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49 The fifty-one (or fifty-two) madhīs currently are constituted as follows:

**Twenty-seven** of the madhīs are Giri; in one group are thirteen madhīs (Megnāth-panth); and in another group, **fourteen** madhīs (Āpānāth-panth).

One other madhī attached to the Giris is known as the *chota madhī*. (The activities of the members of this madhī are not regarded entirely favourably by other Daśanāṁī-śāṃnyāsīs.)

**Sixteen** of the madhīs are Purīs.

**Four** of the madhīs are Bharatīs

**Four** of the madhīs are Vanas.

**One** madhī is Lāmā.

The Lāmā madhī mentioned in the lists does not figure in the contemporary constitution of active Daśanāṁī lineages. However, one explanation (Lāl Purī 2001:58, 73) is that the Lāmā madhī was instituted in Tibet by one Ved Giri, whose guru is believed by some śāṃnyāsīs to have been Padmasambhava (=Kamal Giri: as in Sanskrit, kama and padma both mean 'lotus'). According to tradition, Padmasambhava—the famous Tantric yogi and siddha—was initiated into Buddhist Cakrāyoga by a dākini, came to Tibet in the eighth century at the invitation of King Khri-Strong-Idr-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 Thodol. 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 1997:198). As a siddha—who have a collective religious heritage spanning Nath, Mahānubhāva, Buddhist and Tantric traditions—it is not inconceivable that a lineage of 'Naths' deriving from Padmasambhava became the Lāmā madhī, though Padmasambhava is hagiographically ubiquitous.

The division of the madhīs (as above) is accepted, with minor differences, by most commentators. However, Purī (2001) disagrees with Rām Purī on one point. According to Rām Purī it is the Sarasvatīs who constitute one of the *car* madhīs (the other being the Bhāratī), while according to Purī, the two *car* madhīs constitute the Bhāratī and Vanas.
section of the akhāda

Initiates in particular madhīs may be grouped together as a panthi (meaning: ‘follower or master of a particular sect’). Thus, for example, amongst the madhīs of the Giris there are two subdivisions, known as the Meghnāth panthi and the Āpārnāth panthi. Initiates of madhī number four and madhī number ten belong to the Āpārnāth panthi, whereas the madhīs of the Giris which are grouped under the Rāmdattī and Rddhināthī dāvās are included within the Meghnāth panthi. In essence, the panthi-s are simply another indication of historical lineage.51

Purī (2001:58–59) maintains that the madhī-s were instituted “some generations” after Śaṅkara, but observes that there is disagreement about when that was. He believes that madhī-s were organised by the disciples of the four main disciples of Śaṅkara, the earliest being the Giri madhī-s that were instituted in the tenth century CE, followed in the next couple of centuries by the other madhī-s. According to Purī, an important figure in the early organisation of the madhī-s is Vaikuntha 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 pothī that is 250 to 300 years old, in the possession of the bhāt of the akhāda.

50 At Kumbha Melās the camping arrangements for the Jūnā akhāda are as follows: members of the sixteen lineages (solaḥ madhī) of Purī’s camp to the right of the entrance to the camp, in the north-east quarter; members of fourteen of the lineages of Giris (caudah madhī) camp in the north-western quarter; members of thirteen lineages (torah madhī) of the Giris camp in the south-west quarter; members of the four Bārātī and Sarasvatī lineages (cār madhī) camp to the left of the camp entrance, in the south-east quarter. Camped separately are the chota madhī, who, anecdotally, are described as the nāgā ‘mafia’. Often residing near railway stations, they are said to be armed and to have an extensive information network.

The four mahānts of the Jūnā akhāda camp at the four corners around the centrally located aṣṭadhatu-mūrtī (image made from eight metals) of Dattātreya, the tutelary deity of the akhāda. In the central area around the shrine, the weapons and strong-box of the akhāda are kept. The four sacred javelins (bhālā) of the akhāda-s are planted here: the Dattaprakāśa Bhālā from Ujjain; Sūryaprakāśa Bhālā from Prayāg; Candraprakāśa Bhālā from Nāsik; and the Bhairomprakāśa Bhālā from Haridvār. According to tradition, there are also four dhūṁfs: Dattamukhi, Ujjain; Sūryamukhi, Prayāg; Ajayanegh, Haridvār; and Gopāl, Nāsik (see Daś Nām Vams Vrīṣṇī).

51 90% of a settled caste of samnyāsi-s (all Giris) living to the east of Kathmandu, in Kattike (see Bouillier 1976; 1979) belong to what they describe as the “Āpārnāti thar” (Bouillier 1979:106), which is clearly a legacy of the Āpārnāth panthi. 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 Ankhari, Bouillier (1979:179) remarks that, although her list was not complete, she was informed of five functioning thars, the “Durganati, Ridhinati, Āpārnathi, Ankhari and Bodhla”. With the exception of the Ankhari, the other four thars feature (see above) in the conventional classification of the madhī-s of the Giris.
However, despite Puri’s claims regarding the antiquity of the madhā-s and akhāda-s, there is no real evidence that can be adduced that dates back more than three or four hundred years. The lineages (madhī-s) of the akhāda-s may in some instances have had a geographical connection—such as, for example Giris, Puris, Bhāratīs and Bans (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 Paṅc Daśanāmī akhāda organisation

Having examined the overall structure of the akhāda-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 akhāda-s is the Śrī Paṅc which consists of a group of nāgā-s and usually four or sometimes eight mahān-s (see below) from the akhāda. ‘Śrī Paṅc’ is also a formal appellation preceding the name of the akhāda and may be seen on the proscenium-style arch at the entrance to an akhāda. Representatives to the Śrī Paṅc are elected from all the groups of madhī-s within either four or eight of the dāva-s, depending on the constitution of the akhāda, and as we have seen, only theoretically represent all fifty-two madhī-s. Some of the madhī-s are these days effectively defunct and most akhāda-s are divided into four dāva-s, the exception being the Mahānirvāṇī, which is divided into eight dāva-s. The author’s inquiries during fieldwork indicated that despite the fact that the constitution and decision-making processes within the akhāda-s are somewhat more anarchic than some of the commentaries might indicate, a hierarchy of authority within the akhāda-s is universally recognised.

The Śrī Paṅc has been compared to the parliament of the akhāda-s. It gives the orders for initiating nāgā-s at Kumbha Melās, settles disputes between matha-s and individual nāgā-s. During Kumbha Melās the assembly of nāgā-s is known as the Śambhu Paṅc, which, ultimately, has the highest authority within the akhāda. However, it

52 Sadānanda Giri (1976:36) notes that the titles ‘Giri’, ‘Puri’, ‘Bhārati’ and ‘Vana’ are found in the modern lists of both the ‘ten names’ and the madhī-s. From this he infers that these four ‘groups’ of samnyās-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, Puris and Bhāratīs increased their numbers through initiation.

53 The akhāda-s spell ‘paṅc with a short ‘a’. 
is only operational (as the Śambhu Pañc) for the duration of the Kumbha Melās. During the time between Kumbha Melās it is the Śrī Pañc which 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 mahants, may own properties, such as matha-s or āśrama-s, which may be a part of an extensive landholding. In some akhädā-s the Śrī Pañc may itself, as a body, own land and properties.

All seven Daśanāmī akhädā-s have their own Śrī Pañc, to which officials are usually elected every six years, during either a half or full Kumbha Melās. All akhädā-s follow this practice. The election is based on representatives selected from the dāvās. The number of posts within each akhāda varies according to the size of the akhāda, in terms of the number of properties it owns and the number of current initiates, but the positions are hierarchical. The highest position in an akhāda is held by a single sabhāpati (the ‘president’ or ‘chairman’), who presides over all the activities of all regional branches of the akhāda. Under him, in order of hierarchical descent, are: śrī-mahants and mahants; their assistants (kārbārs or adhikārs); thānāpati-s who manage the akhāda’s properties (the temples and matha-s); secretaries,54 pujārs; kōtvās who are armed guards who also circulate information about the election of mahants and kārbārs at Kumbha Melās, and kothārs (or bhandārs), who manage the daily supplies, such as food items, needed by the akhāda. In the larger akhāda-s, notably the Jūna and Mahānirvāṇi, two other officers, known as dhūnīvalas-s, may be elected to the Śrī Pañc. The dhūnīvala circulates decisions reached collectively by the Śrī Pañc to the Jamāt, Jamāt being the name for a group of travelling Daśanāmīs who do

54 All my informants used the English word ‘secretary’ to refer to this post, rather than the Hindi term, sac/ā, a term common in bureaucratic circles.
not live in an akhādā.\footnote{There are a number of direct parallels between the organisational structures of the Daśanāmī and vaisnava Rāmānandī (Bairagi) orders, one being the 52 madhyās of the Daśanāmīs and the 52 dvāras of the Rāmānandīs. Another is the pāñc-samkarā 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 chāvnr ('temporary lodging' or 'troop cantonment', equivalent to an akhādā) is the mahānt, followed by two adhikārs (who administer the functioning of the organisation); one kothārī (storekeeper); five pūjārs; three vyās (specialists in three different Rāmāyana-s); one kottāl; two prasādī migrants; three jāl-bhārā-s (assistants); and twenty-five bhandārs (cooks). The officers of a Bairagi mandāla (a regionally organised unit) are: śrī-mahānt, adhikāri, rasqā, jāl-bhārī and kottāl. Bairāgis are members of a mandāl by virtue of their kuti/āśrama/āsthān being in that area.}

In normal circumstances, any matha is presided over by a mahānt, who is the spiritual head of the institution, succession typically passing to a disciple of that guru. While the mahānt rules over the matha by legal right (haṅ), the śrī-mahānt is elected, and rules by consensus. Mahānts and śrī-mahānts may both sit side by side on the gaddī, but it is the mahānt of the matha who usually has a more permanent position. The kārbārī oversees daily practical affairs of an akhādā or matha for the mahānt, and will be in charge should the mahānt be away.

The Śrī Pañc elects a number of thānāpatī-s ('landlords') who manage the akhādā-s properties. They should be nāga-s or retired mahānts 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 thānāpatī-s, who also have a limited period in that role, is to prevent dissent over the management and ownership of property.\footnote{However, according to Sadānanda Giri (1976:32) the thānāpati traditionally occupied his office for life, having received a letter with the seal of the akhādā.} The Śrī Pañc, being the highest collective body of authority within the akhādā, has, theoretically, the right to dismiss the thānāpati managing the affairs of the properties of the akhādā. Depending on the size and occupancy of any of the properties administered by an akhādā, there will be a corresponding number of thānāpatī-s, secretaries and other officials. For example, in 1996 the Mahānirvānī akhādā was administering twenty-six properties (Puri 2001:151–153),\footnote{At Banaras (two properties), Allahabad, Kanha (Haridvār), Oṃkāreswar, and Ujjain; in Maharashtra, at Akolā (two properties), Lārēgān (Wardhā), Parbhāni (two properties), and Tryambakeshwar; and at Jvālamukhi (H.P.), RśikēŚ (two properties), Nāgpur, Karnāli (Badaūdā), Aṃkāreswar (Baraūdā), Kurukṣetra (five properties), Dehra Dūn (U.P.), Śrīthāli (Baliyā, U.P.), and Udaypur (Rajashan).} the main matha at Allahabad having eight śrī-mahānts, eight kārbārs, three secretaries and three thānāpatī-s. At Khānkāl, Haridvār, there are two secretaries and five thānāpatī-s. A typical
small *mātha*, such as at Jvālāmukhī, has a single *thānāpati*.68

The Jamāt, also referred to as the Jhunḍī ('small flock or swarm' in Hindi) or Jhunḍī 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 *akhāḍā*. The travelling Jamāt may consist of ex-*mahants*, nāga-s and *vastradārī-s* (i.e. *paramahamsa-s*), all of whom may have joined willingly or been sent travelling by the *akhāḍā*. Members of the travelling Jamāt may stay somewhere and establish a new *mātha* which will recruit new members to the order and send them to the *akhāḍā* for training. Within the *akhāḍā*, the Jamāt is the second highest authority after the Śambhu Pañc.59 It is under the Śambhu Pañc during the Kumbha Melā, and under the Śrī Pañc at other times. Overseeing the activities of all thirteen *akhāḍā-s* (including the seven Daśanāmī *akhāḍā-s*) is a body known as the Akhil Bhāratīya Akhāḍā Pariṣad,60 based in Haridvār, which meets to decide various practical and policy issues.61

### 2.4 Mahāmaṇḍaleśvaras

Affiliated to the *akhāḍā-s* are one or several Mahāmaṇḍaleśvaras ('Lords' of the area).62

The author was informed by a variety of *sādhu-s*, officials and Mahāmaṇḍaleśvaras, that presently the *akhāḍā-s* with the largest number of affiliated Mahāmaṇḍaleśvaras are the

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68 At the time of research (2001-2002), the Jūnā *akhāḍā* at Banaras had: 1 *sabhāpati*; 2 Śrī *mahants*; 2 *kārīvā-s*; 2 secretaries; 4 *thānāpatī-s*; 4 *koṭvā-s*; 2 *pūjārī-s*; 1 *koṭhārī*. The Aṭal *akhāḍā* at Banaras: 1 *sabhāpati*, who is also Śrī *mahant* as well as secretary; 1 *mahant*; 1 *koṭvāl* who is also *thānāpatī*; 1 *koṭhārī*. The Āvāhan *akhāḍā* at Banaras: 1 *sabhāpati*; 1 secretary; 1 Śrī *mahant*. Agni *akhāḍā* at Banaras: 1 *sabhāpati*; 1 secretary; 1 *thānāpatī*, who is also *koṭvāl*; 1 Śrī *mahant*; 1 *pūjārī*; 1 *koṭhārī*; 1 *bhanḍārī*.

69 Sadananda Giri (1976:27) remarks that: "When a disciple first comes into the Akhāḍā, 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 Akhāḍās. Sometimes after training they become head of the Āśrama of the Śiddha-Guru. From many places the Akhāḍās 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 Akhāḍā they are made into good *sannyāsī-s* by rigorous training."

60 Each *akhāḍā* controls an average of a hundred religious bodies, such as *māthas*, temples and *āśrama-s* (Jaffrelot 1996:471).

61 One decision taken quite recently was that the *akhāḍā-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.

62 Mahāmaṇḍaleśvaras usually have lengthy titles, a typical example being, 'Śrīmat paramahamsa parivrājakaṁśya brahmaṁśta ānanta śrī vibhūṣita śrī annapūrṇa pīthādhiśvara mahāmaṇḍaleśvara śrī svāmī viśveśvarānanda girī jī mahārāja vedāntācārya'.

Mahānirvāṇī and Nirañjani, with up to thirty affiliated Mahāmaṇḍaleśvaras.\(^6^3\) While many Mahāmaṇḍaleśvaras are affiliated to the various akhaḍās, usually only one—or, occasionally, up to four—is directly involved with an akhaḍā in his role as ācārya-guru (or ācārya-mahāmaṇḍaleśvara) for the akhaḍā, presiding over a part of the saṃnyāsa rite. Only the ācārya-mahāmaṇḍaleśvara-s may give dīksā, which is the only time when they usually come into contact with the akhaḍā. Even though Mahāmaṇḍaleśvaras may indicate an affiliation with a particular akhaḍā, 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 matha will have broken away from the akhaḍā. 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 Kumbha Melā.\(^6^4\) The Mahāmaṇḍaleśvaras are the heads of a hierarchy within the monastic tradition, which is essentially independent of the hierarchies that operate within the akhaḍā-s, except at times of initiation.\(^6^5\)

Mahāmaṇḍaleśvaras have essentially replaced the former preeminence 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-gurus, of the Nirañjani, Jūnā and [Mahā-] Nirvāṇī akhaḍā-s, and that the ācārya-gurus used to accompany the akhaḍā-s for the baths at the Kumbha Melās. (The three smaller akhaḍā-s, the Ānand, Āvāhan and Ātal, still accompany the three larger akhaḍā-s to the baths.) Although these days each akhaḍā has its own affiliated ācārya-guru, this has not always been so. Purī (2001:133) remarks that the Ātal and Mahānirvāṇī akhaḍā used to share an ācārya-guru, but that since 1922 the Ātal akhaḍā created an independent ācārya-guru. Purī provides a paramparā of twelve Mahāmaṇḍaleśvaras (as ācārya-guru-s) for

\(^6^3\) Sinha and Saraswati (1978:98) list eight Maṇḍaleśvaras, including one Ācārya Manḍaleśvara, for the Mahānirvāṇī akhaḍā, whereas Purī (2001:136–137) lists twenty-nine Mahāmaṇḍaleśvaras affiliated to that akhaḍā.

\(^6^4\) The ācārya-guru, who is a Mahāmaṇḍaleśvara, of each akhaḍā is often a resident of a particular matha. Thus, for example, Sinha and Saraswati (1978:98), discussing the residences of the Mahāmaṇḍaleśvaras of Banaras, note that the Ācārya-Maṇḍaleśvaras of the Mahānirvāṇī akhaḍā always reside in the Govinda matha, those of the Nirañjani in the Durbeśvara matha, and those of the Jūnā akhaḍā in the Mrityunjaya matha.

\(^6^5\) To give one example, the current Ācārya Mahāmaṇḍaleśvara of the Jūnā akhaḍā is Svāmī Aydeśānanda Giri, who was elected at the 1998 Haridvār Kumbha Melā. Svāmīji started and heads an organisation called Prabhu Premī Sangh, the headquarters being in Kankal, 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). Svāmīji has written around a dozen books and lectures frequently.
the Mahānirvāṇī akhādā, which, realistically, would perhaps go back around 150 years. Misra (Amit Kārekhā 2001:103) maintains that it was during the period when the Jyotir pūṭha was moved to Dholka in Gujarāt that a decision was made by the Dholka ācārya that each akhādā should have its own ācārya mahāmānḍaleśvara. It is uncertain when the Dholka pūṭha was first established (certainly after 1776), but the Jyotir pūṭha was reestablished in 1941, which means—if Misra is correct—that the arrangement whereby each akhādā has its own ācārya-mahāmānḍaleśvara came into existence before 1941.66

The title of 'Mahāmānḍaleśvara' clearly derives from the feudal role performed by rulers in the process of state formation during the early mediaeval period.67 The institution of the Vijayanagara Mahāmānḍaleśvara is evident in the parallel role of the Mahāmānḍaleśvaras of the Daśanāmī order, whereby these heads of monastic mathā-s are nominally under the instruction and command of the main mathā-s controlled by the reigning Śaṅkarācāryas. It seems that from hundreds of years before the time of Śaṅkara (eighth century CE), until the last century or so, it was pariṣad-s of learned Brahmans who adjudicated on doubtful points of religious conduct, and prescribed appropriate penances (Kane HDŚ Vol.2:971–974). Only rarely were heads of mathā-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 mathā-s. This arrangement prevailed until the time of the British, and it was only at approximately the beginning of the nineteenth century that mahānt-s and such authorities as the Śaṅkarācāryas—who occupied, for example, the gaddī-s of the Śankeśvara and Karvaṭra mathā-s in Maharashtra68—have claimed almost exclusive jurisdiction in such matters. The adoption of the title of 'Mahāmānḍaleśvara'

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66 Sinha and Saraswati’s account (1978:96) of an anecdote related to them by an informant from the Jūnā akhādā may throw some light on this issue. According to their informant, around a century ago nāgā-s used to give the highest honour to dandī-ś, whom they regarded as their gurus. At that time, the dandī-ś used to initiate the paramāhamsa-s and nāgā-s into samnyāsa. The nāgā-s used to carry the palanquin of the Śaṅkarācārya, who is considered to be the spiritual head of the Daśanāmī samnyāsa-s. However, a dispute arose when the dandī-ś, who are Brahmān brahmacāryas, cast doubt on the purity of the paramāhamsa-s and nāgā-s. Henceforth, the dandī-ś refused to initiate the paramāhamsa-s and nāgā-s into samnyāsa. As a consequence, the institution of ācārya-guru arose, whereby a Mahāmānḍaleśvara from a monastic tradition, and who may also be a dandī, will initiate paramāhamsa-s and nāgā-s at a Kumbha Mela.

67 For example, from an inscription of 1356 (Epigraphia Carnatica, vol. X, Kolar, no. 222), we learn that Kumāra Kampanā, one of the early rulers of the Vijayanagara empire, and the first son of Bukka I, was appointed by his father as the Mahāmānḍaleśvara of the Mulbagal region, entrusted with the task of extending Vijayanagara rule in the Tamil country. Most of the Mahāmānḍaleśvaras were members of the royal family in the early period of Vijayanagara rule. By the time of Harihaṇa II, local tax collection systems of the village assemblies were bypassed and replaced by directly appointed Mahāmānḍaleśvaras and other such officials. See Krishnaswami (1964:7,103ff.) for further details.

68 See Ch. 4.4, on Daśanāmī pūṭha-s and mathā-s.
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 akhādā-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. The land-holdings and estates of the larger matha-s, particularly those of Dvārakā, Kāṅcipuram and Śrīnerī are extensive.69 Besides their religious and administrative duties—which include participating in initiation rituals at Kumbha 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.70 In south India, the local caste council (katte manē), usually with five members, decides many issues, while others are decided by Śaṅkarācāryas. Gnanambal (1973) provides extensive documentation of numerous cases decided by the pontiffs of seven south Indian matha-s, including the Kumbakonam and Śrīnerī matha-s (also known as pītha-s).71 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 offenses, religious rites and caste practice, anti-social acts, change of occupation, 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 dharmaśāstra (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

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69 See Venkataraman (1959:132-166) for details of the landholdings, shrines, temples and revenue of the Śrīnerī Samsthanam (‘institution’). Revenue derives from around fifty villages in surrounding districts. Net revenue in 1959 was 33,000 Rs. The samsthanam also owns around fifty buildings, temples and shrines throughout India. The jagār (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 tāhsildār as the civil administrator (Gnanambal 1973:8).

70 See Lariviere (1993).

71 Some Daśanāmī matha-s are also known as pītha-s: see Ch. 5.4.
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 *pitha*-s have considerable authority, particularly among some sections of Brahmans.

In this chapter, the structure, organisation and hierarchies within the *akhāḍā*-s has been examined. As noted in the previous chapter (1.6), several commentators\(^7^2\) claim that the *akhāḍā*-s are in some respects democratic and non-hierarchical. However, it is evident from our consideration of the organisation of the *akhāḍā*-s, that the *akhāḍā*-s are essentially hierarchical in terms of authority and decision making. Conflicts between the *akhāḍā*-s were referred to,\(^7^3\) 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 *akhāḍā*-s. This is illustrated in initiation procedures, the main topic of the next chapter.

\(^7^2\) See, for example, Sadānanda Giri (1976:27); Sinha and Sarasvati (1978:196); Dazey (1987:557; 1990:309).

\(^7^3\) See Appendix 6 for further details.
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 which are not apparent in the ancient accounts are revealed in the detail 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 Daśanāmid 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 nāga-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 (2.10.17-18; 2.17.10-41), the earliest portions of which may be dated from around the beginning of the third to the middle of the second centuries BCE. There seem, however, to have been a significant number of later interpolations in the text, most probably including the section on renunciatory rites. It is in the *Dharmasūtra* of Baudhāyana that the term *samnyāsa* first appears in *dharma* literature. Other extant *Dharmasūtra* texts also deal at some length with the life of the renunciate; those of Gautama (1-36), Āpastamba (2.9.21,1-17) and Vasiṣṭha (10.1-31). These writers frequently quote from unnamed sources (Olivelle

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1 Kane (HDS Vol. 2: 953).
2 See Olivelle (1999:xxx-xxxiii). Kane (HDS Vol.1:52) tentatively dates Bāudhāyana to 600–300 BCE.
3 For a résumé of the rules concerning the life of the renunciate provided by these and later texts dealing with *samnyāsa*, see Appendix 8.
4 Rules for 'fourth-āśrama' yatīs (or parivṛtaka-s or *samnyāsī*-s) also appear in various *purāṇa*-s. See, for example, *Kūrma-purāṇa* (II.28); *Nārada-purāṇa* (I.27.92–106; II.43.123–127).
According to Baudhayana (2.17), 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, deposits the sacred fires in himself, and utters the praśa mantra: “I have renounced! I have renounced! I have renounced!” A significant omission in Baudhayana’s account is the absence of reference to anyone who assists, supervises or instigates the samnyāsa rites: a guru is not mentioned. The candidate of Baudhayana’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 samnyāsa.

The earliest known Brahmanical text devoted specifically to renunciation is the Skāna (HDS 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 Vāsudevāsramā’s Yatīdharmapraķāśa, a text dated to between, most probably, 1675 and 1800, the only other mediaeval treatises on renunciation to have been published were Viśveśvarasarasvati’s Yatīdharmasaṃgraha and Viḍyāreṇya’s Jīvamuktiviveka.

*For the translation of the Dharmaśutra-s, see Olivelle (1999). See Appendix 9 for an abridged account of the procedure.

* Also, it is meant for Śāfinas and Yāyāvaras who are childless. These are people who were originally two types of Vedic sacrificer. The former maintained a stable residence, whereas the latter were given to wandering. Together they constitute a category of Vedic sacrificer who is distinguished from the ordinary householder (see Olivelle 1993:162).

* A slightly different version of the initiatory rite is given in the Vaikhanāsa Smārtasūtra, and reference is made to several of its elements in the Manu Smṛti (6.38), Yajñavalkya Smṛti (3.56) and Viṣṇu Smṛti (96.1) (see Olivelle 1977:37). It is also described in most Sammyāsa Upaniṣads (see Olivelle 1992) and is substantially similar to accounts found in later, mediaeval, texts on renunciation.

* RV III.62.10, also known as ‘entry into sāvitrī’ or the gāyatrī mantra: “Oṃ Earth! I enter Sāvitrī. That excellent [glory] of Sāvitrī. Oṃ Atmosphere! I enter Sāvitrī. The glory of god we meditate. Oṃ Sky! I enter Sāvitrī. That he may stimulate our prayers” (tr. Olivelle 1989:204). This mantra is the most sacred mantra of the Brahmanical tradition. It is imparted at initiation (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 gāyatrī mantra in contemporary Hinduism.

* 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 Āruni-upaniṣad (2) the external fires are deposited in the stomach and the 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.

* The praśa is the technical term for the mantra, ‘I have renounced’ and constitutes an essential feature of the renunciation. Olivelle translates it as ‘Call’. Praśa 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 1992:85; 1995:67 fn. 26).
Yatidharmasamuccaya of Yādava Prakāśa, written in the twelfth century. While it is evident that Brahmanical texts on renunciation are generally of vaisnava persuasion, more than other mediaeval works on asceticism, the Yatidharmasamuccaya integrates ascetic life into the ritual life of the Brahmanical vaisnava tradition (Olivelle 1995:17). Yādava Prakāśa (4.1-49) details the rites of renunciation, primarily according to Śaunaka. As a preliminary practice before initiation, the so-called kṛchra (arduous) penances are to be performed (4.2), followed by śrāddha oblations (4.2,4,26). A crucial feature of sāmnyāsa is that, unlike the ordinary people, the dead sāmnyāsī does not become a ghost but is united immediately with the ancestral spirits. The śrāddhas usually performed for a dead person in a ghostly state (ekoddistaśrāddhā), and the customary rite of offering pinda a year after the death of a relative (to six generations of ancestors), do not need to be performed for the sāmnyāsī who has performed his own śrāddha. The sāvitrī mantra is then internalised, followed by a night’s vigil. After bathing

12 According to tradition, Yādava Prakāśa was the advaita-Vedāntist teacher of Rāmānuja, whom he had plotted to kill after Rāmānuja’s challenge to his own advaita philosophical view. Yādava Prakāśa subsequently converted to Rāmānuja’s more devotional viśiṣṭādvaita (qualified non-dualism) philosophy and became his disciple. Rāmānuja was the founder of the first orthodox vaisnava order of ascetics, known as the Śrī sampadiya, one of the four extant vaisnava sampadāyas. It is also believed that Rāmānuja climbed the gopuram of the Viṣṇu temple in Gostipūra, and shouted out, for all to hear, including Sūdras, the secret eight-syllable sāmnyāsī mantra he had just received from Gostipūra (Ramakrishnananda 1959:151-155).

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

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, 203-4, 223, 229-314; 7.65-66, 89, 100, 108; 9.25, 45-58; 10.11; 11.28.

16 Four kṛchra penances constitute what is technically known as a prajācāya 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 kṛchra penance—also called pādekrchra ('quarter penance') at Yājñavalkya Dharmaśāstra 3.3.18—is to perform the same four austerities for only one day each (Olivelle 1996:60). In Gautama Dharmaśātra (26) three kinds of kṛchra penances are described, involving progressive restrictions on eating over twelve days, finally only drinking water. The following chapter (27) describes the cāndrayana ('lunar') penance, whereby a lunar month of dietary control is observed, progressively decreasing and increasing food intake. The sequential rules of the kṛchra also apply to this penance.

15 He also cites eight other authorities: Baudhāyana, Vasiṣṭha, Kātyāyana, Jamadagni, Kapile, Jābaḷī, Angīras and Likhita.

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 antyeṣṭi (see Parry 1982:84; Prasad 1996).
at first light, the candidate performs the morning fire sacrifice, reciting the Great Utterances\(^\text{19}\) and the hymn, "Swift runs the river of delight..." (RV IX.58). He should feed some Brahmins 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 \textit{Purusa-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 Śvistakṛt (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 \textit{Taittiriya-āranyakā} (II.18.1) and the \textit{Taittiriya-brāhmaṇa} (II.5.8.8), depositing the fires in himself. He should then stand before the fire or in water and recite the \textit{pāśa mantra} three times softly, three times in a medium voice, and three times in a loud voice.\(^\text{20}\)

One of the most detailed accounts of initiatory procedures is contained in Vāsudevāśrama’s \textit{Yatidharmapraṅkāśa},\(^\text{21}\) a vaiśnava orientated \textit{advaita} work of the late seventeenth or eighteenth century,\(^\text{22}\) which contains one of the first textual references to the ‘ten names’ (66.14—15) of the Daśanāmīs.\(^\text{23}\) Following Baudhāyana (II.17.11), Vāsudevāśrama maintains (3) 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 vaiśnava renunciates, and the single kind by śāiva renunciates. During Daśanāmī renunciation procedures, the \textit{saṁnyāsī} is given a loincloth, and a single staff, which is abandoned shortly if the \textit{saṁnyāsī} is affiliated to an \textit{akhāḍā}, but maintained by

\(^{19}\) There are either three or seven Great Utterances (\textit{vyāhṛti}), denoting ‘worlds’: \textit{bhūḥ}, \textit{bhuvah}, \textit{svatḥ}, with the addition of \textit{mahar}, \textit{janas}, \textit{tapas}, \textit{satya} (see Olivelle 1985:63 fn. 19).

\(^{20}\) Yadava 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 \textit{pāśa mantra}. If he is unable to do that he should just mentally abandon attachments.

\(^{21}\) Vāsudevāśrama was acquainted with fifteen works dealing with \textit{dharma}, four of them particularly with renunciation: Vidyārānya’s \textit{Jīvanmuktī-viveka}, \textit{Yatidharmasamuccaya} and \textit{Pranāvamimāṃsā} (c.1360), and Viśeśvarasarasvātī’s \textit{Yatidharmasamgraha} (early sixteenth century), also known as the \textit{Yatidharmasamuccaya}. Besides the latter works and Vījñāneśvara’s work on \textit{dharma}, \textit{Mātkṣarā} (1100—1120), Vāsudevāśrama was most influenced by the \textit{advaitin} philosopher, Madhuśūdanārasaravatī, the pupil of Viśeśvarasarasvati; he cites his \textit{Siddhāntabindu} (46.12—14). Vāsudevāśrama also cites or refers to the works of Śaṅkara (8th cent.), Sureśvara (8th cent.), Prakāśatman (c. 975), Vacaśpati Miśra (c. 980), Sarvajñātman (c. 1027), Vidyārānya (c. 1340—1360), Madhuśūdanārasaravatī (1540—1647), Nṛsimhāśrama (mid-16th century), Rāmatīrtha (mid-16th century) and Rāmgoji Bhāṭṭa (c. 1575) (Olivelle 1977:28).

\(^{22}\) In the final section (73) of his treatise, Vāsudevāśrama describes himself as a Paramahāmśa renouncer, the pupil of Śrī Govindāśrama, who was the pupil of Śrī Rāmakṛṣṇāśrama.

\(^{23}\) See Olivelle (1976; 1977) for the full text. See Appendix 9 (Olivelle 1977:38) for a resume of the procedures. For references in \textit{bold} type in this and the following paragraph, refer to Appendix 9.
dandhis. In his commentary on the Brhadāraṇyaka-upaniṣad (III.5.1),24 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 advaitins. One may easily distinguish Daśanāmī from other sādhus (notably vaisnava) by the absence of the top-knot, which is removed during initiation. Vāsudevāśrama 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 sāvītṛi 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 viśiṣṭādvaita philosophy of Rāmānuja, who believed that, at least, the sacrificial cord should be maintained. One of the issues underpinning this debate is the viśiṣṭādvaita contention that knowledge alone cannot cause liberation and that 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 Vāsudevāśrama was not biased in a sectarian way.25 He does not adjudicate—as had become customary in advaita orders—over the relative superiority of either advaitins (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.26

The final sacrifice a renunciate will make is performed during the saṁnyāsa rite.

25 Vāsudevāśrama states that, according to one opinion (64.5-30), the renounner worships Kṛṣṇa, Vyāsa, Śaṅkara, his gurus, Gaṇapati, Kṣetrapāla, Durgā, Sarasvatī, the guardian deities of the quarters, Brahmā and Rudra. However, others maintain that only Viṣṇu in the form of the śālagrama 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-samhitā (5.34–38), the advaita śaṁhasa and Paramahamsa ascetics are described as carrying a single staff, whereas the 'higher' classes of vaisnava ascetics, the Bhagavān and the Prabhu, carry the triple staff. Vaiṣṇava orientated texts make frequent derogatory remarks against the saṁha advaita ascetics who carry the single staff, and not the triple staff (see, for example Yatidharmasamuccaya 7.71). Śrī-Vaiṣṇava ascetics, who carried triple staffs, often accused the advaitins of being Buddhists pretending to follow the Brahmanical law. However, most saṁnyāsa-upaniṣads 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 (kutikāsaka, bahūdaka, hamsa, paramahamsa) to be found in many texts, which concerns their different emblems and lifestyles. For further details, see Appendix 8.
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 cauru oblation to Purusa (15) and, optionally, a viraja oblation (16), and should declare the praiṣa (17). (All three rites are central to Daśanāmī procedures and the performance of the viraja-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

### 3.2 Current initiation procedures: pānic-guru-samskār

Among the more comprehensive published accounts of formal Daśanāmī initiation procedures are those of Sarkar (1958:63–81), Sadānanda Giri (1976:26–31) and

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27 Baudhāyana (2.17.23) states that the sacrifice should be to Agni, but the Saṃnyāsa Upaniṣads contain contrasting opinions. The Jābala 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 Nāradaparivarājaka Upaniṣad (138) maintains that the sacrifice should be to Prajāpati, and the Kathāsruti Upaniṣad (38) that there should be oblations to Agni Vaiśvānara, Prajāpati and to Viṣṇu (see Saṃnyāsa Upaniṣads, trans. Olivelie 1992). Both Manu (6.38) and the Viṣṇu Smṛti (96.1) (see Jolly 1991) state that the final sacrifice should be to Prajāpati. The Kurma Purāṇa (1.28.4) states that it can be either to Agni or Prajāpati. Yādava Prakāśa (4.31) cites Jaamadagnya, 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 Śaunaka, as a feature of the sannyāsa 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 Satapāti 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 Olivelie (1978).
however, their accounts do not illustrate the two-stage process of initiation. All candidates first approach a mahan of an aśrama or a matha, having demonstrated a sincere desire to renounce and honour a guru. The first stage of initiation for entrants into non-danda institutions is known as the pañc-guru-samskār (‘five guru ceremony’), while the first stage in danda initiations is to become a brahmacāri, acquiring one of the four danda surnames, Ānanda, Caitanya, Prakāśa or Svarūpa, depending on the organisational affiliation of the matha from which the candidate is taking initiation. A brahmacāri generally serves fully initiated samnyāsīs, as, theoretically, a danda is not supposed to touch fire or metal. The second stage—for all—is the samnyāsa initiation, known as vidyā-samskār or virāja-havan (or homā).

During the pañc-guru-samskār the candidate acquires, besides his main guru, four other gurus, from either the danda matha, or from the akhādā. The pañc-guru-samskār may take place at any time, the samnyāsa rite—freeing the candidate from all previous social ties—being usually performed at the following Kumbha Melā. Akhādās recruit initiates from amongst those who have been accepted by a matha or recommended by an individual or by the Jamāt. Akhādās also admit those who are disciples of others outside their order, and individuals who are not samnyāsīs but who have served under a nāga unconnected with the akhādā. The nāga may then send a potential recruit directly to the akhādā. Initiation into the Daśanāmīs may also, in some

31 See also Ghurye (1964:105); Sinha and Sarasvati (1978:65); and early ethnographers, such as Rose (1914, Vol. 3:345–355) and Anantakrishna Iyer (1930–1931). Sarkar (1958:66) refers to two texts as sources for his information, the Sannyas-graha-paṭṭaṇī of Paramahamsa Gopālaṇand (Banaras 1941)—which I have been unable to locate—and the Yatidbarma-samgraha of Viśveśvararasarasvatī (Anand Ashram Press, 1909), who was the teacher of the advaitin Madhusūdanārsarasvati (1640–1647). The text of the Yatidharma-samgraha (also known as the Yatidharma-samucoaya) is often in whole or in part contained in manuscripts entitled Viśveśvara Smṛti. A work entitled Pāḍamadrama-vidhāna is a work based on or contained in the Viśveśvara Smṛti, a title of numerous similar but not identical texts (Olivelle 1986:21).

32 Sadānanda Giri and Tripathi were both initiated into the Daśanāmīs, as a paramahamsa and danda 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 danda. The climax of his initiation ceremony was when the preceptor whispered the pṛaṇa (or Śiva) mantra into his ear.

33 Some danda institutions, such as the Macchibandhar Matha (one of the larger danda institutions, with headquarters in Banaras) also perform the preliminary pañc-guru-samskār initiation, some time before the virāja-homa.

34 Amongst the danda’s, the guru’s name is referred to as prem-path, and the śiṣya’s as yog-path.

35 The brahmacāri I interviewed from the Macchibhandar Matha of Banaras all took the brahmacāri name Svarūpa, owing to the matha’s theoretical affiliation to the Śāradā pitha in Dvārakā.
rare instances, be directly at one of the main Śaṅkarite matha-s,³⁶ for disciples directly under one of the four (or five) reigning Śaṅkarācāryas. Some kind of initiation by a Mahāmāndaleśvara or Daśānāmī sādhun may also be given quite freely to aspirants such as roving and inquisitive foreigners.³⁷ However, although a new name, mantra and meditation techniques may be given, Daśānāmīs emphasise the importance of the performance of the virajā-homa (see below), incumbent on all genuine dandīs, paramahamsa-s and nāgā-s, before one is truly a samnyāsī.³⁸

The following details of current initiation procedures are as performed by candidates taking initiation into the Jūna ākhaṭa.³⁹ First, the keeper of the ākhaṭa 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 maṭhī of the Śrī Pañčonām Jūna Akhaṭā for the maintenance of the chaḍī (‘mobile shrine’) of Guru Dattātreyā. The date is recorded according to the Hindu calendar. Candidates, usually as a group, present themselves on the appointed day, already shaven, except for the top-knot. A pāṇḍit, the guru and the initiate will sit in a triangle in front of the dhūni. Uttering “Śvāhā”, oblations of water and flower petals are made, after which the candidate drinks pāṇcagavya, a mixture of cow’s milk, curd, ghee, urine and faeces. The candidate is then presented with a bundle, containing a coconut, loin-cloth (laṅgoṭī), sacred thread (janeū) and rudrākṣa necklace, wrapped in an ochre cloth (bhāgavā) 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, sāksī-guru, to the event of the candidate becoming a disciple of Dattātreyā, the Lord of Yogis.

Besides the initiating guru (the mantra-guru), who is effectively the main guru, there are four other gurus from the same akhaṭa present, who, with appropriate mantras,

³⁶ Sawai (1992:155) observes that at the time of his research at the Śrīgeri maṭha in 1984: “There are in Śrīgeri currently only three samnyāsaṁs including the senior Jagadguru (mahāsaṁnīcitanaṁ in Sanskrit and Dodda Gurugaja “old teacher” in Kannada). This small number seems to imply that a life of samnyāsa is perceived by most smārtas as too arduous to attempt...[At Śrīgeri, the Jagadguru is very reticent in permitting aspirants to enter samnyāsa.” It should be noted that dandīs initiated into samnyāsa directly by a Śaṅkarācārya at the main Śaṅkara matha-s constitute a very small percentage of Daśānāmīs, and that there are many dozens of other dandī maṭha-s in north India. The vast majority of Daśānāmī samnyāsaṁs, comprising paramahamsa-s, dandīs and nāgā-s, have been initiated at a Kumbha Melā via one of the hundreds of maṭha-s and aśrama-s scattered throughout north India.

³⁷ My wife and I were initiated into samnyāsa by a Mahāmāndaleśvara at the Kumbha Melā around fifteen minutes after meeting him.

³⁸ Sadananda 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 samnyāsī unless he has performed the virajā-homa.

³⁹ The entire sequence of events relating to samnyāsa initiations was filmed by Rām Puri, who was referred to in the Introduction. Fieldwork inquiries substantiated that procedures are very similar (if not the same) in several of the other branches of the Daśānāmī order.
will present the candidate with, respectively, holy ash \( (\text{vibhūti}) \), loin-cloth \( (\text{langot}) \), a necklace of beads \( (\text{rudrākṣa}) \) and sacred thread \( (\text{janeū}) \). These five gurus constitute the so-called \textit{panc-gurus} that the candidates acquire on their first initiation, known as the \textit{mantra-guru}, \textit{rudrākṣa-guru} etc. Under the \textit{bhagvā}, held aloft by other \textit{sādhus}, the candidate's top-knot is cut and the \textit{guru-mantra} is whispered three times into the candidate's ear by the \textit{mantra-guru}, ending: "Namāḥ parvatī pate, hara hara Mahādeva".

He is given a new name, ending in one of the ten Daśnāmī names.\textsuperscript{41}

The candidate then bathes, smears his body with holy ash, and is given a loin-cloth, \textit{rudrākṣa} and sacred thread. He is finally wrapped in the \textit{bhagvā} and places a monetary offering \( (\text{daksinā}) \) at the guru's feet. He then performs what is known as \textit{Omkar} to the five gurus, a cycle of five rounds of a mantra,\textsuperscript{42} to each guru, presenting each with \textit{daksinā} of one rupee. The \textit{Omkar} 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{sādhu}. The coconut water is mixed with raw sugar \( (\text{gud}) \) and made into cakes. The guru feeds the \textit{sisya} and the \textit{sisya} feeds the guru, and the guru asks three times, "Which is sweeter, \textit{guru} or \textit{gud}?", to which the \textit{sisya} replies, "\textit{Guru}". A metal plate is then lifted over the \textit{sisya}'s head and the guru announces to the three worlds that the candidate has become a \textit{celā} (\textit{sisya}). Such kinds of announcement within the \textit{akhādā} 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{sādhus} present, the Brahmans performing the \textit{havan}, and the fire-places \( (\text{dhūnī}) \) of the \textit{akhādā}. This concludes the first stage of \textit{samnyāsa}, during which the \textit{samnyāsī} acquires five gurus, including the \textit{mantra-guru}, and is nominally affiliated to the \textit{akhādā}. He is now called a

\textsuperscript{40} Purī (2001:160–167) provides the mantras used in the Mahānirvāṇī \textit{akhādā} for the following: cutting the \textit{coṭi} (top-knot); mantra 'blown' into the ear, \textit{bhagvā}, guru; 'laying' of the \textit{gerū} (ochre colour)—on cloth, \textit{vibhūti}/Vedic mantra for wearing \textit{bhasm} ('ash'); applying \textit{candan} ('sandalwood') paste; \textit{rudrākṣa} ; \textit{langot}/; \textit{prthvī} ('earth'); ātī ('water'); \textit{Gayatri}; going in the direction of 'the field'; purification of the water vessel \( (\text{kamarśa}) \); the tent; tooth-brushing; bringing the \textit{dhūnī} to 'consciousness'; \textit{digambar} (nāgī) initiation; \textit{jata} ; \textit{golā} ('ball of ash'); \textit{samādhi}.

\textsuperscript{41} This ceremony is referred to in the Brahmanical texts on renunciation as the \textit{yogagatta}, wherein the candidate receives a new name and recites the fifteenth to the thirty-third verses of the eleventh chapter of the \textit{Bhagavad-gītā}. See \textit{Yatidharmapradīka} 66, 1-24, 'The Procedure of (Conferring) the Meditation Shawl', where one of the first textual references to the 'Ten Names' occurs.

\textsuperscript{42} "\textit{Om Guru-jī, Om Dev-jī, Om Datt-jī, Om Svāmī-jī, Om Ālakh-jī, Om Namo Nārāyan}".
mahāpurusa or a vastradhāri. The sādhu’s full initiation into the akhāda takes place in the third and final stage of initiation, when the samnyāsi may become a nāgā.

3.3 Current procedures: virāj-havan / homa (vidyā-saṁskār) and nāgā initiations

The second initiation, the virāj-havan (the ‘rite of the hero’) or vidyā-saṁskār, is nearly always performed at Kumbha Melās. This is the main samnyāsa rite, which contains most of the features detailed in the texts examined in the first part of this chapter concerning ancient renunciation procedures. It is uniquely this rite which authenticates the samnyāsi’s condition of renunciation (as a ‘genuine’ sādhu), whether as a danda or a paramaḥamsa.

While the major part of this rite is performed by a Brahman pāndit, some parts are performed by the acārya-guru (a Mahāmaṇḍaleśvara), who will represent either a danda lineage (initiating danda-s) or an akhāda (being elected by the nāgās of the akhāda). For danda-s, the acārya-guru may be the same person who performs both the preliminary brahmacārīrite and the final samnyāsa rite. The acārya-guru is also a representative of a reigning Śaṅkarācāryā, who also usually presides over major initiation ceremonies at the Kumbha Melās. For some days, many hundreds of sādhus will have had a restricted, phalāhār, diet, which is essentially a diet of milk with some fruit, and will have been repeating the gāyatrī mantra. They line up near a river or saṅgam at dawn, bringing their parca, a piece of dried silver-birch bark, on which is written their samnyāsa details and that their dues have been paid to the akhāda. Kotvāl’s police the assembly. The candidates have their head (except for the top-knot), moustache, beard, armpits and

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34 Initiation into the Rāmāṇandī order entails similar procedures (see Sharma 1998:62–68). The vaśnava parca-saṁskār consists of: 1. tap-saṁskār, being adorned by heated brands with the emblems of Nārāyaṇa, the cakra (to the right arm) and śaṅkha (to the left arm); 2. pundra-saṁskār, applying a tilak of white clay to the forehead, arm, chest and stomach; 3. mālā or karṇīl-saṁskār, receiving a necklace of tulsi beads; 4. nām-saṁskār, receiving the name Dās, together with the name of Viṣṇu for the current month; 5. mantra-saṁskār, receiving the khaṇḍa 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 (acal) to cover the loin-cloth; 4. kamaṇḍal. The Śrī-vaśnava samnyāsa-s, founded by Rāmānuja, are invariably Brahmans and former householders. Samnyāsa rites are almost the same as those performed by the Daṇḍanāṁśī (see below). Amongst scriptures recited is the Viṣṇu-saḥasranāma (see Lester 1992:78). Following the ātmā-śraddha, āśrama-śvākā (the acceptance of the fourth āśrama begins with the praṇa mantra.

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

46 To give an example, paramaḥamsa Śvāmī Kṛṣṇanānanda of the Daḵšināmūrtī Math of Banaras was initiated by a Mahāmaṇḍaleśvara from the Nirvāṇī akhāda. However, he explained (conversation, on 8 February 2002) that initiations in their order are usually performed by a Mahāmaṇḍaleśvara from the Niraṅjaṇī akhāda.
pubic region shaved (pañca bhadra), and are given a sacred-thread, a kulhad (a small clay pot representing a kamanḍa), and a danḍa,\(^{46}\) an ancient symbol of not only asceticism, but also royal power.\(^{47}\) Danḍa-s are only used by brāhmaṇarins, so all candidates become nominal brāhmaṇarins 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 samnyāsi's potential suicide.)

At sunset the candidates return to the akhāḍā, which has four funeral fires burning at each corner. Around the fires, the virajā-havan (or homā)\(^{48}\) will be conducted, for which the candidates are given some of the requisite materials (which include mustard and sesame seeds, the oblation of the virajā-havan). While a Brahman pandit performs the havan the ācārya-guru goes around whispering one of the four mahāvāya-s (depending on lineage) into the candidates' ears. Recitation of the puruṣa-sūkta is also an important

\(^{46}\) Danḍa-s may be given to the candidates. Otherwise, two days before the ceremony, they go as a group to the jungle, cut their own danḍa-s and collect the firewood (samīdh ) that will be used in the virajā-homa. A Brahman should have a danḍa of palīśa wood (flame of the forest, Butea frondos, whereas āsāṭya-s and vaśya-s should have silva (Bengal quince, aegle marmelos) (Sadānanda Giri 1976:65)

\(^{47}\) Danḍa also means punishment. For an analysis of the symbolic value of danḍa in both political and religious domains, see Glucklich (1988).

\(^{48}\) Sarkar (1958:67–73) and Kane (Vol:2:959–960) describe the lengthy virajā-homa ceremony, involving a total of forty oblations, of fuel-sticks (the samīdh collected by the candidate), boiled rice and ghee. There is a discussion of the virajā-homa in the Taittirīya-āranyakā (1.51–62; 2), wherein the best means to attain self-knowledge is samnyāsa. (Kane's account appears to derive from a mediaeval work, Dharmaśindhu) 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, of oblations, of the virajā-homa, such as: "May my five prāna-s be purified, may I be light, free from rajas and from evil, svāhā. This is for prāna 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 guna-s, puruṣa, the five kosa-s (sheaths) the mind, speech and the ātman and pay homage to the Vedas. 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 Upaniṣads and the first sentences of the four Vedas. 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 yajīya", taking in the warmth of the fire.
element of the ritual. With the assistance of the panjî, the candidates perform their own funeral rites (ṣrāddha), holding the stem of the sacred dūrvā grass. While chanting the prescribed Vedic mantras the candidates perform the eight kinds of ṣrāddha (noted previously) and tarpāṇa, wherein water is released to the ground from cupped hands, as an offering to all the gods. They also offer pīṇḍā 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 samnyāsī dies.

After a night of chanting and initiation, following the performance of the virajā-havan, the samnyāsī goes to the river with the ācārya-guru, where he bathes, breaks his danda, 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 samnyāsī. This is followed by the recitation, usually performed in waist-deep water, of the gāyatrī mantra, which is henceforth internalised. The prāśa 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 ahiṃsā, truthfulness, not stealing, continence, liberality, non-anger, waiting upon the guru, avoidance of carelessness, cleanliness and purity in food habits. He then covers his body with ashes and returns to the akhāḍā. He is instructed on doing good for society and receives a loin-cloth (kaupīnā) and water pot (kamandal). The ācārya-guru then cuts the top-knot (sikhā) on behalf of candidate’s guru, and abhīśeka is performed with a conch-shell over the initiate’s head. The candidate touches a danda, which is held by the ācārya-guru, who pronounces a mantra meaning that the danda is renounced.

49 Besides its occurrence in the Atharva-veda (19.6), the Purusa-sūkta is also recited for obtaining a son, for purificatory baths, for the purification of sins, and during śrāddha rites for the deceased (Gonda 1970:27–32). According to some sources, after death the soul assumes what is known as an attivānika śārīra, which consists of only three (fire, wind and space) of the five elements. If the appropriate rites are performed, the śārīra of three elements may pass over the space between death and the formation of a new gross body in the following incarnation. The recitation of the Purusa-sūkta enables the reconstitution of a new body. For bathing and death-rites, the Purusa-sūkta was used to renew the person concerned, underlined in the case of bathing by an obligatory change of clothes. Gonda (1970:27) remarks that “throughout the ages this text was, in religious practice not only an account of the creation but also an instrument of rising above one’s present state of existence. By identifying oneself with the mythical Purusa and by ritually repeating the mythical event and so reactivating its inherent power for the benefit of oneself and with a view to one’s own reintegration one believed oneself to to achieve one’s own ‘rebirth’”. Gonda also notes (1970:32) that the content of the Purusa-sūkta became one of the foundations of vaishnava philosophy, besides often being quoted by the saiva tradition.

50 See Appendix 8 for summaries of rules for samnyāsīs by Oman (1903:155); Rose (1914 Vol. 3:360); Sadānanda Giri (1976:25); Puri (2001).
Henceforth, the samnyāsi accepts the danda of knowledge. After this ritual the candidate is instructed in the Oṁ, Praśa and Parmamhamsa mantras and the significance of the mahāvākyas by the acārya-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 akhāḍā (in this case the Jūnā akhāḍā), and who only hold a danda for a portion of the renunciatory rite, after which it is renounced. However, dandī-ś, who are Brahmans initiated by a representative of a dandī matha, keep the danda. It is referred to as Brahm-svarūp, and is made from bamboo and not the other kinds of wood, mentioned above, used in the samnyāsa rite. A sacred thread and an axe-head are attached to the danda, which is covered with a cloth. The sacred thread is carried, albeit concealed, as an indication of Brahman status. The receipt of the danda 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), with some significant differences (Olivelie 1986:37), and has the form of an initiatory rite.

At no time should the danda come into contact with anything impure. Once initiated into samnyāsa the danda 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 dandī-ś are given one of five sizes of danda, depending on their height. The tallest samnyāsa-s are given danda-s with fourteen knots (known as Anant), and successively shorter samnyāsa-s with, respectively, twelve knots (Gopa’), ten knots (Vāsudeva’), eight knots (Nārayana’), and six knots (Sudarśana’). (Interviews were conducted with numerous dandī-s, mostly of the Macchilbandar Matha, at the Māgh Mela, in January and February, 2002.)

Upanayana is the traditional rite of passage for a Brahman or other twice-born male, into the twice-born (dvīta) society of those who are entitled to perform sacrifices. Before upanayana, the boy is, technically, a dudra (Vaiśeṣika Dharmaśāstra I.6), until he attains twice-born status. The Brahman householder in particular is required to perform sacrifices: nīya (permanent rites, such as the agnisthāna and śānti worship), naimittika (occasional rites, performed at child-birth, jātakarma, and death, antyesṭi) and kāmya (supererogatory rites, such as to obtain a male child or at the time of a pilgrimage to a holy place). Upanayana is traditionally performed in the eighth year for a Brahman, the eleventh year for a kṣatriya, and the twelfth year for a vāśya, though texts vary on the timing. See Prasad (1997) for further details.

There are distinct parallels and homologies between the life of the boy brahmācārin, before upanayana, and the samnyāsin. The brahmācārin studies away from the parental home, serving a guru. As a formal preparation for the life of a householder (gṛhaśāstra), the brahmācārin—like a samnyāsi—remains celibate, undergoes various austerities, begs for food and sleeps on the floor (Dharmaśāstras of Āpastamba I.1.9–1.7.26; Bhāuhāyana I.3.1–1.4.7; Vaiśeṣika XI.49–XI.79). During the upanayana the brahmācārin has his head shaved, leaving the topknot (a ceremony variously known as mūrgana, cūḍākaraṇa or cūjū, and was traditionally presented with a girdle (mehkhāli), sacred thread, deerskin and danda. The Brahman’s danda should be of bilva or pāṭēśa wood, and should be as long as to reach the end of his hair, the kṣatriya’s of vata or khedara, to reach the forehead, and a vāśya’s of pilu or udumbara, to reach the tip of his nose (Kaelber 1981; Prasad 1997:117).
(dīkṣā) in which the guru plays a central role, ritually handing the new renouncer his staff: the candidate is initiated into a renunciatory tradition.54

Current practice, which clearly reflects ancient tradition, is that during initiations at the Kumbha Mela all initiates are furnished with a staff (danda) and sacred thread, which confers temporary status on them as Brahmans,55 whether or not they actually were previously Brahmans by caste. The danda also confers the status of brahmacārin upon the candidate, symbolising his nominal allegiance to the monastic institutions. Gurus from dāndī institutions present candidates with danda-s to keep permanently, in continuation of the Brahmanical advaitā tradition whereby samnyāsīs carry a danda to indicate both their sectarian affiliation and renunciatory condition. However, at the completion of initiatory rites, non-dāndī samnyāsīs (i.e. paramahamsa-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 the samnyāsi 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 samnyāsa—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-samskār initiation.56 According to my informants nāgā initiations may, in some rare instances, occur directly, without prior samnyāsa initiation. A samnyāsi wishing to take nāgā initiation first approaches a śīr-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 / julūs) of the Kumbha Mela, the kotawāl goes to the eight divisions of his akhāḍā and announces that each division may send those wishing to become nāgās. The

54 See also Kaelber (1989:121): “Whereas the Sannyāsa Upaniṣads often state that the sannyāsin gives up his sacrificial cord, girdle, antelope skin, and upper garment, the Vākhānasasmārtā Śūtra makes it clear that the sannyāsin 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 (l), including the recitation of the Śāvitrī (Śāvitrīpravesānā), are virtually identical in each case. As part of the initiation the sannyāsin 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 brahmacārin had done before him, and like the brahmacārin the ascetic now begins a long period of training”.

55 See also Crooke (1896, Vol.2:471).

56 This account also derives from the video filmed by Rām Pūrī.
names of candidates are then recorded by the karbhari. Nāgā. Initiations take place at night, at 3.00 a.m. or 4.00 a.m. at Kumbha Melā and Ādhā (half) Kumbha Melās. At the appointed time the samnyāsi stands next to the kirti-stambha, a tall 'triumphal' column in the āśrama, 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 tāṅg tōde (literally, 'broken leg'). The samnyāsi is hence fully initiated into the akhādā as a nāgā, and attached to a nāgā renunciate lineage.

The rites of renunciation clearly indicate the process whereby the lineages of the danḍī matha-s and the akhādā-s are integrated. The samnyāsi has theoretically severed all ties to his previous social world, is nominally—but only nominally—beyond caste, and has become affiliated to either a danḍī lineage, or to a Daśanāmī akhādā (through his five gurus), in either case affiliated to the monastic tradition represented by the ācārya-s and the Śaṅkarācāryas. The substance of the samnyāsi'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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57 From different interviews, Sadananda Giri (1976:29–30) maintains that the method of initiating new nāgā-s is different in each akhādā. He also observes that formerly tāṅg tōde was performed but that nowadays there is 'only a slight pull of the penis'. It seems that formerly some initiates had the penis broken (tāṅg tōde) before samnyāsa, but never performed the virājā homa to become nāgā samnyāsi-s, remaining tāṅg tōde all their lives.

58 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.
CHAPTER 4: THE INTEGRATION OF VARIOUS LINEAGES: THE MATHĀMNĀYA-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 Mathāmnāyas, texts that contain the details of Daśanāmī lineages and the pīthas supposedly founded by Śāṅkara. 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 pīthas, and historical evidence in the form of texts and inscriptions, will also be assessed. A brief, preliminary discussion of Śāṅkara'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 Śāṅkara's authorship of texts, and his date

Śāṅkara is supposed to have organised the Daśanāmīs, and is sometimes attributed with the authorship of one or another of the Mathāmnāyas, short Sanskrit texts that present an overview of the order, its ten lineages and its pīthas. These texts will be analysed in the following section. The issue of the genuine works of Śāṅkara has attracted considerable scholarly inquiry. The longest list I have so far seen of works attributed to Śāṅkara is that contained in the Appendix of Piantelli (1974:1–XIII), which lists 433 works, 187 of which, it is indicated, are accepted as genuine by the tradition, including the Mathāmnāyādīvicāra/Saptamaṭhāmnāyādīvicāra.\(^1\) The Mathāmnāyasēṭu is included in the list as a text not accepted as genuine by the tradition, and the Mahānusāsanam is not mentioned.

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-Śāṅkara, and devotional hymns, are amongst the considerations leading most scholars who have

\(^1\) I have not seen this text, or seen any other reference to it.
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 Mathāmnāyas.

The issue is further complicated by the fact that numerous ācārya-s of both the official (four or five) and other advaita mātha-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 Brahma-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 Tārāhasyavivṛtti (Hacker 1995:43), and Rukmani notes yet another, Śaṅkararūjyapādayati, who was the author of the Bhattikavyavyākhyā. However, terms such as pujyapāda and bhagevatpāda are often used as terms of respect for a guru; they are not exclusively reserved for the author of the Brahma-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 commented on by Śaṅkara's direct disciples,⁵ namely the Brahma-sūtra-bhāṣya (BSB)—universally recognised as Śaṅkara's quintessential work—on which Padmapāda wrote the

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 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 Prakashātman (mid tenth century) in the Pañcapādikāvivaraṇa. Two works are attributed to Tōtaka, the Śrutisārasamudhoṣcharaṇa and a short text, Tōtāstaka (see S. Rajagopala Sastrī 1968:63). To Hastāmalaka is attributed the short work Hastāmalakaślokā (probably spurious). Also attributed to Sureśvara (besides Naiṣkarmyasiddhi) is the Mānasollāsa, a commentary on the Daksināmūrti-stotra attributed to Śaṅkara. The authenticity of both these works has been questioned (Potter 1981, Vol.3:560–551). 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 Tōtaka and Hastāmalaka on Advaita Vedānta has been negligible, Padmapāda founded one of the two main post-Śaṅkara schools of Advaita Vedānta, the Vivaraṇa (‘uncovering’) school. This was later overshadowed by the Bhāmati’s school. The main point of difference between the two schools is that according to the Vivaraṇa 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).
Pāñcapiādi, and Śaṅkara’s bhāṣya-s on two Upaniṣad-s, the Brihadāranyaka and the Taittirīya, on both of which Sureśvara wrote vārttika-s. Sureśvara also quotes the Upadeśasāhasra in his Naiskarmyasiddhi. 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.\textsuperscript{6} Using several criteria, he concludes that eleven commentaries (including those on the Bhagavad Gītā, Brahma-sūtra-s and nine Upaniṣad-s), eight stotra-s, and three prakaraṇa-grantha-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 mentioned 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 prastāna-s (the early Upaniṣad-s, Bhagavad Gītā and Brahma-sūtra-s), as well as the Gaudapādiya-bhāṣya, are attributed to Śaṅkara-Bhagavat in the utilized material, as are the Upadeśasāhasra and Vivekacūḍāmanī. 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 Dīkṣitā, commenting on the commentaries of four prominent philosophers in the latter half of the sixteenth century in his Catur-mata-leśa-saṃgraha, refers to Ānandaśīrtha, 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 Vivekacūḍāmanī.

Using the Brahma-sūtra-bhāṣya as a yardstick for genuine works, Mayeda

\textsuperscript{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, Śrīrangam, Pune and elsewhere.
(1992:6) believes Śaṅkara’s commentaries on the Brhadāraṇyaka, Chāndogya, Aitareya, Taittiriya, Isa, Katha, Mundaka, Praśna and Māṇḍūkya Upaniṣad-śs are probably genuine, as most probably are the commentaries on the Gaudapādiya-kārikā and Adhyātmapātala of Āpastamba-dharmasūtra. While the Upadeśasāhasrī is certainly genuine, the commentary on the Śvetāsvatara Upaniṣad may be spurious. Although Hacker, Nakamura and Mayeda believe the Yogasūtra-bhāṣya-vīvaraṇa may be genuine, Rukmani’s (1998) examination of the work leads one to conclude that this is highly improbable.

Śaṅkara’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 mathā-s and their guru-paramparā-s, which will be examined in following sections. Currently, the most commonly accepted date for Śaṅkara is 788 to 820 CE, first (?) proposed by C. P. Tiele in 1877. However, the date of the fifth century BCE proposed by Narayana Sastri in his Age of Śaṅkara—first published in 1916—received widespread endorsement by the monastic tradition, represented by the pithā-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. A consideration of references in the works of Śaṅkara and others indicates that Śaṅkara’s floruit may have been around 700 CE, around a century before the widely accepted date of 788–820 CE.

At first glance, there would seem to be some slight evidence for the currently accepted date for Śaṅkara (788–820 CE), in that when Sāntarakṣita and Kāmaklaśīla are discussing Upaniṣada-vāda, in the eighth century, they make no reference to Śaṅkara.

7 On the basis of the signature ‘Bhagavadpāda’.
8 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 Śaṅkara’s authorship improbable though not impossible.
9 The position of the current Śaṅkarācāryas on Śaṅkara’s genuine works is that a wider body of texts should be included, including the Tantric Saundaryalahari (see Candraśekarendra Sarasvatī 2001). Belvarkar believes the short text Pañcikaranā should also be attributed to Śaṅkara, although he acknowledges that there is nothing in the text to warrant ascription to Śaṅkara. The Vārttika on the text, supposedly by Śrīraśtra is redolent of Tantra and extremely suspect (Potter 1981:318). For some of the more useful discussions, see Belvarkar (1929:209–215); Kunjunni Raja (1960:125–148); Thrasher (1979); Umesh (1981:35–129); Nakamura (1983:57–89); Pande (1994:41–54).
10 Outlines of the History of Ancient Religions (see Kunjunni Raja 1960:129). This was on the basis of Yajñavalkya’s Aśvāmitta-sudhākara and Bhaṭṭa Nīlakanṭha’s Śaṅkara-mandārasaurabhā, which refer to Śaṅkara being born in the village of Kāli in Kerala in the year 3889 of the Keś 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.
11 This date was argued for by Nakamura (1983:57–89). See Appendix 10 for further details.
Further, the Jaina doxographer Haribhadra (c.730–770 CE), although quoting Bhartrhari, Dignāga and Dharmakīrti, also makes no reference to Śaṅkara (Umеш 1981:ii). However, though Śaṅkara later came to be considered as not only the pre-eminent advaitin, but as perhaps the pre-eminent philosopher of India, it is apparent that for several centuries post-Śaṅkara, it was Maṇḍanamisra—who was roughly Śaṅkara's contemporary—who was considered the main exponent of advaita, and not Śaṅkara. For example, Vacaspatimiśra's interpretation of Śaṅkara relies on the doctrines in the Brahmāsiddhi of Maṇḍanamisra (Subramahmanya Sastrī 1935:vi). 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) 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 Kāñcipuram—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 awareness of his views 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

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13 See Chappie (1993:1–2) for Haribhadra's date.
14 Subramahmanya Sastrī (1935:vi) also asserts that Rāmānuja (1017–1137), in his quintessential work, Śrī Bhāṣya, only quotes Maṇḍanamisra as the advaita prototype. However, it is evident that Rāmānuja also refers to Śaṅkara and his arguments: as dramaḍa bhāṣya-kāra (p. 119); as bhāṣya-kāra (p. 120; p. 144); and as the incarnation, Śaṅkara (p. 111). (References are to the Karmākara edition, 1959–1964.)
15 See Potter (1981, Vol. 3:23 fn. 25; 1977, Vol. 1:15, 485, 604). For example, the Nyāya-Vaiśeṣikas Śrīdhara (c. 991) and Aparākadeva (c. 1125) notice Maṇḍana's arguments but not Śaṅkara's.
16 Such as Kαñcnapura.
17 According to one tradition, it was the famous Jaina, Akạlaṅka—and not Śaṅkara—who defeated Buddhists in Kāñcipuram. A village in the suburbs of Kαñc(puram) is still known by the name 'Jaina Kαñc'. Many Jaina centres (that appear to have been weaving centres) were subsequently converted into Kαḷāmukha saṅkha centres. Jainism began to acquire more influence than Buddhism in Kāñcipuram around the seventh century, and in other parts of Tamil Nadu during the latter part of the first millennium (Desai 1957:25–96; Champanakakshmi 1996:397–398).
18 Buddhaghosa (fifth century) and other Buddhists propagated their doctrine from the vihāras of Kāñc. Dīhnāga (c.480–540) was born in a suburb of Kāñc (later going north to study logic under Vasubandhu in Nalanda). Dharmapāla (530–561) was also a native of Kāñc. Bhavya (500–570) also lived in south India, as did Dharmakīrti who lived in the kingdom of Cudāmāni. Around 640, Hūang Tszang reports more than a hundred Buddhist monasteries in Kāñc, with more than 10,000 Sthāvira monks (Watters, Vol.2, 1905:226). Buddhism was still a living religion in Kāñcipuram in the twelfth century, surviving there into the sixteenth century (Mahalingam 1969:126; Chaudhury 1969:234–236; Subramanayam 1975:23–24).
several centuries after his demise, until his promotion by *advaita matha*-s, which were first founded in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries.

4.2 Organisational structure of the Daśanāmīs, according to the the *Mathāmnāya-stotra, Śrī-mathāmnāya-setu* and other texts

The normative account of the Daśanāmīs is embedded in a few short Sanskrit texts, known variously as (*Śrī*) *Mathāmnāya, Mathāmnāya-stotra, Mathāmnāya-setu* and *Mathetivṛttta*, which detail the four āmnāya-s, all supposedly but improbably written by Śāṅkarācārya. The *Mathāmnāya-sāasanam* (or *Mahānuśāsanam*), frequently appended to the *Mathāmnāya-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 gaddi is to be passed on only to the virtuous and learned samnyāsī. One aspect of this text is as a legitimation of the four pitha-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 Vedas 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 mediaeval period. Similar to the Tantric tradition, which has western, eastern, northern and southern āmnāya-s, the Daśanāmī āmnāya-s pertain to the four pitha-s—supposedly founded by Śāṅkarācārya—at the western, eastern, northern, and southern borders of India. The four āmnāya-s of the matha-s are said to be "revealed" (in all texts) in a sequence, such that the first is the western āmnāya, the Śāradā mattha (at Dvārakā); the second is the eastern āmnāya, the Govardhana mattha (at Puri); the third is the northern āmnāya, the Jyotir mattha (at Jyośimāth); and the fourth is the southern āmnāya, the Śrīnegī mattha. 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 pitha-s. There is, however, an ongoing dispute concerning the location of the 'genuine' southern pitha: whether it should be located at Śrīnegī 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

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20 There has been some discussion in orthodox Hindu circles concerning why the southern pitha is located inland, and not at a coastal extremity, such as Rāmeśvaram. See, for example, Ramesan (1968).
commentary on the Daśanāmīs that has been published in the previous 150 years.\textsuperscript{21} 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.\textsuperscript{22}

During the first initiation into the Daśanāmīs, the pāra-guru samśkār, the initiate is instructed on his lineage, lifestyle, gotra, pitha and so on, according to which of the ten names he receives. This information—in particular, the initiate’s own mathāmnāya—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 vams vṛks and Stotrapuspañjali.\textsuperscript{23} In contrast, the contemporary structure of the Daśanāmīs, in terms of its various branches and sub-branches, is ill understood by most initiated samnyāsī-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 vams vṛks describes the cosmic evolution from “the void”, through various gods and rṣi-s, to Śaṅkara and his four disciples, who head the four Mathāmnāya-s. Additional information in this text includes the constitution of the madhyā-s, the four ācārya-s of the four yuga-s,\textsuperscript{24} the four cermonial javelins (bhāla),\textsuperscript{25} and the four

\textsuperscript{21} There are differences to be found in some of the earlier ethnographies. Crooke’s account (1896 Vol.4:273) relies on the Panjab 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 as mentioned in the standard hagiographies.) Maclagan reports that according to some accounts the distribution of samnyāsa-s per matha as follows: Jyotir (Giri, Purī, Bhāratī); Śrīgerī (Vana, Aranya, Tirtha); Nārāgīnī (Parvata, Āśrama); Brahmacārī (Sarasvatī, Dandī). 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, Dandī 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.

\textsuperscript{22} See Mishra (2001:vii–xiv) for some of the legal judgements that have derived from the Mathāmnāyas.

\textsuperscript{23} Yamunā Giri, a foreign woman initiated in 2001, kindly provided me with copies of these texts.

\textsuperscript{24} Satyug Brahmā, Viṣṇu, Śiva; Dvāparug, Vyās, Śukdeva; Tretayug, Śiva, Śakti, Parāśara; Kāluyug, Gauda, Govindaśārya.

\textsuperscript{25} Dattaprakāśa (at Ujjain); Sūryaprakāśa (at Prayāg); Candraprakāśa (at Nasik); and the Bhaliravaprakāśa (at Haridvār).
The ten names are assigned to one of four strings (tenīs): Uttar (north), of the Giris; Purv (east), of the Vanas and Aranyas; Daksin (south), of the Puris; Paścin (west), of the Tirthas and Āśramas.

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

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

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25 DattamukhT (at Ujjain); SuryamukhT (at Prayāg); Ayamukh (at Haridvār); and the Gopala (at Nāsik).

26 According to another undated Hindi paper circulated amongst some DasanamTs: Puff represents the top of the head; BharatT, the forehead; SarasvatT, the tongue; Vana and Aranya, the back; Sāgara, the stomach; Giri, the arms; Pārvata, the legs; Tirtha and Āśrama, the feet.

28 I cannot be sure, but I believe these are the strings that divide the area containing the ceremonial dhūni-s at matha-s, such that the different lineages are stationed in their respective quarters.


30 This text, together with the Mahānūsāsanam and Śesamnoya (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 Mathāmnoya-setu published by Śarma (1963; 642–652), but for a different verse order in some passages. Śarma's text of the Mathāmnoya-stotra (another text containing virtually the same information) is from Śrīnāgar pitha, obtained in the form of a very old handwritten copy from the Śrī Kāmarūpa matha of Banaras. Śarma (1963; 647) states that the Mathāmnoya-stotra he had collected from other mathas, at Nāvadvīpa, Kāśi, Kāmarūpa, Lahore, Pune and Mirzapur, are similar. The texts of the Mathāmnoya-setu and the Mathānūsāsanam are differently ordered in some passages in some versions of the texts, different versions also omitting or adding the occasional verse.

31 Entries with a single asterisk (*) indicate differences contained in the versions of the Śrī Mathāmnoya-setu and Mathāmnoya-stotra published by Śarma (1963; 642–652). The Śrīnāgar (2001) provides the Śrādā pitha āmnāya, which is identical to Miśra (1996). At variance with Mishra (2001); Vidyānand Giri **(1993; 63–66); Upādhyāy *** (1967; 601–617); Puri **** (2001; 44–48); Kunhan Raja ***** (1933; 48–49). The information in the Daś nām vamśī vṛkṣa is almost identical to the Mathāmnoya-setu of Mishra, with the exception that the deities of the Jyotir matha are called Śūrya Nārāyaṇa and Punyagiri; and both Hastaṃalaka and Pṛthvīdhāraṇāya are assigned to Śrīnāgar. The sīlāda of Jyotir is called Rādhināth, and the āsdara of Jyotir is Dattatreya (no other āmnāya in this text has an āsdara). The Śrīnāgar matha has (inexplicably) the gaddi of Anusūyā (sītā).
Matha    Šāradā-pīṭha  (also named Kālikā)
(Western kṣetra) Dvārakā (Arabian Coast, Gujarat)
Jurisdiction (maṇḍala)   Sindhu, Sauvīra,32 Saurāṣṭra,35 Mahārāṣṭra
Orders (paṭāni)   Tīrtha, Āśrama
Deities (m)   Siddeśvara
Tīrtha / kṣetra  (r)34 Gomati, Dvārakā (Gaṅgā-Gomati)****
Veda   Sāma
Mahāvākyas35   tat tvam asi36   (you are that)
Gotra   Avigata
Brahmacāri name   Śrīnāma
Sampradāya   Kīṭavāra
Appointed pontiff Viśvarūpa (Padmapāda)* **** (Hastāmalaka)***

Matha    Govardhan-pīṭha
(Eastern kṣetra) Jagannāth (Purī, East Coast, Orissa)
Jurisdiction (maṇḍala)   Aṅga,37 Vaṅga,36 Kaliṅga,39 Magadha,40 Utkala,41 Barbarā (?)42
Orders (paṭāni)   Aranya, Vana
Deities (m)   Jagannāth  (f) Vimalā (Vṛṣalā)*
Tīrtha / kṣetra  Mahodadhi (sea), Purusottama.
Veda   Rg
Mahāvākhya   prajñānam brahma43 (knowledge is brahma)
Gotra   Kaśyapa
Brahmacāri name   Prakāśa
Sampradāya   Bhogavāra
Appointed pontiff Padmapāda (Hastāmalaka) ****

32 The area adjacent to the Indus river.
33 The area around Surāṭ.
34 (r) = river.
35 An aphorism (great saying) from the Upanisads.
36 Chāndogya Upanisad (6.8.7); attached to Śāma Veda.
37 The country around Bhagalpur, in Bihar.
38 West Bengal.
39 Orissa.
40 West-central Bihar
41 Orissa.
42 The barbarian region (?)..
43 Altaraya Upanisad (3.5.3); attached to Rg Veda.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Matha</th>
<th>Jyotir-pitha</th>
<th>(also named Badarikā, or Śrī)</th>
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<td>(Northern kṣetra)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Jurisdiction (mandala)</td>
<td>Kuru-pañcāla,44 Kaśmīra, Kamboja45</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Orders (padāni)</td>
<td>Girī, Parvata, Sāgara</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deities (m)</td>
<td>Badarikā (Nārāyaṇa)* **** (f) Pūrṇagirī (Punyagirī) ****</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tīrtha / Kṣetra</td>
<td>(r) Alakanandā, Badarikāśrama</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Veda</td>
<td>Atharva</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mahāvāyika</td>
<td>ayamātmā brahma46 (the self is brahma)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gotra</td>
<td>Bhṛgu</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Brahmačārī name</td>
<td>Ānanda</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Sampradāya</td>
<td>Ānandavāra</td>
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<tr>
<td>Appointed pontiff</td>
<td>Ṭotaka (Troṭaka)</td>
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<thead>
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<th>Matha</th>
<th>Śringeri-pitha</th>
<th>(also named Śaradā)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(Southern kṣetra)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Jurisdiction (mandala)</td>
<td>Āndhra, Dravīḍa,47 Karṇata,48 Kerala</td>
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<td>Orders (padāni)</td>
<td>Sarasvatī, Bhāratī, Purī</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deities (m)</td>
<td>Ādi Varāha (f) Kāmākṣi (Śaradā)* ****</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tīrtha / Kṣetra</td>
<td>(r) Tūṅgabhadra, Rāmeśvaram</td>
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<tr>
<td>Veda</td>
<td>Yajur</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mahāvāyika</td>
<td>aham brahmāsmi49 (I am brahma)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gotra</td>
<td>Bhūrbhuva</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brahmačārī name</td>
<td>Caitanya</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Sampradāya</td>
<td>Bhūrivāra</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Appointed pontiff</td>
<td>Hastāmalaka (Suṛēsvara)* *** **** 50 (Prthvīdhara) ** *****</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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44 Western Gangetic plain.
45 Eastern Afghanistan.
46 Morningkya Upaniṣad (4.2); attached to Atharva Veda.
47 Tamil Nadu.
48 Karnataka.
49 Brhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad (1.4.10); attached to Śukla (white) Yajur Veda.
50 Prthvīdhara is identified with Suṛēsvara by Purī (and some other commentators), while Śarma identifies Prthvīdhara with Hastāmalaka.
4.3 Gotra, sampradāya, Brahmaçarī name, Veda and mahāvākyā

In the Mathāmnāya-s we find an assignment of the four disciples of Śaṅkara to the four pithā-s, each with its own Vedic school; and the ten names distributed in four groups, each with its own Brahmanical gotra, sampradāya and Brahmaçarī name. As can be seen, the two points of disagreement between the Mathāmnāya-s concern the deities (at three of the pitha-s) and the appointment of Śaṅkara’s disciples. The Mathāmnāya-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 ṛṣis.\(^5\) The gotra-s were most probably distinguished originally on the basis of different Vedic rites performed.\(^6\) 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 Mālvā Brahmans, and other groups, all with various gotra-s. Four groups of gotra-s are traditionally assigned to one or another of the four Vedas,\(^5\) this arrangement also being reflected in the correspondence (albeit inaccurate) in the Mathāmnāya-s of four gotra-s to four Vedas. Mediaeval āgama texts of Śaiva-Siddhānta reveal that traditional initiation into Śaivism also entails the acquisition of the gotra/gocāra 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 ṛṣis, in the Dharmaḥsastra-s (Mitchener 1982:30),\(^5\) while the Kaśyapa gotra is traditionally in the group of gotra-s that follow the Sāma Veda (Sherring 1872:8). This is inconsistent with the scheme of the Mathāmnāya-s, whereby the Kaśyapa gotra is assigned to the

\(^5\) 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).

\(^6\) One of the original senses of gotra, as used in the Rg Veda, was of a ‘cowstall’ (Kane 1935:10). For Jainas, gotra had 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 pravara recitation by Brahmans, which accompanies daily sāṃśaya worship, is a recitation of a list of usually three ancestors, who were among the seven primordial ṛṣis, 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).

\(^5\) 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.

\(^5\) Agastya is to be found occasionally in the Dharmaḥsastra-s as an eighth ṛṣi.
Govardhan pīṭha, which follows the Rg Veda. Bhṛgu appears as an eighth rṣī in a second list of rṣīs, which came to take textual preference over the first list, notably in most of the lists to be found in the Purāṇas (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 Mathāmnāya-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 Mathāmnāya-s—which initiates are supposed to learn—are essentially esoteric verbal markers of the initiate’s identity and lineage within the Daśanāmīs, used for mutual identity and detecting imposters: a kind of samnyāsī pravara.

The origin of the four sampradāya names, Ānandavara, Bhūrivara, 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 Daśanāmī 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 Daśanāmīs as an identificatory title, such as, for example, Mahant Lāl Purī, Bhūrivā. (It can be seen, according to the mathāmnāya-s, that Bhūrivā indicates a Purī, Bhāratī or Sarasvatī; Ānandavār indicates a Giri, Parvata or Sāgara; etc.) At the time of initiation into samnyāsa by the ācārya-guru, a mahāvākyā from one of four Upaniṣad-s—attached to its respective Veda—is given, the liberating mantra of the lineage. However, the distribution in the Mathāmnāya-s of the four Veda-s to the four cardinal

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55 See Ghurye (1964:85–87); Dazey (1990:288). This author has also failed to find any references to these gotra-s in published works.
56 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 (bhūr 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. Bhogbār, 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. Ānand-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. Kanśil-bār, who have no desire and live on air and water, in continual beatitude.
57 Of the Mahānirvāṇī akhādā at Kankhal (see Bibliography).
directions is not corroborated in other Brahmanical sources.6

The four Brahmacārī names given, Ānanda, Caitanya, Prakāśa and Svarūpa, are
the names given to brahmacārīs who have passed their first stage of initiation to become
dandīs. They will subsequently undergo the vīrajā-homa to become dandī-saṁnyāsīs.
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 pīṭhas

In this section, 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 four matha-s to be the only legitimate ones were
far from universally established. It can be seen from the variant schemes of the
Mathāmnāya-s (as shown above) that there is also inconsistency concerning the
appointments to the four pīṭha-s, depending on which text is referred to. The identity of
Suresvara, who is claimed by the Śrīgeri, Dvārakā and Kāñci matha-s (see below), is

6 However, Mishra (2001:2) cites the Bhāgavata Purāṇa (3.12.37), stating that the Rg, Sāma, Atharva
and Yajur Vedas 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, Sāma and Atharva—became
manifest” (trans. Prabhupada): र्ग-यजुर्सन्मथावश्वक्ष्यन वेदान पुर्वदिक्षित mukhaṁ (सांत्रम् त्याम
स्तुति-स्तोत्रम् प्रयासोत्तम) vyadhat kramāt. There is no mention of directions.

6 Rose (1914:353) records two (variant) versions of the appointments to the matha-s. Chakraborti
(1973:181) also remarks on the disagreement amongst scholars over the appointments to the matha-s,
one issue being whether it was Hastāmalaka or Padmapāda who was the first appointed pontiff of the
Puri matha. The Śrīgeri tradition, according with the Mathāmnāya-stotra, maintains that the first pontiff
of Dvārakā was Padmapāda.
also disputed.60

Over the previous few hundred years, several advaita matha-s have claimed to have been founded by Śaṅkara, 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 and be accorded due honours (aḍḍa-pālaka), 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 Mathāmnāya-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.61 Claims and counter-claims by rival matha-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.

There is also an ongoing dispute concerning whether Śaṅkara founded either four matha-s, as per the Mathāmnāya-s, or five matha-s, including Kāñcipuram (known as the

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60 Sureśvara is identified by the monastic tradition as Maṇḍanamisra (see Pande 1994:281–283). Relatively large parts of all the hagiographies of Śaṅkara are dedicated to the debate between Śaṅkara and either Maṇḍanamisra—the famous Mīmāṃsaka and author of the Brahmasiddhi, who is portrayed as a disciple of another great Mīmāṃsaka, Kumārila—or Viśvarūpa. In the ŚDV (10.103–107), after his conversion by Śaṅkara, Maṇḍanamisra (a grhastraße) acquired the name Sureśvara (as a sāmyasāh). The ŚDV also refers to Maṇḍanamisra as Viśvarūpa. The identification of Maṇḍanamisra and Sureśvara is also made by Anantānandagiri, in the Śaṅkaravijaya (sec. 55), and by Civillāsa in the Śaṅkaravijaya (10.44–45). However, in other hagiographies of Śaṅkara (Vyāscāla’s Śaṅkaravijaya (6.5.36); Govindānātha’s Śaṅkarakāvyacarita (6.1); Lakṣmanā Sāstri’s Guruvamsakāvya (2.143) Śaṅkara’s opponent is identified as a disciple of Kumārila called Viśvarūpa; and Maṇḍanamisra is a different person. Many scholars have argued, on philosophical grounds, against the possibility of Maṇḍanamisra being Sureśvara: see Dasgupta (Vol. 2, 1922:22–87); Hiriyanna (1923, 1924); Bhattacharyya (1931:301–308); Kuppuswami Sastri (1937:xxiv–lvii) illustrates not only the philosophical differences between the two authors, but points to a long line of Vedāntins—including Vācaspatimīśa, Viśvakarman, Prakāśātman, Anandabodha, Prakāśārvakāra, Citsukha, Amalānanda, Ānandagiri, Viḍyārāṇya, Madhusūdanaśarvasvat, and Brahmānandasarasvat—and philosophers of other schools, whose works illustrate their understanding that Maṇḍanamisra and Sureśvara were different people, with different views on particular philosophical points. Indeed, Sureśvara, in his Vārttika and Nāṣkāryasiddhi, sneers at some of the views of Maṇḍana (p. xxx). The main division in advaita, between the Bhāmaçı and Viśvarūpa schools (concerning whether the locus of nescience resides in jīva or brahma) goes back to Maṇḍanamisra and Sureśvara. However, in some works (see p. xxv), for example Viḍyārāṇya’s Viśvarūpa-prameya-samgraha (p. 92), a passage from Sureśvara’s Vārttika (4.8) is attributed to Viśvarūpa (Dasgupta, p. 83), lending some credence to their identification in the Mathāmnāya-s. Also, in none of Maṇḍanamisra’s works, or in the philosophical works of other authors, is Maṇḍanamisra mentioned as a disciple of either Kumārila or Śaṅkara.

61 Amongst the hagiographies, the Kāñcī matha relies most on the evidence of the AŚV (see below), where Śaṅkara is said to have passed away at Kāñcī. (This text is rejected as inauthentic by Śrīgeri.) In their support, the Kāñcī matha also cite evidence for this from the Śivarahasya and the Mārkandeya-samhitā, the authority of which is disputed by Śrīgeri.
Kāmakōṭī pīṭhā). This matha is nevertheless fully recognised in most orthodox circles.\(^{62}\)

Both Śrīṅgerī and Kāṅcipuram claim legitimacy as the authentic southern pīṭhā, and a substantial volume of polemical publications from both sides have issued in the last century, the foremost contributors being, on the Śrīṅgerī side, Śarma (1963); and on the Kāṅcī side, Kuppuswāmi (1972; 2001)\(^{63}\) and Narayana Sastri (1971 [1916]), who published the first work in English in support of the Kāṅcī claim. Recently, Antarkar (2001) has responded to numerous points raised by Śarma, Aiyer and Sastri, and Venkataraman, objecting to the legitimacy of the Kāṅcī matha. Śarma claims, contrary to significant epigraphic evidence, that the Kāṅcī matha only came into existence in the early nineteenth century. The Pūnya Śloka Maṇjarī (PŚM), one of the three hagiographies of Śaṅkara accepted as genuine by the Kāṅcī matha,\(^{64}\) contains a guru-parampara for the Kāṅcī pīṭhā, going back to Śaṅkara's founding of the matha and ascension of the gaddī in 480 BCE;\(^{65}\) he is followed by Śūreśvara who was on the gaddī from 477 to 407 BCE.\(^{66}\) The guru-parampara is said by the Kāṅcī to have been prepared by Sarvajñāsadbodha, the fifty-sixth aśaṭa, on the gaddī from 1512 to 1539. Later

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\(^{62}\) Published in Kalidāna (Tirthāṅkār) (1997:547–548) is a list of twenty ādānta-kāśikā-pīṭhā-s and upāpīṭhā-s. The five main pīṭhā-s "established by Śaṅkara": Jyotiśa pīṭhā, Govardhaṇa pīṭhā, Śāradā pīṭhā, Śrīṅgerī pīṭhā, Kāmakōṭī pīṭhā, seven "branches or upamātha-s of the Śrīṅgerī pīṭhā" (the following matha-s): Kūndī (=Kudalī), Śivagāmā, Śivānī, Śirāṇa, Puspa-gāmī, Śankeśā-gara, Raṁcāndrā-pūra (Hosangāgā tālukā, Mysore District); eight mathas in the Karnataka area: Harīharpur (near Śrīṅgerī), Bhandāgādī (Udupī tālukā), Yaḍgūṭī (Kāḷi-gīrī tālukā, Kodānda-rama (Tumkur tālukā, Mysore District), Svarṇavīllī (Sīrī tālukā), Neelāmāvu (Uttarā Kāṇḍā tālukā), Yoganāyana (Holenarasūpūr, Mysore District), Bālakuduru (Udupī tālukā). Another list of twenty mathas is cited by Anantendra Sarasvatī (1968:388) from a work that I have not seen, by Mahāvidvāna Venkāṭācāraya Śarma. These mathas are described as Śaṅkara-yādānta-dhāma-pīṭhā-dhyāna-paramparāgata-mathā-s: Sumeru, Paramāṭma, Sumeru (at Kāśi), Parvāyaka, Koppalā, Śrī-Sailām, Rāma-emāram, Gītānājī, Honnamahālī, Kālīvalyapura, Miḷaḷabagalu, Śiṭrī, Giri-nāsaka, Nīlīmāvanā, Parālā, Kāśi, Tīrtharājapura, Gāngōtṛi, Tīrthahallī. There is also a reference to a Śaṅkara matha at Gāṅgōtṛī in The Light of Asia (1894:331). My suspicion is that this may be to a now practically derelict matha at Ukhīmāṭhā (near Gāṅgōtṛī), which I visited in 1985. This appears also be the matha referred to by Ghosh (1930:12)—who cites Sister Nivedita's Northern Tirthas—which was originally granted to the "Kedarnāṭ order of Śaṅkara-cārya" for (presumably) military gosain-s in the service of the kings of Gadhvāl. The mahant was said to be the 125th in succession.

\(^{63}\) Kuppuswāmi responds, in large measure, to the arguments presented by R. Krishnaswāmī Aiyer and K. R. Venkataraman in The Truth about the Kumbakonam mutt, [Pubisher and place not identified]1965. (I have not been able to see this work.) Bader (2000:365) lists thirteen polemical works arising from disputes between the mathas, including those by Śarma (1963), and Aiyer and Venkataraman (1965).

\(^{64}\) The others are Anantānandagiri's Śaṅkara-viṣaya (see following section) and the Guru-ratna-mālā.

\(^{65}\) Antarkar (2001:38) and Veezinathan (1972:1) also refer to the Jagadgururatnamālākhastra (Guru-ratna-mālā/mālākha [GRM]), containing a list of 57 ācārya-s for the Kāmakōṭī pīṭhā. The work is attributed by the Kāṅcī matha to Śaḍāśavabrahmendra, who was co-student with Ātmabodhendra (1586–1638), both being disciples of Paramahamsa Śivendra (1539–1586), ācārya no. 57. It appears that a commentary on the GRM, the Susma, and the PŚM (part 1)—part 2 was written at a later date—were both written by Ātmabodha. The Susma contains references to the Brhad-śaṅkara-viṣaya of Citsukha, and the Prācin-śaṅkara-viṣaya (Pande 1994:21), the two lost hagiographies of Śaṅkara discussed by Bader (see following section).

additions to the parampara were added by several subsequent ācārya-s, the current reigning ācārya being Jayendrasarasvatī, the sixty-ninth. However, the credibility of the guru-parampara pertaining to the period prior to the sixteenth century is doubtful.

The earliest record of an advaita matha at Kāñcī is a copper-plate epigraph, dated to 1291/2 CE, that records the grant of a village called Ambikāpuram (near Kāñcī) to Śri Śaṅkarārya (also referred to as Śaṅkara-yogin), by Vijaya-ganḍagopāla, a Telegu Colā ruler. The inscription mentions pūjā to Candramauliśvara and advaita upadeśa. It has been claimed, by some Kāñcī supporters, that the inscription is referring to a Śaṅkarācārya, and provides evidence of a matha founded by him. However, firstly, it is clear that the reference cannot be to Ādi Śaṅkara, as no one suggests that Śaṅkara lived at such a late date. Secondly, the name in the inscription is Śaṅkarāya and not Śaṅkarācārya.

A Tamil inscription in the Śiva temple at Ambikāpuram, dated 1516 CE (śaka 1436), is signed by Čandraśekharasarasvatī of the Kāñcī matha, and refers to a village granted to the matha, confirming the aforementioned grant of 1291/2 CE by Vijaya-ganḍagopāla (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 Candracūdasarasvatī, disciple of Mahādevasarasvatī. In 1527 CE (śaka 1450) Kṛṣṇadevarāya made a further grant, of the village named Udāyambākam, to Sadāśivasarasvatī, disciple of Candraśekharasarasvatī, wherein Sadāśiva is described as Śiva incarnate, besmeared with holy ash, and wearing rudrakṣa mālā (El XIV:168-175). While there are several consistent records concerning the names of the early pontiffs of the Kāñcī matha, the name Śaṅkarācārya first appears in epigraphs at Kāñcī in 1686 CE. The four other matha-s consistently deny the authenticity of the Kāñcī matha, yet the matha currently enjoys equal status with the Dvārakā and Śrīṅgerī matha-s, the three matha-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

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68 See, for example, Kuppuswami (1991:xxix–xxx), who assigns this inscription, contra El, to 1111 CE. A Tamil inscription dated 1536 Śaka (1514 CE) refers to Ambikāpuram as "Namandu Maddappuram Ambi", meaning village or lands granted to a matha.
69 In another grant, of 1506 CE (śaka 1429), Mahādevasarasvatī is mentioned as a disciple of Sadāśivasarasvatī (El XIII, p. 122), while Sadāśivasarasvatī is a disciple of Candraśekharasarasvatī, 'Candraśekhara' and 'Candracūḍā' being homonyms (El XIV, p. 169).
70 See also El XIII, p. 122.
Śaṅkarācāryas of those institutions have been, and continue to be, held in very high regard.

Regarding the polemical arguments against Kāṇḍī, one strand of Šarma’s multifaceted argument is the absence of any reference to Kāṇḍī in the Mathāmnāyas. However, the Kāṇḍī matha currently denies the authenticity of the Mathāmnāyas, believing that they post-date Vidyāranya and were not written by Śaṅkara. This is the view of most scholars who have examined the Mathāmnāyas. However, at the end of the nineteenth century, in response to objections by critics that Kāṇḍī was not mentioned in the Mathāmnāyas, some supporters of Kāṇḍī either found or produced a Mathāmnāya-setu that included Kāṇḍī, as the madhyāmnāya or maulāmnāya, and constituting the fifth āmnāya. However, the production of this āmnāya appears to have detracted from the Kāṇḍī claim, rather than substantiating it as intended. Critics of the Kāṇḍī claim, notably Šarma (1963:312 ff.), have devoted a substantial effort to pointing out the inconsistencies contained in the Kāṇḍī Mathāmnāya. For around 120 years, since the controversy first began to generate considerable heat, the claim of the Kāṇḍī matha is that Śaṅkara founded five matha-s, with himself as the first ācyā at Kāṇḍī, and his four disciples at the other places recorded in the Mathāmnāyas. The main substance of the Śrṅgerī claim is that the Kāṇḍī matha is a branch matha—of which there are many—of the Śrṅgerī matha.

One of the issues that has complicated the argument is the shifting of the Kāṇḍī matha to Kumbakonam, which took place certainly prior to 1763 (Antarkar 2001:139),

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71 In response to an inquiry I made to the Kāṇḍīpuram pitha (23.06.02), the secretary, P. Neelakanta Iyer, kindly wrote to me (03.07.02) that, in the opinion of many scholars—he also cites a court ruling—the Mathāmnāyas are historically unreliable, were not written by Śaṅkara, and came into existence after the time of Vidyāranya. However a Mathāmnāya-setu that records five matha-s is referred to (see below), Kāṇḍī being the Mūlāmnāya, presided over by Śaṅkara himself, the others by his disciples. (I have not been able to see this text.)

72 Šarma (1963:316–336) refers to a mathāmnāya published by the Kumbakonam matha in 1894.

73 Details from this āmnāya are to be found in Sarma (1963: ‘kha’), who refers to this āmnāya also as the mūlāmnāya, ārdvāmnāya and mukhyāmnāya: Matha, Śāradā; Āśrama, Indrasarasvatī; Pitha, Kāmakoti; Brahmaśaśtra, Satyabrahmacārī; Veda, Rg; Mahēvākya, Amṛ Tatsat; Sampradāya, Mithyāvāra; ĀśaIya, Śrī Śaṅkarācārya. Details provided by Aiyer and Sastri (1962:98) are as per Sarma, but also included are: Kṣetra, Satyavrata Kāṇḍī; Devata, Ekamraṇātha/Kāmakoti or Kamākṣī; Tīrtha, Kampa Sarasar.

74 In 1888, a forum of scholars and pandits met at at the Banaras vyavastha and decided that only four matha-s were legitimate. Their decision was based primarily on the ŚCV and Mathāmnāyas (Antarkar 2001:135–137). Ironically, it coincided with a tour of the north by Mahādevasarasvatī, the 63rd ācyā at Kumbakonam matha. However, the purpose of the vyavasthā was to discredit the claim of one Sadānandatīrtha Svāmī that Śaṅkara founded a fifth matha at Mūlābalga in Dvārakā (see below).
most probably in 1743 (Srinivasan 1979:246). From epigraphic evidence, it appears that the Kamakoṭī pīṭha was located in the Viṣṇukāṇṭi part of Kāṇḍīpūrām at least until 1686. Owing to Muslim raids, the maṭha was then temporarily shifted to Tanjore, at the invitation of the rāja, Pratapa Simha, who built a new maṭha and had a golden image of Kamākṣi dēvi installed. The maṭha was then shifted to Kumbakonam (Gnanamab 1973:10), which may have been the site of a Śaṅkara maṭha since the thirteenth century (Champalakāshmi 1996:344). Endowments were made to the Kumbakonam maṭha by the provision of the late Vījayanagara ruler Vēṅkaṭā V in Ś.1632 (1710 CE). The main maṭha returned to the Śivakāṇṭi part of Kāṇḍīpūrām in the early nineteenth century, the Kumbakonam maṭha now being a branch maṭha of Kāṇḍīpūrām.

While there is an on-going dispute between the Śrīgeri and Kāṇḍīpūrām pīṭha-s as to which pīṭha was founded by Śaṅkara as the south Indian pīṭha, the Sumeru pīṭha of Banaras also has a claim to have been founded by Śaṅkara, as the northern pīṭha. Sastri and Kumaraśwamy (1971:202) believe the maṭha moved to Kumbakonam in the latter part of the eighteenth century. Srinivasan (1979:273 fn. 160) refers to a [unidentifiable] copper-plate inscription of from the Kamakoṭi temple at Kāṇḍī, that refers to Mahādevendrasarasvatī (1703–1746), a pupil of Candrasekharasarasvatī of the Śaṅkaraśāra maṭha at Kāṇḍī. The inscription mentions the renovation of the temple by Candrasekharasarasvatī, the pontiff of Kāṇḍīpīṭhaḥ, who came to Kāṇḍī from Kumbakonam for that purpose in 1840.

The vaṣṇava Śrīṅgāpāṇi temple of Kumbakonam was renovated in the early Vījayanagara period, beginning in 1385, when the name Kumbakonam was first used. A vaṣṇava maṭha was first attached to the temple in the period of Raghunātha Nayaka, in the seventeenth century, since when it has served as an important pontifical seat of south Indian Vaṣṇavism (Champalakāshmi 1996:344).


Both the Kumbakonam ('junior') and Kāṇḍī ('senior') maṭha-s have a traditional entitlement (known as mērā) 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 mērā to the Kāṇḍī maṭha (Anantanandendra Sarasvati 1968:379).

A dispute between the Kāṇḍī Kāmaṭktī and Śrīgeri maṭha-s led to two court cases, in 1844 and 1848. This concerned the authority to carry out the repair of the ear-ornaments (tattaka-pratiṣṭhā) of the Goddess Aklāndesvari, in the Tiruvaṅkōlī temple at Jambukeśvaram, and the entitlement to exclusive jurisdiction over certain spiritual affairs of the area, in this case in district of Tiruchinopoly. (Incidentally, the maṭha attached to this temple also claims to be the first and foremost of the maṭha-s established by Śaṅkara; see Antarkar 2001:95). The cases were decided in favour of the Kāṇḍī maṭha, and the Śrīgeri maṭha 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 same outcome, the Kāṇḍī maṭha finally performing the consecration. There were several other disputes between the two maṭha-s (Bader 2000:290–291 fn 136; 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 Kāṇḍīpūrām maṭha are not Jagadguru-Śaṅkaraśārayas. Rajendran cited the Maṭhamānmaxa-s, and called attention to the three branches of the Śrīgeri maṭha in Tamil Nadu. He objected to the control of the Kāṇḍī maṭha over the Kāmaṭktī-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 Kāṇḍī maṭha. 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 Śaṅkaraśāraya.
Several of the publications of the *Mathāmnāya-s*\(^{81}\) include another (or extra) text (together with the other four *āmnāya-s* and the *Mahānuśāsanam*) that presents—with some minor differences—three more *matha-s* and *āmnāya-s* (see Appendix 2),\(^{82}\) the Sumeru being the fifth.\(^{83}\) The Sumeru *āmnāya* is as follows (Mishra 2001:48–52, vv. 66–68):\(^{84}\)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Matha</th>
<th>Sumeru-pīṭha</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(Kailāsa kṣetra)</td>
<td>Kailāsa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Orders (padāni)</td>
<td>Satya (Truth) Jñāna (Knowledge)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deities (m)</td>
<td>Nirañjana (f) Māyā</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tīrtha</td>
<td>Māṇasa (rovaram)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sampradāya</td>
<td>Kāśi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acārya</td>
<td>Īśvara</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In a previous publication Miśra (1996:12) claims that, although it is said that there are seven *matha-s*, in fact Śaṅkara founded four of them. The existence of the Sumeru *matha* is explained as being an allegorical ‘heavenly’ *matha*:\(^{85}\) Upādhyāy (1967:610) similarly explains the fifth *āmnāya*, Sumeru *matha*, as an “ūrdhvāmnāya”, stating that the last three *āmnāya-s* have a corporeal form only as knowledge.\(^{86}\) However, the Sumeru *matha* 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 *gaddī*, the first

\(^{81}\) Kunhan Raja (1933:49); Sarma (1963:650–651); Upādhyay (1967:610–612); Miśra (1996:48–49; 2001:16–52). (Miśra’s text is currently being disseminated by the Dvārka pīṭha)

\(^{82}\) The *Ṣesāmnāya-s*; called the “Residuary-Shrutī Receptacles” (Miśra), and part of the *Mathāmnāyasētu* (Sarma).

\(^{83}\) The sixth *āmnāya* (Miśra vv. 69–72) is said to be the Self (*ātmāmnāya*), and *paramātmā* is the ‘great’ *matha*. The *sampradāya* is *satīvatośa* (‘goodness-pleasure’), and the *pāda* (‘title’, ‘office’) is *yoga*. The *kṣetra* is the ocean; the deities are (m) Paramahamsa, and (f) Mānasi Māyā; the *tīrtha* is Tripuṭī (?); the sentences of Vedānta are the instruction; and the *acārya* is *Cetanāhrdaya* (‘consciousness-heart’). The seventh *āmnāya* is *Nīlskāta*. The *matha* is *Sahasrāṇākādyutī* (‘brilliance of a thousand suns’). The *sampradāya* is *sacchāmnāya* (‘the good student’) and the *pādas* are *Śīr-guru* and *pādūkās* (a mendicant’s ‘holy’ sandals). The *kṣetra* is *ānubhūti* (‘realisation’), the deities are (m) Viśvarūpa (‘multiform/universal/Viṣṇu’) and (f) Citsakti, and the *acārya* is Sadguru. The *tīrtha* is hearing the true scriptures.

\(^{84}\) Further details are included in the text provided by Kunhan Raja (1933:49)

\(^{85}\) *jaisa Sumeru math' ko ūrdhvāmnāya kahā gayā hai* (Miśra 1996:12).

\(^{86}\) *unka šārīr keval vijñān hi hai* (Miśra 1996:12).
being Mahādevānandatīrtha.87 Curiously, all the mahant-s but the last, from 1958, are named 'Tīrtha'. The matha is in a district of Banaras named 'Sumera', possibly indicating the antiquity of the matha, and preserves a pair of wooden sandals (paduka), believed to have been used by Śaṅkara, hence its other name, the 'Pādukā Maṭha'. It admits only dandais of the Sarasvatī order, and used to be patronised by the Mahārājā of Banaras.88

In the Gruvamśa-kāvyā, written in 1740 (see below), it is stated (3.25) that Śaṅkara established five matha-s, including one for himself at Banaras. At the Brahmendra matha, at the Śivālaya ghāt in Banaras, there is an inscription dated 1884 CE (V. S. 1941) revealing a guru-parampara of Śaṅkara (Anantanandendra Sarasvati 1968:379-380). This would seem to indicate that the Banaras matha was of some considerable importance in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Sinha and Sarasvati (1978:60) relate that "some years ago", Svāmī Mahēśvarānanda was designated Śaṅkaraścārya of Kāśi by the then Śaṅkaraścārya of Jyotishmatī at a ceremony at the Ādhā-Kummat at Prayāg. However, Svāmī Ānandabodha Āśrama, the mahant of the Sumeru matha at the time of Sinha and Sarasvati's study, did not recognise Svāmī Mahēśvarānanda as the Śaṅkaraścārya, nor did Mahēśvarānanda live at the Sumeru matha. One of the most important recent pontiffs of the Sumeru matha was Svāmī Harihārānandasarasvatī (commonly known as ‘Karpatīt), who died in 1982. He has been described as the most influential dandī not only of Banaras but of all India (Sawyer 1993:170), directing the affairs of the Jyotir pīṭha even though he was not a Śaṅkaraścārya.

The Mūlabāgala matha (in Karnataka) and the Durvaspur matha (in the vicinity of Dwārakā) have both claimed legitimacy, in opposition to the Dwārakā matha. The claim of

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87 Sinha and Saraswati (1978:261-2) relate that the matha was supposedly founded as a branch of the Śāradā pīṭha by Mahādevānanda, who was a disciple of Padmapādacārya, the latter being one of Śaṅkara's four chief disciples. The fifty-eighth mahant, Nityanandatīrtha, although himself a vegetarian, apparently introduced left-handed Tantric practices, including goat sacrifice to Kali, when he was on the gaddī between 1945 and 1950. Ānandabodha Āśrama, who occupied the gaddī in 1958, banned women from residence in the matha. From 1758, when the gaddī was occupied by Mahādevānanda VI, all mahant-s have been of Bengali descent. Several buildings attached to the matha were sold off by a drunkard, Viśeśvarānandatīrtha, the fifty-third mahant, and several bullock-cart loads of manuscripts were sold to Annie Besant. At the time of Sawyer's (1993) research in Banaras, in 1988, the Śaṅkaraścārya of the Sumeru matha was Svāmī Śaṅkaraścārya. This author visited the Sumeru matha in February 2002. It was in a run-down condition with no resident sādhus. I was informed by several of the caretakers that the current mahant was away somewhere.

88 There is a copper-plate inscription on the wall of the matha, written in both Bengali and Devanāgarī Sanskrit. It is dated 1290 saka, and purports to record an inām, on behalf of the local rājā, for sustaining a temple there, said to have been founded by Ādī Śaṅkaraścārya in the eighth century, and inaugurated to Śri Bhadraścārya. The plate does not appear significantly weathered. A learned colleague of mine, Subhajit Gupta, a Bengali Sanskritist, was kind enough to inspect an imprint of the text 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.
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 (*Daśanāmi 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 Badarināth had long ago set up *matha*-s in Gujarat and elsewhere, having been obliged to quit Badarināth 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 Śrīgerī *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 Śrīgerī, Dvārakā and Purī had received offerings when they are on tour in districts outside their alleged jurisdiction, but allowed the appeal, setting aside the ruling of the lower court. The Dvārakā *pītha* was again involved in a dispute in 1982, after the demise of the then pontiff Abhinava Saccidanandatīrtha, who had appointed Svarūpaśāntasarasvatī as his successor. However, at that time Svarūpaśānta was Śaṅkarācārya of the Jyotir *matha*, where he had been installed since 1973 (Jaffrelot 1996:356). This resulted in Svarūpaśānta becoming the Śaṅkarācārya of two *matha*-s, which was challenged by Mādhava Āśrama who wished to occupy the Jyotir *matha gaddī* (Sundaresan 2000:4).

Besides Kāṭci, at least six other *matha*-s have various claims to legitimacy in the

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90 This was on the basis of *Sri Sunkur Swami v. Sidha Lingayat Charantī*, see Bader (2000:301 fn. 159).
south (see Antarkar 2001:51–69): the matha-s at Ávani, Puṣpagiri, Virūpākṣa,89 Sankeśvara, Tuṅga Śrīgeri and Kuḍalī (or Küḍalī). 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 Śrīgeri (in Chikkamagalur District, Karnataka) from the fourteenth century,90 the others date from a later period. The Ávani matha was founded by Abhinava Nṛsimhabharata V, of the Śrīgeri matha, who, according to the Śrīgeri guru-parampara, ascended the Śrīgeri gaddi on 1576, his demise being in 1599 (Aiyer and Sastri 1962:165). The earliest record for the Ávani matha is a grant by Śrī Raṅga III, dated 1645 (Venkataraman 1959:60),91 subsequent grants being made by the Mughal administrators of Bijapur (Karnataka). According to the occupants of the Ávani matha (Ananandendra Sarasvati 1968:384–385), the matha was established after Nṛsimhabharata returned to Śrīgeri from a long tour in the north, to find that someone else had been installed on the Śrīgeri gaddi. Rather than dispute, he set up at the Kuḍalī matha. When Nṛsimhabharata went on tour again, he left a disciple on the Kuḍalī gaddi, to avoid being usurped again. On this tour he established a matha in Kolar district that was subsequently moved to Avanti (also in the Kolar district), and which became known as the Ávani matha. Although the Ávani matha is currently recognised as a branch of the Tuṅga Śrīgeri matha,92 in the eighteenth century the agrasambhāvanā collected by the ācārya, who was on tour in the Kāveri area, went to the Kālfī matha, as the Kāveri area lay within the Kālfī jurisdiction. However, correspondence from the early eighteenth century93 reveals that at that time both the Ávani and Śivagarī (see below) matha-s were paying tribute annually to the Kuḍalī matha (Ananandendra Sarasvati 1968:384–385), indicating that it was either Kuḍalī or Kālfī that was then considered the preeminent matha.

The Tuṅga Śrīgeri matha and Kuḍalī matha (whose current jurisdiction is in north-west Karnataka and southern Maharashtra; see Anantendra Sarasvati 1968:363 fn. 11)

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87 Both the Puṣpagiri matha (Cuddapa talukā, Cuddapah District, Karnataka) and Virūpākṣa matha (Hospet talukā, Bellary District, Karnataka) have their own Mathāmāya-s (Antarkar 2001:80). For the mathāmāya stotra of the Puṣpagiri matha, see Ananantendra Sarasvati (1968:86–87). It seems possible that the Puṣpagiri matha was originally one of four Śaiva-Siddhānta matha-s known to have been very influential in the development of temple culture in the Cōla period (c.1000–1200) (see Ch. 6.2), given that another matha, at Tiruvānaikkāvä, seems to have once been a Śaiva-Siddhānta matha which was converted at an indeterminable time, after 1200, to an advaita Śāṅkara matha-s (see Annual Reports on Indian Epigraphy (1986:131, no. 536, para. 53, 28th July 1909).
88 From inscriptional evidence, it appears that the Kuḍalī matha received grants from 1155, while the Tuṅga Śrīgeri matha received grants only after 1345 or 1350 (Antarkar 2001:66–67).
89 Āgriphā Carnātaka, X, Mulbagal, 60.
90 The ācāryas of the Ávani matha call themselves Ávani Śrīgeri svāmī-s (Venkataraman 1959:60).
91 Letters written in 1711, 1713, 1714 and 1715.
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 Śrīgeri. However, it seems that previously the Kudālī matha enjoyed supremacy. In 1580, during the reign of Kṛṣṇappa Nāyaka of Keladi (1520–1609), an order was passed prohibiting the acārya of the Tuṅga Śrīgeri matha from going out on digvijaya. During the reign of the 52nd acārya of Kudālī, around 1723, the acāryas of Kuḍalī, Sankeśvara and Tuṅga Śrīgeri matha-s met at Sātārā (Maharashtra) during the reign of Sahu—the successor of Śivaji—to decide which of the acārya-s should be entitled to agra-pūjā (first/foremost pūjā). It was decided in favour of the acārya of the Kuḍalī matha. Under the order of Basavappā Nāyaka II—during the reign Nṛsiṁhabharati, the 53rd acārya of Kuḍalī (1727–1751)—the acārya of Tuṅga Śrīgeri was restrained from going on digvijaya; and again in 1806, this time under the order of Purṇayya, the famous minister of Hyder Āli and Tippu Sultan. Another restraining order was also issued in 1820. In 1811, Kṛṣnarājendra III of Mysore permitted Nṛsiṁhabharati (1820–1856) of Kuḍalī to go on digvijaya in palanquin and with full honours, having recognised him as jagadguru. When, in 1836, the incumbent of Kuḍalī, the 59th acārya, also wanted to go on digvijaya, the Tuṅga Śrīgeri acārya objected and took the Kuḍalī acārya to court in Mysore to prevent it; the resultant ruling was in favour of Tuṅga Śrīgeri, but on Appeal (No.22 of 1847) the ruling was overturned, in favour of the Kuḍalī acārya, ratified by Sir Mark Cubbon in 1849. Up until the middle of the nineteenth century, all of the several court rulings in disputes between the Kuḍalī and Śrīgeri matha-s issued in favour of the Kuḍalī matha.

Although currently the Śaṅkarācārya of the Tuṅga Śrīgeri matha is recognised as the ‘legitimate’ Śaṅkarācārya, and not that of Kuḍalī, it seems that it was only in the middle of the twentieth century that the Tuṅga Śrīgeri matha started pushing the claim that theirs was the Dakṣiṇāmnāya 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 Kaficī, Kuḍalī and Śrīgerī matha-s that have enjoyed dominance as the southern matha. The Śīva Gaṅgā matha was established at Śivagaṅgā, near
Bangalore, around 1615, by an ascetic, Śaṅkarabhāratī, at the instance of Rāja Wodeyar, the then ruler of Mysore. The spiritual jurisdiction of the *matha* extended over most of the territory of modern Karnataka. Between 1767 and 1817 the *matha* rose to prominence, so much so that the Śrṅgerī *matha* was overshadowed by the influence of the Śiva Gaṅgā *matha*. However, Nṛśimhabhāratī VIII, who was on the *gaddī* as the *pithādhīpati* of (Tuṅga) Śrṅgerī from 1817 to 1879, revived the fortunes of Śrṅgerī (Venkataraman 1959:84–95; Antarkar 2001:85–92), 'rediscovering' Kaladi (Śaṅkara's birthplace), instituting Śaṅkara *jayanī* 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 palanquin (*adā pālaki*) and the receiving of presents by the 'illegitimate' *ācārya*-s of the Śiva Gaṅgā *matha*. To settle the dispute, the Maharaja of Mysore passed an order (10.06.1831) that both *matha*-s should enjoy equal privileges. At times, the Śiva Gaṅgā, Āvari and (Tuṅga) Śrṅgerī *matha*-s have sent payments to the Kudali *matha*, which is evidence of their status as subsidiary *matha*-s in previous centuries. As observed previously, the Śrṅgerī *matha* subsequently gained preeminence, and gained control of the Śiva Gaṅgā *matha*, persuading the government to deny it certain privileges.¹⁰⁰

The Virūpākṣa *matha* is another *advaita matha* 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 Vidyāraṇya,¹⁰¹ its first *ācārya* being appointed in 1382. However, the earliest available inscription is of Kṛṣṇadevarāya, of 1515 (Verghese 1995:116).¹⁰² In 1863, the Śrṅgerī *matha* filed a suit in the Nizam’s High Court, attempting to prevent the Virūpākṣa *matha*—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 *matha*, and that the Śrṅgerī *matha*.

¹⁰⁰ The vigorous assertion of power and privileges for the Śrṅgerī *matha* by Nṛśimhabhāratī VIII also led to several court cases against the Kumbakonam *matha*, where the Kāśi *matha* was stationed during most of the nineteenth century. In 1829, two hundred residents of Madurai had an order (*nbandhanapatrakā*) issued, stating their allegiance to the Kumbakonam *matha*. The Śrṅgerī *ācārya* got a similar order issued in his favour. However, in 1837, when Nṛśimhabhāratī wished to attend the Mahāmāgam festival in Kubakonam, he was prevented by a government order from going by palanquin through the street of Kumbakonam housing the Kumbakonam and other *matha*-s; he was obliged to pass via another route. The *ācārya* went to Tirchirapalli in 1838 and attempted to get donations (agraśamādhānamavanda) from the residents of some villages in the district. Upset, the villagers approached the District Collector, who passed an order preventing the Śrṅgerī *ācārya* from doing so.

¹⁰¹ See the following chapter.

¹⁰² Another *smārta advaita matha* is located nearby, the Cintāmani *matha* at Ānegondi. It is believed that this *matha* was founded in the early fourteenth century, and continued to function in post-Vijayanagara times.
(institution) had not toured for many years. The court ruled that the Śrīgerī matha should give up its claim to regular payments for spiritual authority; and that the Virūpākṣa matha should continue to impart religious instruction to its disciples, to tour the country, and that no one should interfere with that organisation.103

In Maharashtra, in the village of Karavīra, is the Karavīra matha, also known as the Śaṅkeśvara pīṭha. The matha appears first to have been affiliated to Śrīgerī, and then to have seceded in the sixteenth century (Lütt 1978:416). It has four branches, at Śaṅkeśvara/ Karavīra, Pune, Kolhapur and Sātārā (Anantendra Sarasvati 1968:367). In 1925/26 both the Śaṅkarācārya of Pūrī (Bhāratīkrṣṇatīrtha) and the Śaṅkarācārya of Śaṅkeśvara (Dr. Kurkoti) were actively engaged in the politics of the recently reformed Hindu Mahāsabha, and both were vigorously defending their claim to be Śaṅkarācāryas, through public exposure and political activity. Bhāratīkrṣṇatīrtha was attempting to become pontiff of Dvārakā, but did not succeed, instead becoming Śaṅkarācārya of Pūrī in 1925, at the request of the dying Śaṅkarācārya of Pūrī, Madhusūdanatīrtha (Lütt 1978:415).104

According to tradition, Śaṅkara was of the Nambūdiri (Nambūthiri) caste of Kerala. Their manners and customs are recorded in the Śāṅkara-smṛti and the Śaṅkarācārya, 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 Kedarnāth, where he had set up a śiva-līrīgam, and returned to Śrīśailam via Ayodhya, Gayā and Pūrī. 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 (Nāduvil) were functioning at the beginning of the twentieth century, presided over by Nambūdiri samnyāsīs, who have, according to them, descended in a regular line of succession from the original heads of the matha-s (Ananthakrishna lyer 1912:258).105

Most of the matha-s so far mentioned claim to have been founded by Śaṅkara,103 The Kāṅkāri matha, and the Virūpākṣa, Āvāni, Śivagargā, Hampl and Karavīra matha-s—the latter now all being branches of the Śrīgerī matha—are all known as Saradā matha-s. While there is a reference in some of the vijaya-s of Śaṅkara (see below) to Śaṅkara's inauguration of the worship of Saradā devī at Śrīgerī, according to the Mathhamnāyā-s it is Dvārakā that is the Saradā pīṭha.
104 The Śaṅkarācārya of Śaṅkeśvara/ Karavīra, together with the Śaṅkarācāryas of Pūrī and Dvārakā, attended the Allahabad Kumbha Melā of 1918 to preside over sessions of the All-India Hindu Sabha (later to become the Hindu Mahāsabha) and the All-India Sanātana Dharma Mahāsammelan. The Śaṅkarācārya of Karavīra was subsequently enrolled into the Hindu Mahāsabha (Jaffrelot 1996:198).
105 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 (Anantananandendra Sarasvati 1968:378).
and have parampara-s of acaryas 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 Śrīṅgerī matha. The later date of Śaṅkara (788 to 720 CE) accepted by many contemporary scholars was challenged by Narayan 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 Narayan 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 Theosophist107 volumes XIV and XVI containing the guru-parampara-s of the Śrīṅgerī and Dvārakā matha-s respectively, the Śrīṅgerī list recording the birth of Śaṅkara in 43 BCE, the Dvārakā list giving the birth-date of Śaṅkara in 2631 Yudhiṣṭhira 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 Śrīṅgerī, 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 Śrīṅgerī matha had had a guru-parampara that accorded 800 years for the life of Suresvara.

Perhaps the earliest list of acarya-s for the Śrīṅgerī pitha is that contained in the Śrī-puruṣottama-bhāratī-carita, composed by Viṣṇu in the late fifteenth century (Sastry 1982:7).108 It provides a brief account of the acarya-s from Vidyāśaṅkara (on the gaddi from 1228–1333) to Candraśekhara Bhāratī II (1454–1464). In one of the hagiographies of Śaṅkara, Lakṣmana-Śastry’s Guruvaṃśa-kāvya, written in 1740, is also to be found a list of acarya-s for the Śrīṅgerī matha. Antarkar (2001:40) believes that this is possibly the earliest full list of acarya-s of the Śrīṅgerī matha. This work was instigated by the then reigning acarya, Saccidānandabhāratī II (1705–1741). Probably the earliest widely disseminated list of the Śrīṅgerī acarya-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-parampara gives the date of Śaṅkara’s birth as 43 BCE, his accession to the Śrīṅgerī gaddi as 34 BCE, and his death as 11 BCE. He is

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


109 I am doubtful about this early date, as it is based on the report of Venkataraman (1959:ix), some of whose proposed dates for the acarya-s of Śrīṅgerī lack sufficient historical support.
followed by Viśvarūpācārya and thirty-one other gurus, up to Saccidānanda Śivābhīnava Nṛsimhabhāratī, 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 Nṛsimhabhāratī VIII, after his demise in 1879.\textsuperscript{106} Up to 1989 there were 34 or 35 acārya-s in the six lists that Antarkar (2001) inspected.\textsuperscript{110} However, it seems that Śaṅkara could not have lived earlier than the seventh century CE,\textsuperscript{111} rendering spurious all guru-paramparā-s that go back to BCE.\textsuperscript{112}

The other three matha-s (of the 'official' four) have a list of between 60 to 144 acārya-s in their guru-paramparā-s,\textsuperscript{113} widely disparate numbers of acārya-s for institutions that were supposed to have been founded within a few years of each other. To date, the Dvāraka matha has a list of 77 names, going back to Śaṅkara, born in 491 BCE, the seventy-seventh acārya being Abhinava Saccidananda, installed in 1960 (Miśra, Mathāmānya Setu 2001:26). This guru-paramparā, minus the acārya-s of the twentieth century, is given in the Vīmaṛṣa\textsuperscript{14} (pp. 25-28) said to have been written by the acārya Śrī Rājarājeśvara Śaṅkarāśrama Svāmī, the seventy-third pontiff of Dvāraka, in

\textsuperscript{106} It was also published in Telugu, by Vavilla Rāmasvāmī in 1885 CE.
\textsuperscript{110} Many of the pontiffs of the Śringerī matha have been from the Mūlakanadu branch of Telugu-speaking Brahmans of Tamil Nadu (Gnanambal 1973:6).
\textsuperscript{111} See Appendix 9.
\textsuperscript{112} Sastry and Kumaraśwamī (1971:201–206), supporters of the Kāññī matha, comment that lists of Śringerī acārya-s are not consistent. A list of thirty acārya-s was published in 1854 by His Highness Śrī Kṛṣṇarāja Wodeyar, in which Pṛthvidhāra is Śaṅkara's immediate successor at Śringerī. In some later manuscripts Viśvarūpa is introduced in place of Pṛthvidhāra, but none of them mention the name of Suresvara, as found in the list prepared by Nṛsimhabhāratī VIII. In the list of Śringerī acārya-s published by Aiyer and Sastri (1962:164), Śaṅkara is recorded as ascending the gaddī in 18 BCE, and passing away in 12 BCE. Suresvara follows him, ascending the gaddī in 12 BCE, and passing away in 773 CE; a 'miraculous' reign of 765 years. Sastry and Kumaraśwamī maintain that Suresvara was not introduced to the Śringerī guru-paramparā until after 1856. They believe (1971:194–201) that Śaṅkara was born in 508 BCE, and was the first Śaṅkarāśrama of Kāññī, passing away in 477 BCE. The second acārya to occupy the gaddī was Suresvara (477–407 BCE), followed by sixty-five other acārya-s (eight of whom were called Śaṅkara), up to Candrasekharendraśarasvāti, who ascended the gaddī in 1907 CE. The thirty-seventh was Abhinava Śaṅkara, born in Cidambaram, who was on the Kāññī gaddi 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 Adi Śaṅkara, the bhāṣyakāra.

\textsuperscript{113} See Aiyer and Sastri (1962:167–181) for the acārya-s in the guru-paramparā-s of four matha-s: 35 for (Tunga) Śringerī; 68 for Kudalī; 79 for Dvāraka; 144 for Jagannāth. These lists seem to be based on a Marathi work by Mahadev Rajaram Bodas, Śaṅkarācāraya va tīṭācā sampradāyaka, Poona 1923 (Lüt 1978:412 fn. 2). See also A. K. Sastri (1982: Appendix III) for the (36) pithādīpatis of Śringerī jagadgurus who go back to Adi Śaṅkara (788–820 CE), followed by Suresvara. Dates only start with Vidyāśākharātitha (on the gaddī from 1228–1333 CE); see Sādānand Brahmācāri (2000:29–34) for the (78) jagadgurus of Dvāraka, also going back to Śrīśveṣvara, who supposedly occupied the gaddī from 447 BCE. According to this guru-paramparā, Śrīśveṣvara is followed by Čitsukhaśvārya (from 423 BCE). However, Čitsukha may be dated to the latter half of the twelfth century, as he comments on the Nyāya-mākaraṇa of Ānandabodha Bhāṭṭārakācārya, who appears to have lived in the latter half of the eleventh and first half of the twelfth century (see Dāsgupta, 1922, Vol. 2:49; Satochidanandendra Sarasvati 1989:908–943). However, it was long ago suggested (Govinda-Dāsa 1894:168) that the Čitsukhaśvārya of the Dvāraka guru-paramparā is different from the more recent Čitsukha.

\textsuperscript{14} I have not seen this work.

In several sources, the so-called copper-plate of King Sudhanvā is mentioned. The inscription (last line) is dated Asvin Śukla 15, Yudhiṣṭhira Śaka 2663—corresponding to 476 BCE—and has been cited on several occasions 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 matha-s in the four quarters of India. Sudhanvā (as a king of Kerala) also appears (four times) in the Śaṅkara-dīg-vijaya (ŚDV) and the Mathānmāya-s. 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') is odd, 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

116  The Dvārakā guru-parampara is also published in Govinda-Dāsa (Theosophist, Vol.XVI, 1894: 164–168); Bādev Upādhyā (1963); Yatisandhyāsamuccaya (pub. by Dvārakā-pitha, 1967).
117  For the Sanskrit text and translation, see Mishra (Mathānmāya Setu 2001:62–65).
118  Vimatara p. 2 (see Umesh 1981:169); Mishra (Mathānmāya Setu 2001:xvii).
119  installing; (I.1) Padmapāda (alias Sanandana) at Bhogvardhana (Jagannāth); (I.17) Tojaka (alias Pretardana) at Jyotir (Bādarī); (I.23–27) Viśvarūpa (alias Sureśvara) at Śāradā (Dvārakā); and (I.18–19) Pṛthvīdēha (alias Hastāmalaka) at Śṛṅg-ṛṣi (Śṛṅgeri). Sureśvara is deputed by Śaṅkara to be the arbiter of important decisions (I.32–33). Śaṅkara is also said to have installed Śrī Kṛṣṇa in the revovated temple of Trāilokya Sundar in Dvārakā, which is particularly renowned for heresies (I.23–26).
110  See Mahāva-Vidyāranya 1986. The first (1.60–98) 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 Perumāls who administered Kerala (Palli Bana Perumal and Cheraman Perumal) embraced Buddhism, Palli Bana Perumal (c.305–317 CE) ordering the Brahmins throughout Malanāḍu to also embrace Buddhism. The Brahmins, with the help of a saint named Jaṅgaman and six Sāstrīs 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 śāiva, though supporting Palli Bana Perumal's conversion to Buddhism (Chaudhury 1989:233). In the second incident (5.10–30), 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 (14.166–175) when Śaṅkara visits Kerala; and when Śaṅkara commences his dīg-vijaya, he is accompanied by many disciples and Sudhanvā, who here makes his fourth appearance (15.1–29). During his encounter with Krakaca and his ferocious Kāpālīka entourage, the king fought with bow and arrow on behalf of Śaṅkara, who reduced them to ashes with a mystic syllable.
120  Discussing the various characteristicos (taksara) needed by a wandering mendicant (parivrājaka) to assume authority at either of the four separate pithas (Dvārakā, Jyotira, Śṛṅgeri and Govardhana), the Mahānudāsakam, v. 53 (Mishra, vv. 53 and 55 [=Śarma 1963:649, Mathānmāyasātu, 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.
121  See also Miśra (Āmit Kārekrkhā 2001:21–23) for a discussion of the term sarvabhauma.
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 seems doubtful as I have been unable to find any reference to him in the history of Kerala, and the copper-plate inscription seems to be entirely spurious, manufactured to add credence to the legitimacy of Dvārakā and the other three pitha-s.122

Regarding the history of the eastern pitha in Orissa, little if anything is known of the historical origins. It seems that the oldest matha-s in the area were Kāpālīka and Pāśupata.123 The Govardhana matha at Puri has a list of 144 (or 142) acārya-s contained in its Mathāmnāya, published in Puri as the Śaṅkarācārya-jagadguru-mathāmnāya by Yogendra Asthavādana Śarma in 1930 (Pande 1994:29). The Govardhan matha has three other branches in Puri, the Śaṅkarāṇanda, Śivatīrtha, Gopalaṭīrtha and Mahiprakāśa matha-s. The first three matha-s are presided over by samnyāsī-s, while the last is a brahmacārī matha.124 The only dates known for the pontiffs of the Govardhan matha are for the last five pontiffs, the first of whom became Head in 1849. In the bold list many names are repeated. One significant difference between appointments at Puri and other pitha-s is that at Puri the Śaṅkarācāryas are traditionally first householders before assuming office. At the other pitha-s the Śaṅkarācāryas are generally appointed much younger, from brahmacārīya. As a consequence, pontiffs at Puri tend to reign for shorter periods, which could account from its longer list of pontiffs (Lüt 1978:412). However, there seems to have been some kind of lapse of authority at Puri, as evidenced in a letter 122 Suresvara'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 pitha-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 king. 123 In Bhubanesvara, the oldest matha is the Sadavrata matha, dating from (tentatively) the seventh century. It was originally in the hands of the Pāśupata order, but in 1964 it was administered by Bhāratī of the Daśanāmī order (Miller and Wertz 1976:13). The second oldest monastery is the Kāpāli matha, dating (tentatively) from the eighth to sixteenth centuries. This matha is associated with the Kāpālikas, a sect closely associated with the Pāśupatas. 124 The Śaṅkarāṇanda matha is the more important of the affiliated matha-s, supplying the vice-president to an organisation of Brahmins (the Mukti-Mantapa) which oversees sixteen inām villages in the Puri pargana. The Govardhan matha supplies the president to this organisation (Anantananandendra Sarasvati 1968:399).
from the Śaṅkarācārya of Śrīgerī to his colleague at Purī, dated 1862. The Śaṅkarācārya states that “the Acharyas of the Govardhana and Jyotir Maths degraded themselves to the position of Gosains [presumably married samnyāsīs] 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 Purī matha was (still or again?) in the hands of samnyāsīs around 1800 (Lütt 1978:i13 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 Śrīgerī was regarded as the preeminent authority regarding the running of the other matha-s, and the Śaṅkarācārya of Purī did not play an important role in the religious life of India. This changed in the twentieth century, since when the Śaṅkarācāryas of Purī have played a more prominent role in Hindu religious affairs, notably under Bhāratīkṛṣṇatīrtha, who was very active during his period on the gacḍī, from 1925–1960 (Lütt 1978:414–415). Prior to becoming Śaṅkarācārya, he was involved...

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126 During his reign, Gajpati Dibyasingh Deva II (1793–1798) renovated the Jagannātha temple, temporarily removing the mūrti-s of Padmapāda and Śaṅkarācārya. They were returned but subsequently destroyed by vaishnavas (Das 1997:109).
127 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. Śākta 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 Ganga king Anantavarman Cordaganga, who was most probably Śaiva. The cult of Puruṣottama (later known as Jagannātha) was raised to the status of an imperial cult. Jagannātha at Purī is mentioned by Sāyana (c.1370), indicating its importance. See Dimock (1963:107); Dash (1978); Panigraha (1981:335–352); Upinder Singh (1993:249–259).
in the Hindu Mahāsabha, after 1923, and ran for presidentship 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 Nirāfiṇiādevatīrtha, 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 Puri, Dwārakā and Jyōśimaṭh have been mutually supportive during various religious and political protests, their orthodox stance being supported by Hindu organisations such as the Hindu Mahāsabha and the Jana Sangh (Lüt 1978:416–417).

Little information is available about the Jyotirī matha in the north, for which Antarkar was supplied with a list of 82 acārya-s in 1987 by the then acārya. Miśra (Amīt Kālekha, 2001:102–106), an affiliate of the Dwārakā pitha, maintains that the Jyotirī pitha was vacant from 1776 to 1941 (165 years) during which time the gaddī was removed.

128 In January 1906, at the Allahabad Kumbha Melā, the Śaṅkarācārya of Puri presided over the orthodox organisation, Sanātana Dharma Mahāsabha; at the inauguration of the All-India Hindu Sabhd at Haridvār, in 1916, the Śaṅkarācārya of Puri acted as one of the three Śaṅkarācārya vice-presidents; three Śaṅkarācāryas—of Puri, Dwārakā and Śaṅkēśvar/Karavīra—presided, at the Allahabad Kumbha Melā of 1918, over sessions of the All-India Hindu Sabhd (later to become the Hindu Mahāsabha) and the All-India Sanātana Dharma Mahāsammelana; 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 Mohammed Ali declared it unlawful for any faithful Muslim to serve in, or consort 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 Nagpur, founding the Vāvā Punārmitāna Saṅgha (World Reconstruction Association) there in 1953, and eventually settling in Nagpur.

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

130 In July 2000 a dispute erupted over the gaddī of Puri (Bannarjee 2000:34). Svāmī Adhokṣajānanda, from Banaras, arrived in Puri, claiming that he was the real Śaṅkarācārya, having been ordained by the previous acārya of Puri, Svāmī Nirāfiṇiādevatīrtha. However, he was arrested and expelled from the town, with widespread support from local dignitaries for the incumbent, Svāmī Niścoḷānandadasaravatī. 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 Niścoḷānandadasaravatī's appointment was that a Śaṅkarācārya of Puri 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 Mathāmānya-s—used many times in court in legal and jurisdiction disputes by Śaṅkarācāryas of the four main matha-s—Tīrthas should belong to the Dwārakā pitha, and Sarasvatīs to the Śrīgerī pitha.

131 The current acārya frequently resides in Allahabad, where the Jyotirī matha has a pāthaśālā.

132 According to some records, the Jyotirī matha ceased to function for nearly three centuries, but the current authorities of that institution admit a break of only 165 years (Cenkner 1983:111).
to Dholka, where it was occupied by a continuous line of Śaṅkarācāryas during the interval. (It will be recalled that the Dholka gadāli was the object of a considerable legal dispute.) Pande (1994:29) observes that the tradition of the Jyotir mātha 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.¹³³ There is also a list of twenty-one names for the period between 1479 and 1776,¹³⁴ then there is a gap until the twentieth century. In 1851/2 there was an earthquake in the area which destroyed the mātha (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 mātha (Sundaresan 2000:1). However, on May 11th, 1941, Brahmanandasarasvatī was installed as pontiff, with the approval of the Śaṅkarācāryas of Śrīnerī and Puri, and support from Karpatri of Banaras and the Maharāja of Darbhanga.¹³⁵ His appointment was, however, surrounded by controversy, as was the appointment—after his demise in 1953—of his successor, Śāntānandasarasvatī, who had a rival, Kṛṣṇabodhāshrama. Both were appointed Śaṅkarācārya by the rival factions, resulting in court proceedings, decided in favour of Śāntānanda, who was subsequently succeeded by Viṣṇudevānandasarasvatī in 1981. However, the controversy lingered on concerning the rightful successor to the Jyotir pīṭha. In 1979 a meeting of the Śaṅkarācāryas of the four āmnāya māthas took place at Śrīnerī, the first ever such meeting. It was convened by the then Śaṅkarācārya of Śrīnerī, Śrī Abhinava Vidyā Tīrtha, but neither Śāntānanda nor Viṣṇudevānanda were invited. Another court case which began in 1999, at Allahabad, concerning the succession to the Jyotir mātha, was still running in 2000.¹³⁶

Our relatively brief excursion into the histories of various advaita māthas has also

¹³³ Māyādattā Śāstri, Jyotispīṭha-Paricaya, p. 16 (cited by Pande).
¹³⁴ Hari Kṛṣṇa Ratūrī, Garmval Ka ēthas, p. 55 (cited by Pande).
¹³⁵ Brahmanandasarasvatī’s reputation was enhanced through the influence of his former secretary and disciple, Mahārṣi 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 Brahmananda, see Mason 1994:12–23.)
¹³⁶ For further details of the dispute concerning the gadāli, the claim exerted by svāmi.sa of three separate lineages, political influence, and the subsequent succession, see Daśanāmi Sampradāya (1999); Sundaresan (2000); P. N. Misra [Amiṭ Kālirekhā] (2001).
shown that very little reliance, if any, can be placed on the paramparās of the mathas, or the information in the Mathāmnaya-s that Śaṅkara founded four matha-s in four specific places, each pitha being associated with either two or three of the ten lineages: the status of various pitha-s was still being contested in the nineteenth century. The epigraphic evidence which has been examined indicates there that were advaita matha-s in south India dating from the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, notably Tuṅga-Śrīgeri, Kuḍai-Śrīgeri 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 Śrīgeri 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, Puri and Jyōsimath, there appears to be no reliable epigraphic or other evidence that is more than than a couple of hundred years old referring to these institutions.

137 According to the guru-paramparā of (Tuṅga) Śrīgeri (see Aiyer and Sastri 1962:164–181), none of the first four ācārya-s of the Śrīgeri after Śaṅkara are named Sarasvatī, Bhāratī or Puri, as they should be according to the Mathāmnaya; ācārya-s nos. 8 to 11, and nos. 35 and 36 are named Tīrtha (located at Dvārakā in the Mathāmnaya); and ācārya-s nos. 5, 6 and 7 are Gīris (located at Jyotir matha in the Mathāmnaya). There are no Purīs or Sarasvatīs in the list at all. In the Kuḍai list all the ācārya-s are Bhāratīs. Of the seventy-nine ācārya-s of Dvārakā (Tīrtha and Āśrama according to the Mathāmnaya), only six are Tīrtha, one is a Sarasvatī (acc. Śrīgeri), thirty-six are Āśrama, while the rest have other names. The 144 ācārya-s of the Jagannātha matha should be called either Vana or Aranya, according to the Mathāmnaya, yet none of them have that name. After the eighteenth, all but two are Tīrtha (located at Dvārakā in the Mathāmnaya and the first seventeen have other names. (No guru-paramparā is provided by Aiyer and Sastri for the Jyotir matha.)
CHAPTER 5: ŠÄNKARA’S HAGIOGRAPHIES AND HIS RELIGIOUS ORIENTATION

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

5.1 The hagiographies of Šāṅkara

Two scholars in particular have made detailed studies of the hagiographies of Šāṅkara, namely Antarkar and Bader (2000). Around twenty Sanskrit hagiographies of Šāṅkara have so far been uncovered. Several biographical works have been composed since the late eighteenth century, on the basis of earlier works or tradition, but vernacular texts do not start appearing until the end of the nineteenth century. Bader examines eight of the hagiographies (some other texts, not examined, being largely derivative of one of the

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2 See also Kuppuswami (1972:7–20); Pande (1994:1–39).
3 A few brief references and details of Šāṅkara’s life may also be found in the Śiva-rahasya (9.16); Patañjali-canda (8), composed by Rāmachandra-Dīksita, c.1700; Markandeya Samhitā (72.7.10,11–18; 73.7.1–2); Linga 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 Šāṅkara’s life may be found in several other Purāṇas (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 Śāṅkara-dīgviṣa of Sadānanda, composed in the late eighteenth century. His son-in-law Dhanapati Sūri composed the Dīpālīma, dated to 1824, a well-known commentary on the SDV.
eight works considered): Mādhava’s Saṅkara-dig-vijaya (ŚDV), Anantānandagiri’s Saṅkaravijaya (ASV), Cidvilāsa’s Saṅkaravilāsa (CŚV), Vyāsca’s Saṅkaravijaya (VŚV), Rājācūḍāmani-Dīkṣita’s Saṅkarābhhyudaya (RSA), Govindanātha’s Saṅkarācārācarita (GŚC), Tirumala-Dīkṣita’s Saṅkarābhhyudaya (TŚA), and Laksmana-Sāstrī’s Guruvamśa-kāvya (GVK). All texts are tentatively dated post-fourteenth century, the earliest being the ASV and the VŚV, most probably followed by the CŚV and TŚA. Antarkar (1973:2) places the CŚV perhaps before the RSA (c. 1630), and possibly before the TŚA (16th cent.). Bader (2000:24) believes the RSA 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 Saṅkara-dig-vijaya (ŚDV/Madhāviya) of Mādhava is by far the most widely distributed of the hagiographies of Saṅkara, the incumbent Saṅkarācāryas of the Śrīnērgī and Dvārakā/Jyotir māthā-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

a Bader also discusses two so-called ‘lost’ hagiographies of Saṅkara, the Prācitārā-Śaṅkaravijaya (PrŚV)—attributed by some (see Pande 1994:7) to Ānandagiri (or Ānandaśāk Titanium)—and the Brhat-Saṅkaravijaya (BrŚV) attributed to Cītsukha. (According to one tradition, Cītsukha—also called Vīṇūśārmman—was a direct disciple of Saṅkara.) Narayana Sastri (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—Acyuta’s Advaitarāja-Laksmy (17.16.103), dated to 1798, and the Dīnākara—the PrŚV was a source for the ŚDV. However, Bader (2000:342–350) believes the PrŚV to be a summary of the contents of ASV. Atmbodha (Atmbodhendra)’s Siṣṣa (a commentary to the Guraratnamālīka attributed to Saṁśivendra Brahmandra) 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 Atmbodha is dated from 1666–1638. No text of the BrŚV is available, but for a single chapter published by Sastri (1971:272–281). It contains astrological information and faulty Sanskrit that lead Bader and Umesh (1981:179–182) to doubt its authenticity.
e Antarkar (1961) demonstrates that this Anantānandagiri cannot be identified as Ānandagiri, the Vedicantin, with whom he is sometimes identified.

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 ASV, CŚV and the GVK, and the other, Group B, comprising the VŚV, RŚA, GŚC and ŚDV. The TŚA stands somewhat alone.

Some believe the VŚV to have been written by Mahādeva IV, the 52nd ācārya of Kāfiḍī, from 1498–1507 (Pande 1994:22).

In the colophons of the TŚA, Tirumala-Dīkṣita says that he is devoted to Paramāśivendra. According to the guru-paramparā of the Kāfiḍī māthā, the fifty-seventh ācārya was Paramāśiva II (Paramāśivendraśarasvatī), who reigned from 1539 to 1586, and was the guru of Sadasivendra Brahmandra (Ayer and Sastri 1962:131). If we accept the admittedly unreliable chronology of the guru-paramparās, and if the Paramāśivendraśarasvats are identical, then the TŚA may be placed in the latter part of the sixteenth century.

See Mādava-Vidyāranya (1966) for the references in this section.

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 Saṅkaśopa-Saṅkara-jāya) but also the author’s name, to Mādava-Vidyāranya. Besides Bader, several other scholars have presented evidence against the possibility of Vidyāranya’s authorship: see Sastry (1971:229); Antarkar (1972:1–23); Sawai (1985:454–459).
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 Śrīnerī and initiating the worship of the devī Śāradā, and to his installing certain of his disciples in āśrama-s, such as the one at Rṣyaśṛngā (Śrīnerī) for ensuring the greatness of his creed (16.93). He also built a temple to devī at Kāṇḍīpuram, 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 any mention of the founding of an order of ascetics, nor the term ‘Daśanāmi'. 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 śaṁnyāsī and that his guru was Govinda, but not much more. According to tradition, Śaṅkara was of the Nambūdīri caste, an orthodox Brahman caste who are the only original Brahmans of Kerala, renowned for their maintenance of Vedic rites which are extinct elsewhere. Suresvara, 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 jīrṇī Atri, indicating that Śaṅkara was a Brahman (Alston 1980a, Vol.1:44). In the Naiṣkāmyasiddhi (4.44) Suresvara refers to Śaṅkara as a drāvida, indicating

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12 There are two exceptions (Bader 2000:23): the Acārya-digvijaya-campu, by Vallisahāya, and the Brhacchānkaravijaya by Brahmanandasarasvatī. 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 Mūkambīka (Kollur); Tōṭaka (Giri) became his next disciple, in Śrīnerī; lastly, Suresvara, who became his main disciple.

14 In Hindu mythology, Rṣyāṅga 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 1981:42–54).

15 This was towards the beginning of his digvijaya according to the ŚDV, and at the end of the digvijaya according to the ASV (see below).

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

17 See Grimes (1982).
Sankara’s southern origins. However, it is interesting to note that in the works considered genuine, all Sankara’s references to places are to those in the north, in the Ganges delta (Alston 1980a, Vol.1:44). Sankara also refers to the Himalayas, lending some support to the supposition that Sankara wrote and taught in north India. Our only other source of information for the life of Sankara 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.

Amongst the numerous incidents recorded in the various hagiographies, particular stories are common to all. 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 Sankara’s life, even though they do not occur in the other hagiographies. All of Sankara’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 Āryāmbā. In all texts but one, Śankara is born in Kālaṭi, a village in the Ernakulam district of Kerala. Śankara is initiated into an advaita lineage by his guru, Govinda, that goes back, ultimately, to Vyāsa and Śiva. His mission is to restore the true teachings of Vedānta, to which end he is to write his commentary on the Brahma-sūtra, 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.

18 This is also indicated by Sankara’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 Sahkaracarya 1993:468,567]) Sankara refers to the melting of snow and hail. He refers to a blind man dreaming he has seen a Himalayan peak (Bṛhadāranyaka Upaniṣad-bhāṣya [V.3.6 [see Sahkaracarya 1966:605]])


21 One prominent example is when Sankara avoids an outcaste in Banaras, who is Śiva in disguise, an incident which only occurs in the ŚDV and the TSA.

22 In the Calcutta edition of the ASV Śankara is born in Chidambaram, Tamil Nadu, a place more commonly associated with the birth of Patañjali, the author of the Yogasūtra, who is an embodiment of the primal serpent, Ādisea (see Dikshitar 1985:5.2-5.8).

23 The description of Sankara’s birth uses stock images of kavya literature, as found in Āśvaghosha’s Buddha-carita and Kālidāsa’s Rāgavaṃśa (Bader 2000:80). When Śankara was five, Śivaguru was about to perform Sankara’s upanayana, but died; his mother performed the rite. Against the wishes of his mother, Sankara wanted to leave home and renounce. While bathing in the river, Śankara is seized by a crocodile. Brahmanical tradition permits renunciation in the event of a life-threatening calamity (apart-samyāsa), and Sankara, in the jaws of death, asks his mother permission to renounce, which she, of course, grants, miraculously saving him.

24 Govinda’s teacher is Gaudapāda, the author of the earliest specifically advaita text available, the Gaudapādiya-kārika (King 1995:15). In the hagiographies, Gaudapāda is also linked with another lineage, descending from Patañjali. Although current tradition, taken from the ŚDV, locates Govinda by the Narmada river, only three texts agree on this, and do not specify the place.

25 Śankara’s life-span is omitted in the CSV (Bader 2000:85 fn. 25).
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 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 Pāṣupata 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 Kauṛuṣya. The concept of divine presence—and also, by 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

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26 Sawai (1987) also summarises Śaṅkara’s purpose of incarnation, as told in the ŠDV: to halt the conduct of “evil” people, establish Vedic *dharma*, and to guide people to salvation. The *śaiva* mythological frame of the hagiographies of Śaṅkara draws on themes found in the *Purāṇas*. In the ASV, CŚV and GVK, it is Nārada who is alarmed by the Brahman’s 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 TSA, ŠDV and GVK, the story begins with Śiva himself, who is approached for help by the *devas*. In the TSA and ŠDV, not only Śiva incarnates (as Śaṅkara), but Brahmā becomes Maṇḍanamāliśa, Sarasvatī his wife, Kumāra is born as Kumārilā-Bhaṭṭa (*ācārya*), Nārāyaṇa as Padmapāda, and Vāyu as both Hastāmallaka and Tōṭaka.

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 Śaiva 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).
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 *samnyāsīs*: 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 *samnyāsīs* 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. Throughout his journey he is victorious over all rival sects and views—the very existence of which indicates the decline of the Vedic tradition—and reestablishes the correct understanding of the sacred texts. The other hagiographies differ considerably over the places visited.

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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 Kamsa, 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 *śaiva samnyāsī* renunciate, and the householder *vaśnava* tradition represented by his mother, a staunch *vaśnava*, 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 *vaśnava* component in the narrative, implied in a comparison of the childhoods of Śaṅkara and Kṛṣṇa; the hagiographies of Śaṅkara are distinctly *śaiva* in orientation.

30 This features in five of the hagiographies (Bader 2000:141–182), the most extensive account being contained in the AŚV, which is associated with the Kāñcī *matha*, and is particularly *śaiva* 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: BadařI, Prayāga, Kāñci, Rāmeśvara; in six, Maghada, Gokarna, Kāḷaṭṭ; in five, Kāśmīra, Kāḍī, Cidambaran, Śrīval/Sivālehāra; in four, Śrīśaila, Śrīgeri, Tirupati, Anantaśayana (Bader 2000:143).
end of the debates, and the final event of significance before he dies, signals Śaṅkara's ascension to the Throne of Omniscience.

The *digvijaya*-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 *digvijaya* ('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 (*itiḥāsapurāṇā*) 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 *vaśnavā* dualist, Madhva (1238–1317) from Udupi,

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3 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) Vṛṣācāla (Trichūr) in Kerala (two works, GSC, and Kūśmāṇḍa Śaṅkara-vijaya of Puruṣottama Bharat); 2) Kāñcī (four works: ASV, BrŚV, RŚA, (and presumably) Aćcāya-digvijaya-campū of Vellī-Sahāya) [Also Susamā]; 3) Himalayas, in either Kedaranātha or Kailāsa, and in two accounts, via a cave/hermitage of Dattātreya [this cave could be at Māḥīrī in Maharashtra (Bader 2000:158)] (seven works: SDV, ČSV, GVK, Śaṅkara-digvijaya-sara of Sadānanda, Bhagavat-pādābhuvanāya of Kavi Lāksmaṇa Sūrin, and Śaṅkara-mandāra-śaurabha and Śaṅkara-daya, both by Nīlakaṇṭha). Kedarnāth has become the most widely accepted of the places mentioned, owing to the popularity of the SDV. However, Antarkar favours Kāñcī, though this is rejected by those who deny the authenticity of the Kāñcī *pīṭha*. The iconographic evidence from Kāñcī (statues of sānyāsīs) is relatively modern, and really provides no substantive evidence at all on this issue. Local traditions locate the place of Śaṅkara’s death at Kāñcī, Kedarnāth, Śrīnagar (Kashmir), Vṛṣācāla and Nirmāla (near Bassein, close to Bombay), all of which contain either shrines or samādhīs for Śaṅkara. Gadgil (1895:295) visited the samādhi of Śaṅkara at Nirmāla but concludes that the festival there, celebrated around the 13th of the bright half of Kartika, is for a ‘second’ Śaṅkara. In our current state of knowledge, the question of where Śaṅkara may have died is still open.

3 Six of the hagiographies describe Śaṅkara’s final ascension to the seat of omniscience (*sarvajīpa-pīṭha*), 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 from Sarasvatī (Maṇḍanāmīśra’s wife), who (in some versions) questions on 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 *dāstras*-s, including *kamā*-dāstra: see Bader (2000:169–182). Śaṅkara passes the test, and disappears to his abode on mount Kailāsa.

34 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 Śaṅkara-rāvya of Kāñcī), and other community leaders who act as sponsors for worship (as *yajamānās*) and exhibit altruistic behaviour in the giving of charity.

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38 In this category of literature, Bader (2000:170) notes Ratnākara’s (9th cent.) *Haravijaya*, the story of Śiva’s defeat of the demon Andhaka; Vāsudeva’s (9th cent.) *Yuddhiṣṭhiravijaya*, a retelling of the main events of the *Mahābhārata*; and the (12th cent.) *Prthvirāja-vijaya*, dealing with the war and triumph of Prthvirāja III (which may have directly influenced the VŚV, GŚC, GVK and SDV). A *digvijaya* also features prominently in Kālidāsa’s *Rāgnuvamśa*.

39 Manimaranji and *Śumadhvavijaya*, both by Nārāyanapandita, the son of Trivikramapandita, who was a direct disciple of Madhva.
as it is probable that one of the earliest hagiographies of Śaṅkara, Ānanta-giri’s Śaṅkaravijaya, post-dates Madhva.\(^{30}\) In Madhva’s hagiographies, during his digvijaya (similarly to Śaṅkara), Madhva goes first to Śrīgerī, and also goes to Badaṅkarāśrama, 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 ceremony for a kṣatriya king, which is one of the three large-scale śrauta rites, the others being the aśvamedha and the vāja-peya. 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 (ultsava), whereby the powers active in the universe are regenerated. The king’s anunction is preceded by a year long dikṣā, and dikṣā-like observances. Technically, the consecration rite is reserved for kṣatriyas; 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 (dikṣā, received from Govinda); the establishment/conquest of the four quarters (digyāsthāpana);\(^{39}\) the chariot drive\(^{40}\) (also performed by the Śaṅkarācāryas); and the enthronement.\(^{41}\)

In the rājasūya the king has a particular association with the tiger, upon whose skin he receives the anunction,\(^{42}\) prior to the dikṣā. Similarly, the gaddi-s of the Śaṅkarācārya-s are also coverered with a tiger skin. It is during the chariot drive that the

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\(^{30}\) Besides the hagiographies of Śaṅkara and Madhva, Sax (2000) also discusses the digvijayas of Vallabha (1479–1531) and Caitanya (1486–1533). Madhva took samnyāsa from Acyutapreksa, either at the age of nine or eleven/twelve (see Glansenapp 1992:4), and wrote a treatise on renunciation (see Olivelle 1982). Śrī Caitanya Kṛṣṇa was given his name by Keśava Bhārati, a Daśānāmī, from whom he took samnyāsa in 1510. The initiation seems to have been largely of a formality (he did not add Bhārati to his name); Caitanya was far more influenced by Tāvara Pūrṇ of the Madhva sect, who he had met previously in Gaya in 1508, and who initiated him into the Daśākṣara Kṛṣṇa mantra, after which he became an ecstatic devotee of Kṛṣṇa (Kapoor 1994:20–25). Vallabha, besides his other works, wrote a treatise on renunciation, the Samnyāsanītya, which, according to tradition, was written in Badarāṇāth. He took samnyāsa 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 ṛtu of the world can be known without it; bhakti is contrasted with samnyāsa (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] Vaishnavas”. Madhva attacks Śaṅkara’s reputation, portraying him as an incarnation of the demon Manimat, born to a widow (Bader 2000:37), and the digvijaya 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 vaishnava hagiographies were based on the earlier hagiographies of Śaṅkara and Madhva.

\(^{39}\) 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.

\(^{40}\) ibid (pp. 127–139).

\(^{41}\) ibid (pp. 140–142).

\(^{42}\) ibid (p. 108).
king engages in a ritual battle with another *ksatriya*, at whom he shoots his arrows, declaring, “the purpose has been fulfilled”. The parallel in the hagiographies is the verbal battle with the wealthy ritualist Māṇḍanamiśra, who is presented to Śaṅkara by his uncle and teacher, Kumārila-Bhaṭṭa (the foremost authority of his time—seventh century—in the Vedic Mīmāṃsā tradition), who self-immolated after meeting Śaṅkara. The fulfilment of the *rājaśuṣya* 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 *brahmāṇ* 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 *digvijāya* are described in the fifteenth chapter. A substantial part of the *digvijāya* is devoted to the conquest of *śaiva*-s of various types, the Kāpālikas being the most horrendous, while the only *vaśnava* opponents are described as wearing the emblems of Viṣṇu, and as recognising five differences. The philosophical doctrine (*pāṇc-bhedā*) appears to be that of Madhva. The *vaśnava*-s are dealt with in but three verses, which is significant. Śaṅkara's lack of engagement with any *vaśnava* opponents, of which there were many in Śaṅkara’s time, and throughout the period of the composition of the

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43 Ibid (p. 129).
44 Identified in four of the hagiographies as Viśvarūpa. See Ch. 4.4, fn. 73, of this thesis for the identity of Viśvarūpa/Sureśvara/Māṇḍanamiśra.
45 Kumārila, the ritualist, is portrayed as the man responsible for the defeat of Buddhism and the re-establishment 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 *sangam* at Prayāg.) Śaṅkara does not debate with Kumārila, who expresses admiration for Śaṅkara's commentary on the *Brahmasūtra* 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 bhaṭṭaḥ paramārthe śaṅkarat* (Halbfass 1983:101 fn. 21).
46 Ibid (pp. 140–160).
47 First, the liquor drinking Śāktas, in Rāmeśvaram (vv. 1–3). He then worships Lord Rāma (Rāmanātha) and proceeds to Kāṇcī 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 Venkatānātha (Viṣṇu), followed by a battle with the *śaiva* Kāpālikas, Krakaca, and his followers in Karnāta (vv. 8–12). He then defeats the *śaiva* dualist, Nīlakanṭha, and his disciple, Haradatta, in Gokarna (vv. 29–72); *vaśnava* s in Dvārakā (vv. 73–75); the *bheda-bheda vedāntins*, Bhaṭṭa Bhaṭśvara, in Ujjain (vv. 76–140); some Jainas among the Bahlikas or Bāctrians (vv. 141–155); a Śākt named Abhinava Gupta, in Kāmārupa (most probably confused with the famous Kashmiri Tantric); and finally some unidentifiable philosophers in Bengal (vv. 161–162).
48 Between God and *jīva*, between *jīva* and *jīva*, between *jīva* and insentient objects, between God and sentient objects, and between insentient objects themselves
49 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, viyūha, vihāva, antāyāmin* and *arca* forms—(see Bhatt 1968:3), they do not adhere to the doctrine described in the ŚDV.
hagiographies, is curious indeed. A possible explanation is that Śaṅkara's hagiographers wished to project him as a śāiva (for reasons that will become apparent in the following chapter) who defeated only radical śāivas and tāntrikas, yet did not want to offend vaisnavas, 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 be analysed, particularly considering the evidence from Śaṅkara's own works. The indications are that he was a vaisnava with a religious background that was most probably Pāṇcarātra, a ritual and philosophical system that also significantly informed the religious background of both Rāmānuja and Madhva, two other important early Vedantins.

It is known that the Pāṇcarātrins produced a vast number of texts, their Tantras (or Āgamas) 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 Śrīvaisṇavas to the Pāṇcarātrins is ambivalent. On the one hand, a long array of Śrīvaisṇavas and later Pāṇcarātrins have attempted to disprove the charge of heterodoxy made against the Pāṇcarātrins. On the other hand, while most of the Pāṇcarātrin authors regard Pāṇcarātra as being in conformity with the Veda, they also regard the Veda as either the shoots or the roots of Pāṇcarātra (Bhatt 1968:12).

Śaṅkara's opposition to the vaisnava Bhāgavatas (Pāṇcarātras) is known from his remarks in the Brahma-sūtra-bhāṣya (2.2.42). As Pāṇcarātra claims to be based on an independent, extra-Vedic revelation, it would have been illegitimate and unacceptable from Śaṅkara's perspective. However, Pāṇcarātra gets off lightly. His principal objection to Pāṇcarātra does not concern their shared common Ultimate, Nārāyaṇa, but concerns an aspect of Pāṇcarātra metaphysical doctrine; the contention being that an individual

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50 While several scholars have concluded that the origin of the term pāṇcarātra (lit. 'night of the five') is obscure, Neveu (1977:10) believes that the term probably refers to the dissolution of the five elements in mokṣa. For Pāṇcarātra doctrine, see Schrader (1916).

51 Schrader (1916:14) estimates that the samhitā literature of the Pāṇcarāstras amounted to at least 1.5 million slokas.

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

53 Śaṅkara appears to have lived between the times of the composition of the earlier northern Pāṇcarātra samhitās and the later southern samhitās; see Schrader (1916:16-17).
soul (called Saṁkarśana) 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 Pāṇcarātra doctrine of vyūha-s (emanations). However, he agrees with the Pāṇcarātrins that Nārāyaṇa 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' (ekāntī) devotion and temple visiting. Śaṅkara (BSB 2.2.42) gives five methods of worshipping the supreme lord, Bhagavat Vāsudeva: (i) abhigamana, ritually going to the temple of the deity, with speech, body and mind centred on him; (ii) upadāna, collecting materials needed for worship; (iii) jyā, worship; (iv) svādhyāya, the muttering of mantra; (v) yoga, meaning meditation. By worshipping the lord in these ways for a hundred years, the devotee reached Bhagavat.

Alston (1980a, Vol.1:10–14) comments on Śaṅkara's connection to the early Pāṇcarātrins, pointing out Śaṅkara's reference in the introduction to his Gītā commentary to two separate groups of mind-born "sons of Brahmā",54 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 (12.321.27–12.326.97) the earliest known account of the doctrines of the Pāṇcarātrins (Neveil 1977:10); it is of a secret dialogue between Nārāyaṇa and Nārada. In the next section (12.327ff.), Dvaipāyana praises Pāṇcarātra as the greatest Upaniṣad.

Śaṅkara could have objected to the Pāṇcarātras 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 paramountcy of bhakti over mokṣa; and the admission of women, śūdras and foreigners within the Bhāgavata fold (see Batt 1963). However, Śaṅkara equates the Supreme of the Upaniṣads with Nārāyaṇa (BSB 2.2.42), which is the Supreme for the Pāṇcarātras. Śaṅkara only rejects one aspect of the vyūha doctrine of the Pāṇcarātras, and expressly approves a considerable part of their system, which is said to agree with his Vedānta. According to Neveil's analysis (1977:20), Śaṅkara's rejection of Pāṇcarātra 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.

54 Also described in the Nārāyaṇiya section of the MBh (12.327). Simon Brodbeck kindly supplied this reference.
(quoting Chandogya Upanishad 7.26.2). Śaṅkara also says (BSB 2.2.42–44) that the entire universe is a vyūha of the Lord, twice referring to a specific aspect of the Pāṇcarātra vyūha theory, the sad-gunas.55 In his introduction to the Bhagavad Gītā, Śaṅkara refers to the sad-gunas—in the same sequence used by Pāṇcarātra—in explaining how Nārāyaṇa has become the āvāta 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 śāiva Maheśvaras, Kāpālikas and Pāṣupatas—and also of Buddhists, Jainas, Vaiśeṣika, Śaṅkhya and Yoga56—all of which he explicitly describes as heretical (vedabāhyā). Neevel argues that Śaṅkara placed Pāṇcarātra on a higher level than other systems, closest to Vedānta. Objections to Pāṇcarātra did come from Pūrva-Mimāṃsakas, who maintained that Pāṇcarātra was in conflict with the Vedas, 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 Vedāntasūtra-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 Upaniṣads, but Pāṇcarātra had developed an alternative and increasingly popular ritual tradition, which Neevel suggests may have threatened the livelihood and authority of smārta Brahmans, hence their opposition.

If Śaṅkara really was a śāiva, as depicted in the hagiographies, then his attitude towards the vaisnava Bhāgavatas and his recognition of Nārāyaṇa as the highest Self in his main work, the Brahma-sūtra-bhāṣya, is indeed remarkable.57 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 Ānandagiri—his sub-commentator—to be his chosen deity (īśta-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 vaishnava 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;68 on the contrary, as śaiva-s prefer to refer to their īśta-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 Pasūpati.

‘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 Pañcarādikā (v. 3) Padmapāda69 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 vaishnava in style, and not śaiva. Three times in the BSB (1.2.7; 1.2.14; 1.3.14) the śālagrama 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 of Viṣṇu on idols (pratima), as an instance of the superimposition of religious ideas on things. Hacker maintains that if Śaṅkara really was a śaiva, then the imagery would have more naturally employed the līṅga instead. Similar vaishnava imagery occurs throughout the commentaries on the Upaniṣads.60 Imaginary persons used by Śaṅkara in explanations are also frequently vaishnava characters, with names such as Devadatta, Yajñadatta, Viṣṇumitra and Kṛṣṇagupta. In his commentary on Gaudapāda’s Māṇḍūkya-kārikā (4.1), Śaṅkara equates Gaudapāda’s Sambuddha (Śākyamuni, the Buddha) with Nārāyaṇa (the Puruṣottama), once again indicating

68 The Daksināmūrti-stotra (attributed to Śaṅkara), on which Suresvara wrote a Varttika, the Mānasollāsa, is śaiva in orientation, but both are of doubtful authenticity (see Potter 1981, Vol.3:550–551).
60 Taittiriya (1.6.1; 1.8.1); Mundaka (2.1.4); Praṣna (5.2); Brhadāraṇyaka (1.1.1; 5.1.1); Chāndogya (6.16.3; 7.1.4; 8.1.1).
Sāṅkara's *vaśnavā* orientation.

Hacker (1995:36) observes that Sāṅkara deviates from custom, in that he does not—with the exception of the *Gītā* commentary—include the invocation to a deity (*mangalācarana* 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 *Ātmā*. This Sāṅkara explains in his commentary on the *Kāṇa Upaniṣad*, where he says that "for 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 Sāṅkara was specifically *vaśnava*, as his realisation took him beyond religious identification. It merely points to Sāṅkara's probable religious background, which was evidently not *śaiva*.

A further clue as to Sāṅkara's religious orientation is provided by his attitude to Vināyaka (Gaṇapati/Ganeśa). Commenting on a passage in the *Gītā* (9.25), Sāṅkara remarks there are four kinds of worshippers (each attaining their own respective goal): *Devavrata*-s (who attain the *deva*-s), *Pitṛavrata*-s (who reach the realm of ancestors), *Bhūtavrata*-s (who attain the *bhūta*-s, 'malevolent spirits'), and *Viṣṇuvrata*-s (the *vaśnava*-s who worship Me, and reach Me). Sāṅkara mentions three sects of *Bhūtavrata*-s by name: the Vināyaka, the Mātrgaṇa and the Caturbhaginiṣ (Nagaswamy 1996:237–238).

Ganeśa makes his first appearance in the Hindu pantheon around 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 Sambandar 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 Sāṅkara regarded the worship of Ganeśa as the lowest form of worship, that of malevolent spirits (*bhūta*). The horrifying nature of Ganeśa, leader of the attendants (*bhūta*-s) of Śiva, is described in a chapter of the *Yājñavalkya 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, Ganeśa had became integrated within the orthodox *śaiva* tradition by the time of Sāṅkara, so his attitude to those who worship Ganeśa as *bhūtavrata*-s seems to be yet another clear indication of his non-*śaiva* religious orientation.

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inheritance.

The second group of bhūta worshippers that Śaṅkara mentions is of those who worship the Mātṛgāṇa (which represents the Saptamātrīs), while the third group of bhūta worshippers mentioned by Śaṅkara are those who worship the 'four sisters' (caturbhagīns). It is evident from Śaṅkara's commentaries that the worship of Durgā, Bhadrakāli, Vīnāyaka, the Saptamātrīs, rākṣasas, pīśācas and the sixty-four yoginiś is considered the lowest grade of worship. Śaṅkara's classification of the caturśaṣṭīyogiṇī worship with the lowest form of worship of bhūtas, pratās and pīśācas, would provide further evidence against Śaṅkara's authorship of the Tantric stotras and commentaries attributed to him.

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. The winner must convert to the lifestyle of the other. The arbiter is Maṇḍanamiśra's wife (Sarasavāṇī/ Bhārati/Ubhaya-Bhārati/Sarasvatī), who decides that Śaṅkara has won. Maṇḍanamiśra is then initiated as a samnyāsi 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 vaisnava, while Maṇḍanamiśra seems to have been a śaiva, as at the end of his Brahma-siddhi he calls the state of liberation paramaśīvabhāva.65 Hacker surmises that a few centuries later, when concrete differences between the two schools had been forgotten, Vācaspatimiśra successfully merged the two systems into one. From then on, Maṇḍana's doctrines survived as the so-called Vācaspati (bhāmati) sub-school of Advaita-Vedānta. However, it is apparent that Kumārila was also a śaiva, as the maṅgala-śacaraṇa the beginning of his

62 These are usually Brāhmi, Mahēśvarī, Kaumari, Vārāhi, Indrāni and Cāmunda. This gana also includes Ganeśa at the beginning and Vīrabhadra (or Vīṇādhara 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.

63 In an intriguing analysis of the term caturbhagīni used in the Gitā, Nagaswami (1996:242–244) argues, from the evidence of commentators on the passage containing the term, that the original term used was caturśaṣṭīyogiṇī, referring to sixty-four yoginiś (associated primarily with Tantric worship), and not caturbhagīni. There was a close relationship between the sixty-four yoginīs, Tantric Kaulas, and the Pāśupatas.

64 Portrayed as cordial and respectful in one set of texts, while in the other set there is an antagonism with the shaven-headed samnyāsī (Beder 2000:88–89, 185).

65 See Kuppuswami Sastri (1937:300, section P.159.9).
Slokavārttika is an explicit eulogy to Śiva. 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. Maṇḍanamisra'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 vaiṣṇava heritage. The Paramārtha-sāra (ascribed to Ādiśeṣa) and the Viṣṇu Purāṇa are both vaiṣṇava devotional works that espouse both a form of advaita and a doctrine of illusion, māyā (Alston 1980a, Vol.1:36–37). Both texts slightly predate Śaṅkara, and 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, 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 Pāṇcarātrin 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 Pāṇcarātra (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 Pāṇcarātra remains uncertain, as a fundamental principle of Pāṇcarātra is that, for participation in the cult, an initiation ceremony is required, to be performed by an ācārya, mathādhipati or a guru (Gnanambal 1977:108).

We will first address Rāmānuja’s connection to Pāṇcarātra. According to the Koil Olugu (the somewhat historically unreliable Śrīraṅgam temple chronicle), it is said that Nathamuni, Yāmunamuni and Rāmānuja (the three most important ācāryas in the early

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66 See Kumārila (1993:3, 1. 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 crescent moon”: viṣuddhajñānadehāya triveddhyacaksuse śreyaiprāpthinītāya namah somārdhādhāriṇe.

67 Hacker (1986:39) dates the Paramārtha-sāra to before the sixth century, while Hāzra (1840:22) dates the Viṣṇu Purāṇa to not later than the seventh century.

68 This initiation is based on five sacraments, known as pānc-samskar (or cakranāka), the pānc-samskar initiation also being fundamental to the first stage of initiation into the Daśanāmis. For details of the pānc-samskar 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.
development of Śrī Vaiṣṇavism) took samnyāsa from the householder state, but by the consent of Lord Varadarāja of Kāñcipuram, rather than at the feet of another samnyāsa, as was traditional (Lester 1992:91–92). Neveel (1977:37) believes that Yāmuna’s family, and that of his grandfather Nathamuni, were of a class of Bhāgavatas, known as śīṣṭa Bhāgavatas, who performed both Vedic and Pāñcarātra practices, installing images, prostrating and circumambulating temples. Yāmuna makes every effort to distinguish Pāñcarātra from other non-Vedic traditions, defending it from attacks from the two major schools of Pūrva Mīmāṃsā, the Bhaṭṭa (Kumārila), and Prabhakara. Hałbfass (1983:92) comments that Yāmuna’s Āgama-prāmāṇya (c.1000) is an exemplary statement concerning the authority of the so-called Pāñcarātra. Yāmuna also presents a long and elaborate refutation of the charge that Bādarāyaṇa rejected Pāñcarātra. (It was previously mentioned that Śaṅkara was also uncomfortable with Bādarāyaṇa’s apparent rejection of Pāñcarātra.) One of Yāmuna’s distinctive contributions was to deny that there were any general conflicts between Veda (or śrutī) and Pāñcarātra (Neveel 1977:24). Yāmuna’s works reveal many influences, including, directly, the bhakti of the Ājīvārs, tangentially Islam, but more importantly, Pāñcarātra. Neveel (1977:193) contends that by the time of Rāmānuja, a division of labour had taken place, in which Śrī-Vaiṣṇava viśiṣṭādvaita philosophy had hived off the philosophical activity of the Pāñcarātras, leaving their ritual activity to take a separate course. However, according to tradition (the Koil Ollugu) Rāmānuja was also a Pāñcarātrin ritually, opening the temple to full participation by śūdra-s, called sattāda Vaiṣṇavas (‘those with no thread’) (Stein

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69 Nathamuni 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 Neveel 1977:14–16). According to tradition, Yāmuna is Rāmānuja’s teacher’s teacher (paramācārya).

70 For details of Pāñcarātra eight-fold daily observances, see Czerniak-Drozdzowicz (2002); for the worshipper’s visualisation and installation of the deity, see Rastell (2002).

71 Lipner (1986:5) refers to Neveel’s study, but contends that Rāmānuja, while recognising the authority of Pāñcarātra, does not explicitly identify his position with thier views. However, according to tradition, after fleeing from Śrīrangam to avoid persecution, Rāmānuja settled at Melkote, directed the restoration of the Tirunarayana-svāmi temple, and renewed his samnyāsa on the stone marking the renunciation of the great sage Dattatreya (also the tutelary deity of the Jūna akhāta, who is listed as the twenty-fifth prādūrbhava (or vibhava) within a list of thirty-eight descents contained in the Sāttvata Śamhitā (9.77–84)—copied almost verbatim in the Aḥībudhnya Śamhitā (5.60ff.), an important Pāñcarātra text—one of the earliest sources within the Pāñcarātra tradition (Rigopoulos 1998:43). A continuity within the Śrī Vaiṣṇava tradition with respect to Dattatreya is still evident. On January 31st 1971, the dying pontiff of the Yadugiri Yatirāja Matha at Melkote officially bestowed the title to the gaddī of the mattha to a successor, a ceremony was performed at the Dattatreya temple. On the initiation day for the successor, the tirōṇḍa was handed over, and the kaśaya (ochre-coloured) robe was placed at the feet of Dattatreya (Gnanambal 1977:140).
Lester (1992:95) maintains that although *guru-paramparā* texts and temple chronicles place the Śrī-Vaiṣṇava practice of renunciation on a Vedic foundation, inscriptions and other evidence suggest otherwise, that *samnyāsīs* and Jiyar *māṭās*, at least to begin with, were mostly inspired by non-Vedic traditions of renunciation, those of the Sattada/Sāttvata ekārīgin/ekāntin Bhāgavatas, in other words, Pāñcarātra. Madhva (1238–1317), a *smārta vaiṣṇava*, 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, *Samnyāsapadhati*, on rules for renunciates.

It is apparent that Śaṅkara was a *vaiṣṇava* 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 māṭās* 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 or the institution of *māṭās*, traditions which seem to have arisen well after the founding of the first *advaita māṭās*. Most of Śaṅkara’s hagiographies include the

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72 In two of his hagiographies, the *Rāmānuja Divya Caritā* and the *Prapannāmrtata 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 Pāñcarātra rites. The incumbent (‘degraded’) priests resisted, and Rāmānuja was magically removed by Lord Jagannātha to Śrī Kūrmā, a *śaiva* temple in Andhra Pradesh. The incident is also briefly mentioned in the temple chronicle, *Mādajā Pāṇi* (Dash 1978:159–160). Lord Jagannātha and Balabhadra wear the Śrī-Vaiṣṇava *tīkatā* on their foreheads.

73 By title, there are three types of renunciates in contemporary Śrī-Vaiṣṇavism: *jīyar*, *āṇḍavan* and *ekārīgin*. The *jīyars* and *āṇḍavans* are former Brahman householders who have become *samnyāsīs*; *ekārīgins* are important in the historical development of Śrī-Vaiṣṇavism, but are unrecognised these days in works on or of Śrī-Vaiṣṇavas. With the exception of the *ekārīgin*Brahmans at Tirupati, *ekārīgins* came to be regarded generally as low-caste, even though they at one time enjoyed great power and prestige in *vaiṣṇava* temples. *Ekārīgin* may be equated with the *ekāntin* Bhāgavatas, and while Śrīrangam Brahman authorities state that *ekārīgi* designates a non-twice-born renunciate, it is unclear from the Śrīrangam chronicles whether the *ekārīgin* is Brahman or non-Brahman. However, a mid-fifteenth century inscription in the Tirumalai-Tirupati temple contains the earliest reference to Sattada Śrī-Vaiṣṇavas, who are identified as persons living a life of renunciation (either as *ekākīn* or *ekārīgin*), and as disciples of Kandāḍai Rāmānuja Ayyangar, who refers to himself as *parama ekārīgi*, a title suspiciously close to that used by the Pāñcarātra Vaiṣṇavas. Kandāḍai Rāmānuja Ayyangar’s teacher was Kandāḍa Anūnan of Śrīrangam, who was known as *sattada parama ekārīgin*, *sattada* most probably being a corruption of *sattadā*, designating the Bhāgavata/Pāñcarātra *vaiṣṇava* tradition, reflected in the title of its earliest text (Lester 1992:85–86).

74 See Olivelle (1982) for a translation and commentary.
inauguration of a *Devi* shrine at Śrṅgerī, and non-Tantric *devi* worship at Kāṇḍī. *Devi* worship is apparent in the hagiographies of Śaṅkara, but in a non-Tantric, Vedic (*smārta*) form: radical *śaiva* opponents are defeated. The hagiographical tradition of *Devi* worship is embodied in the *Mathāmnāya-s*, but we also find there deities such as Bhadrakālī (=Durgā), the tutelary deity of the Śaradā *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 *Mathāmnāya-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 *Pīthas, Mathā-s* and the installation of disciples in the hagiographies

The paucity of references in the hagiographies to the founding of *mathā-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 *mathā-s* did not have the prominence they now enjoy. There also appears to be no inscriptive evidence connecting Śaṅkara with any *mathā-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 *matha* is the *Śaṅkara-viśaya* of Anantānandagiri (sec. 61–62). After installing the *devī* Sarasvatī in Śrṅgerī, Śaṅkara is said to have founded a *matha* there and established the Bhāratī *sampradāya*. He

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76 *Śarvasvatī* is installed at Śrṅgerī in five of the hagiographies: AŚV, ČŚV, TŚA, ŚDV, GVK (Bader 2000:75).

78 The ŚDV has already been discussed, while the VŚV, GŚC, RŚA (Group B) and TŚA make no mention of succession, nor to the founding of monastic centres.

79 The first inscription that specifically identifies Śaṅkara as the founder of a *matha* appears to be one dated 1652. It records a grant to the Śrṅgerī *dharma-pītha* established by Śaṅkarācārya, for the worship of the gods Mallikārjuna, Vidyāśaṅkārasvāmī and Śrādā-amma; *Epigrapha Carnatica*, Vol. VI, Śrṅgerī JagTr, no. 11 (see Kane HDS, Vol. 2. part 2: 907; Bader 2000: 241 fn. 28).

80 References are to the Madras edition of the AŚV, edited by Veezhinathan (1972).
placed Padmapāda in charge. Śaṅkara then proceeds to Kāṇcoīpuram (sec. 63), instigates the construction of two towns in the vicinity, consecrates a temple to the devī Kāmākṣī, and installs a śīr-ccaśra. 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 (vidyā-pīṭha) at Kāṇcoī (sec. 67). No other mathā is specifically mentioned in this text, which is the one recognised by the proponents of the Kāṇcoī mathā as the most authoritative biography of Śaṅkara.

Besides the ASV, which only mentions mathā-s and worship at Kāṇcoī and Śrīgerī, only two hagiographers, Cidvilāsa (CSV) and Lakṣmaṇa-Śāstrī (GVK), mention the founding of four mathā-s.80 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 CSV and GVK (Bader 2000:160–161). We have noted that Antarkar tentatively fixes the date of the CSV around the sixteenth century, though acknowledging that fixing a date for this text is difficult.81 The GVK is known to have been composed at the behest of an incumbent of the Śaṅkara mathā at Śrīgerī, Svāmī Sacchidananda Bhārati (on the gaddi from 1706–1741),82 and records the traditions of the time (c. 1735–1740).83 The founding of the monastic centres follows the account of Cidvilāsa (CSV), who appears to have been the first hagiographer to mention four

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79 Sureṣvara, according to the Calcutta edition of this text, which also only mentions the establishing of a lineage of disciples in Śrīgerī, and does not mention any mathā founded at any other place (Bader 2000:235). This discrepancy between the two editions of the ASV has been one of the contentious points fuelling the ongoing controversy concerning the legitimacy of the Kāṇcoī pīṭha, discussed previously. Another point of contention is that the Madras—but not the Calcutta—edition of the ASV also mentions Śaṅkara’s receipt from Śiva of five crystal lingā-s (ASV sec. 55, 66, 74), three of which were established by himself at Kedāra (mukti-lingā), Nīlakanṭha (near Kathmandu) (vara-lingā), and Śrīgerī (bhoga-lingā). The fourth (yoga-lingā) and fifth (mokṣa-lingā) were given to Sureṣvara, the former to be worshipped by him, and the latter to be sent to Cidambaram.

80 Despite the fact that there is no mention at all in the SDV of the founding of four mathā-s (which is mentioned in only two hagiographies), the tradition of Śaṅkara founding four mathā-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 (mathā) of the Daśānāmī orders and of the Advaita sampradāya. This position is elaborated and continuously re-created in numerous hagiographies.” This assertion is apparently incorrect. Further, Malinar focusses almost solely on the SDV, which contains no mention of the founding of either Daśānāmī orders or four (or any) mathā-s.

81 Antarkar (1973:2) supplies several references—five to kings—from the CSV 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 Rudrākśa-nagar, near Prayāg (ch. 16); 2. Virasena, near the bank of the Tungiāghadā river, Śrīgerī mathā (ch. 24); 3. Rājasena, king of of Kāṇcoī (ch. 25); 4. Bhōjasin, king of Cidamb (chs. 26 and 27); 5. Rātāsingh, king of Bādari (ch. 31); 6. Rāmarāj, of Anantaśayana (ch. 28). Bader (2000:38–40) largely corroborates Antarkar’s findings, but concerning an earliest date for the CSV, he notes (p. 197) that some sections of the CSV featuring debates between Maṇḍanamiśra and Śaṅkara appear to have been lifted from the Pārśara-mādhavīya (1340–1360).

82 Miśra (Āmit Kātekā 2001:25).

83 This is the first text giving a guru-paramparā for the Śrīgerī mathā.
Cidvilāsa extols Śṛṅgerī (CŚV 24.31–33a), where the first matha (called śrī mathā) is established by Śaṅkara, who installs Sureśvara in that seat of learning. Śaṅkara is then said to establish other mathā-s: near the Jagannātha temple in the east (presided over by Padmapāda); in the “western quarter” (where he installed Hastāmalaka); and “in the northern quarter he had a heavenly matha built” (where he installed Toṭaka) (CŚV 30.10–31.29). While there are specific references in the text to Śṛṅgerī and Jagannātha, and though the Gomati (river) is mentioned by name as a tīrtha (CŚV 30.4) in connection with the western quarter, there is no mention in the text of either Dvārakā or Badarīnātha as the place of the founding of a matha. In the GVK, besides the specific references to the Śṛṅgerī and Jagannātha mathā-s—also found in CŚV—there are specific references (3.59–62) to the mathā-s at Dvārakā and Badarīnātha. The appointment of disciples also follows the CŚV. However, there is no unanimity in the hagiographies as a whole concerning the identity of Śaṅkara’s leading disciples.

The only hagiographies to mention the founding of mathā-s, the AŚV, CŚV and GVK, mention Śṛṅgerī as the place of the founding of the first matha. However, according to all the Mathāmnāya-s, Dvārakā is the first of the four mathā-s to have been founded, a tradition that is clearly different from that embodied in the hagiographies. Given that the GVK is relatively late (c.1740), the only other source of the tradition of the founding of four mathā-s amongst any of the earlier hagiographies of Śaṅkara is the CŚV, which, as we have seen, is partially incomplete, in a text which may be assigned to the sixteenth century.

84 All references to the CŚV are to the text edited by Antarkar (1973). See also Bader (2000:237–238).
85 Antarkar (2001:22) observes that another vijaya of Śaṅkara, the Bhagavatpādābhuyudaya, mentions, besides the four places in connection with the founding of mathā-s, also Kāśī, but that this text postdates the GVK.
86 Regarding our previous discussion of the Sumerū matha at Banaras: the GVK (3.23) also refers to Śaṅkara contemplating five mathā-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).
87 See Bader (2000:98). The AŚV does not mention Toṭaka, who is usually counted, along with Sureśvara, Padmapāda and Hastāmalaka, as one of the four chief disciples. In five of the hagiographies, Śaṅkara’s first disciple is Sadānanda, who gains another name, Padmapāda, from walking across water, lotus blossoms appearing under his feet from his intense devotion. In the TSA, however, the two are treated as two separate individuals. In the AŚV, Padmapāda occupies a prominent place, but Sadānanda walking on water is not mentioned, nor is there any other story about the disciples.
88 The Mathāmnāya-setu states that the Śāradā pīṭha (at Dvārakā is the “first āmnāya mathā”: prathamāḥ paścīmāmnāyaḥ śāradāmatha ucyate (Mathāmnāya-setu line 1): Misra (1996:33); Mishra (2001:1); Upadhyay (1967:601); Sarma (1963:648). The Mathāmnāya-stotra (of Śṛṅgerī ) simply mentions Dvārakā first in the āmnāyas of the mathā-s: “In the western quarter the kṣetra is Dvārakā (and) the matha is Kālikā” (dīghāhāge paścīma kṣetraḥ dvārakā mathāḥ).
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 ČŚV (24.36–37a). This is said to occur while Śaṅkara is residing at Šrīneri, but no more information is supplied. The only other hagiography to refer to a lineage is the ĀŚV, which (we have already noted) refers to the establishing of but one sampradāya, the Bhāratī (ĀŚV sec. 62). Curiously, the GVK, which follows the ČŚV on the establishing of mathā-s, like all the other hagiographies makes no mention of the ten names. There is nothing in any of the hagiographies to connect mathā-s with the Daśanāmī lineages, such as we find in the Mathāmnāyā-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 mathā-s were independent from both the sources for the traditions that are constituted in the Mathāmnāyā-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 ČŚV 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 Yatidhammaprakāśa of Vāsudevārāma (66.14–15), dated to between 1675 and 1800 (Olivelle 1976:18). In this passage Vāsudevārāma is citing an earlier work, the Yatidhammasamgraha of Viśveśvarasarasvatī (pp. 102–103). Viśveśvarasarasvatī was the teacher of the illustrious advaita philosopher, Madhusūdanarasvatī (1540–1647), who is the person believed by some to have authorised the acceptance of nāgā lineages within the Daśanāmī order. Given Viśveśvara’s relationship to Madhusūdana, we may assign the Yatidhammasamgraha of Viśveśvara to around the middle of the sixteenth

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86śampradāyāna dasaivaśaṇā śīyesvaraśacaya svatā / tirthārama-vandārānyagiri-parvata-sāgarāḥ //

87Discussing the procedure of conferring the meditation shawl (yogapatta)—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 Bhagavad Gītā called Viśvarūpa, up to the words “…enjoy a prosperous kingdom”. (Note that here also a vaishnava text is recited.) “Then the guru should give him a name that is approved by all. Tīrtha, Āśrama, Vana, Aranya, Giri, Parvata, Sāgara, Sarasvatī and Purī are the ten names (given to) renouncers. His name should be uttered appropriately with the titles śī 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 [Part 1, 1976:99; Part 2, 1977:187]).

88=Viśveśvarapadatīthi, published by the Anandārāma of Pune in 1909; see Olivelle (Part 2, 1977:25)

89See Chapter 7.1.
Another early reference to the ten names occurs in the *Vāraṇ of Bhāī 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 Arjun Dev. The *Vāraṇ* may be dated to the first quarter of the seventeenth century (Jodh Singh 1998, Vol.1:1–5). It states (*Vār 8, paudī 13 [vāmā]*): “Many are yogesvārs (great yogis) and many are sannyāsis. Sannyāsis are of ten names” and yogis have been divided into twelve sects.”

That the notion of sannyāsīs 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*, Vol 2. 1843:139) that the sannyāsīs are of ten names. Our chronicler accurately describes, perhaps for the first time, the division of the sannyāsīs into the two main branches of the Daśanāṁī-Saṁnyāsīs, 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. In the following chapter the establishing of orthodox *śaiva advaita matha*-s—the monastic tradition—will be discussed, and how Śaṅkara may have been projected onto that project.

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93 *Sannyasi das nām dharī*
95 Kane (Vol.1, part 2: 815) notes a reference to the ten names in the *Smṛtimuktāphala* of Vaidyanātha-Diksita, a text he dates to c.1700.
96 “...Ban, A’ran, Tirthah, A’shram, Kar (Gīrī?), Parbatah, Sākar, Bhārthhy, Peri and Sarsatī. They are said to follow the dictates of Daṭātēri [Dattātreya], and to be of two classes: “Dandaheri”, who do not have long hair and are attached to the precepts and regulations of the smṛti; and the “Avadhūtas” who drink ashes, wear the “zunar” and “juta” [jata, “dreadlocks”]. Other sannyāsīs rubbing bhabūt [vābhubu] 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.”
CHAPTER 6: THE RISE AND INFLUENCE OF ADVAITA MATHAS

In order to consider the relative importance and influence of advalita mathas within the context of religious developments in India from the early to late mediaeval period, a brief survey of the development of early Šaivism will first be presented. The processes will then be considered whereby several forms of Šaivism 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-gurus. A more detailed analysis of the institution and funding of śaiva mathas 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 smārtta form of advalita Šaivism, primarily represented in Vedānta tradition and philosophy. It was only much later that Šaṅkara—ideally situated as an orthodox advalita-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 śaivas in India, the Pāśupatas. In one of what many scholars believe to be one of the later additions to the Mahābhārata (Śanti-parvan, 349.64), there are references to different doctrines (jñāna) and sects (mata) prevalent at the time (c.300–500): the Pāśupata-s, Śāmkhya, Yoga, Pāñcarātra and Vaidika. In the Purāṇas, the vaiteśa 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 Šaivite ascetics, covering their body with ashes and sectarian markings, emphasising yoga, and often criticised for anti-social behaviour. Šaivite sects, which seem to have developed in the early centuries BCE, all attribute their origin to the Pāśupatas—the oldest recognisable Šaivite sect—who worshipped Bhairava, the fierce form of Šiva (Maheśvara). The first textual references to Šaivism are found in Patañjali’s Mahābhāṣya on Pāñini’s grammar, probably written in the second
century BCE (Dyczkowski 1989:4). Patanjali (5.2.76)\(^1\) refers to Śivabhagats, whom he describes as itinerant ascetics wearing animal skins and carrying an iron lance.

The Pāsūpata doctrine\(^2\) is attributed to Lākulīśa (or Nākulīśa), 'The Lord of the Stave', who was considered to be an incarnation of Śiva. His teachings, according to tradition, had been revealed by Śrīkantha, the consort of Umā (Chakraborti 1970:8; Pathak 1960:4–6). He is believed to have come from Baroda (Gujarat) and to have lived in the early centuries. However, it is far from certain that Pāsūpata Śaivism began with him, as there is a tradition which admits the existence of Pāsūpata teachers prior to Lākulīśa (Dyczkowski 1989:20). There were other groups of ascetics also known as Pāsūpatas, and it is probable that Pāsūpata became a general name for a number of sects. The earliest surviving texts of the sect are the Pāsūpata-sūtra, with the Pañcartha bhāṣya of Kaundinya, which may be dated to around the fourth to the sixth centuries (Dyczkowski 1989:21).\(^3\) Pāsūpata texts inform us that the Pāsūpata 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).\(^5\) Pāsūpata philosophy appears to have been a relatively late accretion to a radically antinomian lifestyle, which included: wearing filthy garments; use of violent and indecent language; imitation of animals; feigning madness; spitting; defecation; and public sex acts. The Pāsūpatas specified five levels of attainment,\(^6\) the second level being distinctively Pāsūpata, 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 Pāsūpata goal was mokṣa, but also to be free to act at will.

The Pāsūpatas are thought to have survived in two major factions, the Kāpālikas\(^7\)

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\(^2\) Pāsūpata doctrine and the yoga doctrine of Patañjali bear distinct affinities (see Hara 1999).
\(^3\) For the chronology of the Pāsūpata-sūtra and its commentaries, see Hara (1994).
\(^4\) Ingalls (1962:291–297) assumes that Pāsūpata actions were indeed far more lecherous than Kaundinya glosses, and believes that both Cynics and Pāsūpatas had shamanic roots.
\(^5\) 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 śaiva philosophy was added to extant ascetic practices, as in the Sarva-darśana-saṃgraha of Mādhava the Pāsūpata system is not identified with any form of philosophy, but with different kinds of ascetic practices.
\(^6\) See Ingalls (1962); Davidson (2002:183–184). There are distinct parallels between the Pāsūpatas and the Greek Cynics. The Cynics first appeared in the fourth century BCE, and exerted considerable influence until the fifth century.
\(^7\) In Hala's Prakrit poem, the Gāthasaptāta (third to fifth century) there is one of the earliest references to the Kāpālikas (Dyczkowski 1989:26).
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 Pāśupatas. 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 Matha-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 influence 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 matha considerable status in the local area. The adoration of the preceptor of Jaina matha-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 vaisnava bhakti (centred on the Āḻvārs) and, more importantly, śaiva bhakti (centred on

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*One of the most important centres of the early south Indian bhakta saints was Kāñčipuram, also with the early career of Rāmānuja (13th century).*
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 identity. While all 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 Jain 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 Nāyaṇārs' hymns) particular emphasis is given to the temple.

9 In the Tamil region, three Śāiva poet-saints, Tirunāṇampantar, Tirunāvukkaracar and Cuntaramūrti, popularly known as Campantar (or Nānacakampantar), Appar and Cuntarar (sixth to eighth centuries), are recognised as the principal 'leaders' (Nāyaṇar), or the "First Three Saints", of the sixty-three Nāyaṇārs. In a later classification, Māṇikkavācaṉer (ninth century?), the author of the Tiruvācaṉam ("Sacred Utterances") is included with the other three poets, as 'Preceptors of the Faith' (Camayakuravan) or 'The Four' (Nēvar). Their vernacular poems were incorporated into the Tēvāram, also known as "The Complete Canon" (Attakann̄murāi) 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 Tirumantiriam 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).

12 It may also be noted that the bhakti movements contributed significantly to the cult of the book—notably Purāṇas—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 support for 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 Nāyaṇārs' 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 Śāivite sacred geography (see Spence 1970).
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).

In the tenth and eleventh centuries the Cōlas actively promoted the devotional Śaivism of the Nāyaṉārs, enlarging and rebuilding extant Śiva shrines visited by the Nāyaṉārs, 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 Nāyaṉārs in ritual worship in the temples (Peterson 1991:14).

Although developments in the dominance and decline of various religious movements are being discussed, particularly concerning the rise of Vaiśṇavism 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 samskāra-s performed by Brahmans, yet pay homage to the Buddha (Chakrabarty 2001:145). However, notwithstanding religious syncretism, sectarian conflicts nevertheless took place. The twelfth-century work of Cēkkilār, the Periya...

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16 Besides the bhakti movement, more radical forms of Śaivism were also prevalent in the south. In the Tirumantiram, Tirumular (eighth/ninth century), the great Tamil siddha and Tantric, describes four paths of Śaivism, also called siddha-siddhānta and vedānta (Thirumular 1999:vv. 1419–1501). In desending order of accomplishment, from jñāna to bhakti, are: jñāna-rajas, merging the "I in the you"; yogi-rajas, raising kundalinī 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 caryā and kriyā wear earrings, rudrāksha around the neck, and (presumably) the vṛṣabha (bull) and trident mudra-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' (pāda) of both the Śaiva Āgama and the Pāṇḍitātra. 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 Nammālvār) are veḻḷāḷa-s, technically a śūdra caste, but in practice members of a community of middle-class landlords. The remaining 10% are either low-caste or of unknown caste.

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 Madiraikonda Parakesarivarman, records a gift of gold to a devotee at a (most probably) Jain monastery, Jinagiripāḷi. Other inscriptions during the reigns of the Cōlas record various grants and land gifts. These include an inscription of 1116 (from the reign of Kulottunga 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 Jain temple (Desai 1957:34–35).

19 It is apparent that in mediaeval contexts, while texts may have been sectarian, ritual was frequently fluid, crossing Jain, 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).
Purāṇam (a hagiography of the sixty-three Nāyaṇārs), contains a description of a major conflict between Jainas and Śaivas, which occurred at Vaḍaṭali, 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 śaivas.20 The period following the Periya Purāṇam witnessed a significant growth of matam-s (matha/ guha/ ātīṇam), which functioned not only as centres of sectarian leaning, but also of administration.

Inscriptional evidence for the Deccan and south India, between 600 and 1000, reveals that the overwhelming majority of matha-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.21 Although, as explained, śaiva-orientated sects are known to have existed since at least the early centuries BCE, Śaiva monasteries22 were unknown before the eighth century (Nandi 1973:70–90; Swaminathan 1990:117).23 Between the eighth and tenth centuries, there are around thirty-five inscriptions for śaiva matha-s, the earliest

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20 One indication of this is an epigraph at Srīśailam, Andhra Pradesh, dated to 1512, recounting the pious achievements of a Vīra Śaiva chief, named Liṅga, who took pride in cutting off the heads of Śvetāmbara Jainas (Desai 1957:23). There is also a persistent tradition that Cuntarar was responsible for the annihilation of 8,000 Jainas in Madurai (Nampī Anṭār Nampī, Āḷaṭaiya Pillaiyār Tiruvulămālai, 59 and 74; see Zvelebil 1973:106). During the reign of the Kālaōḷiya king Bijāla (12th century), the Kāḷāmukha Ekanatada Rāmayya exterminated many Jainas at Ablūr. Kāḷāmukhas desecrated dozens of Jaina basadis during that period, many of which can be identified, after defeating the Jainas “in debate” (Settar 1969:77–79).

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

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

23 One of the earliest references to a matha in inscriptions is in the Tirumeriḷ inscription (of uncertain date) of Dantivarman Pallava (r.796–847) (Swaminathan 1990:117).
being for the the Śaiva-Siddhāntins (see below), Pāṣupatas, Kāpālikas, and the Kālāmukhas of Mysore, all of whom had established matha-s in the south by around the middle of the tenth century.

The influence of the Pāṣupatas appears to have been extensive. Davidson (2002:184–186; 341–343) has identified over one hundred Pāṣupata 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. It appears (Davidson 2002:85) that Buddhist missionary activity was effectively supplanted by the Pāṣupatas. The Pāṣupatas and Kālāmukhas, besides promoting their āgama-s, were both associated with Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika philosophy, and the Kālāmukhas also with Śāṅkhyā.

By the tenth century there were śaiva matha-s all over the Deccan, the greatest concentration being around Dharwar (central Karnataka). By the end of the Cōla period (early thirteenth century), nearly every temple in south India in the region governed by

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24 The earliest inscription referring to Pāṣupatas is dated 943, found at Hemāvatī, Sira Taluka, Mysore. Another important inscription, referring to Śiva becoming incarnate as Lākūṭa, is found at Ekālīgīli, near Udaipur, Rajasthan, dated 1028 (Bhandarkar 1995:166). There was also an important Pāṣupata centre in Uḍupi, on the Kanāṭaka coast in South Kanara district, supported by the Ālupa chieftains. The Pāṣupatas were also influential in the area around Pāḷajāyārai (south Tamil Nadu) during the Cōla 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 śaiva matha-s (Champalakshmī 1996:346).

25 The earliest occurrence of the word kapaḷa (one who bears a skull) is probably that in the Yājñavalkya Smṛti III. 243 (c.100–300). Further references to Kapaḷikas occur in the Maitrāvanīya Upanisad, and various literary texts from the third to the fifth centuries onwards. The earliest inscriptional evidence is provided by Jainā inscriptions, one at Srawaṇa Belgoḷa (dated 960–974), and the other from Tīrūmakkadal-Narsipur Taluk in Mysore District (Lorenzen 1991:12–24). There is a copper-plate charter dated to 639, granting a village near Ikatpuri, Maharashtra, for the worship of the god Kāpāḷēśvara (Bhandarkar 1995:168), though this does not indicate a matha.

26 The earliest mention of the Kālāmukha sect is in a Rastrakūta grant of 807 (Nandi 1973:85). By the mid-twelfth century the eastern Deccan (Telugu speaking) had become a stronghold of the Kālāmukhas. They rose to prominence during the 11th, 12th and early 13th centuries (see Lorenzen 1991:97–172).

27 The Kālāmukha matha-s at Mayillāppūr and Tiruvilvāṭūrūr (in the Chennai area) and Tiruvātiruttal seem to have an ancient history, and may date from the ninth or tenth centuries (Nillakanta Sastri 1982:117–118; Champakalakṣmī 1996:385 fn. 65).

28 By the seventh century Pāṣupatas were associated, as teachers, with the court of Bhavavarmā II, and during the eighth and ninth centuries Pāṣupata Śaivism was well established in Cambodia.

29 As late as 900, even Buddhist monarchs respected Pāṣupata missionaries. In art, Lākūṭa is usually depicted in the image of the Buddha.

30 Haribhadra (eighth century), in his Saḍākṣaraṇasamuccaya (vv. 13, 59), mentions that naiyāyika-s and vaibhāṣika-s are śaiva-s, while Gauḍarāṇa (late fourteenth century; one of Haribhadra’s commentators) states that the naiyāyika-s are śaiva-s, and the vaibhāṣika-s are pāṣupata-s (Nandi 1973:84). Bhandarkar (1995:167) comments that the identification of naiyāyika-s with śaiva-s must be a mistake, as Bharadvāja of the Nyāya school is specifically referred to as a pāṣupatacārya. Udōcetaka (c500) an important Nyāya philosopher, worshipped the Supreme Lord as Śiva, in accordance with the practice of the Pāṣupatas, while Praśastapāda (c500), an influential Vaibhāṣika philosopher, was a Mahēśvara śaiva (Hirst 1993:121). There are indications that both naiyāyika-s and vaibhāṣika-s were associated with the Pāṣupatas, but the precise reference that several mediaeval commentators (including Haribhadra) make in regard to śaiva-s and pāṣupata-s is often hard to determine.
them had one or more matha-s functioning in close proximity to it (Nilakanta Sastri 1955:650; Suthanthiran 1986:192). From the early thirteenth century, numerous śaiva matha-s were established by devotees of what had become a canon of śaiva saints.\textsuperscript{31} Besides being educational institutions which were frequently in receipt of grants and donations (vidyādāna) to further educational activities,\textsuperscript{30} the matha-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.\textsuperscript{33} The early matha-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 Cāḷukya, 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.\textsuperscript{34} Kings were consecrated and installed as royal protectors of the realm at the centre of a śaiva mandala.\textsuperscript{35} Davidson comments (2002:89) that “śaiva royal inscriptions are collectively the most extraordinary documents for the combination of religious fervour, erotic sentiment and graphically violent images.”\textsuperscript{36} Records indicate that the śaiva preceptors, known as rāja-guru-s, were almost exclusively from the Śaiva Siddhānta, Kālāmukha, and Mattamayūra orders (the latter also being a Śaiva-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 Śaiva-Siddhānta and Kālāmukha sects.

\textsuperscript{31} See Rajamanickam (1986:231–250).
\textsuperscript{32} Amongst subjects studied were Veda, Mahābhārata, Rāmāyaṇa, the eighteen Purāṇas, yogaśastrā, systems of philosophy, logic (tarkā), grammar (vyākaraṇā), poetry (kāvyā), dramaturgy (nāṭakā), and sciences connected with literature (sāhityā) (Gurumurthy 1979:14; Swaminathan 1990:118). For educational subjects and salaries in matha-s during the Cōla period, see Nilakanta Sastri (1955:628–634).
\textsuperscript{33} Gurumurthy (1979:14); Suthanthiran (1986:192); Swaminathan (1990:117).
\textsuperscript{34} For further details see Saletore (1936); Desai (1957:19–22); Rajamanickam (1964:228–231); Nandi (1973:101–102); Nagaswamy (1998); Settar (1999). For a résumé of these studies, see Appendix 11.
\textsuperscript{35} The rāja-guru should perform a special abhiṣeka ritual, marking the king's spiritual enthronement (see Nagaswamy 1998:26).
\textsuperscript{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 palladium, typically a linga) that is at the centre of a royal consecration ritual based on the aindra abhiṣeka, whereby the king is consecrated with the power of either Indra or Śiva. The ancient Vedic rite was augmented by Agamic rites, and by the ninth century it had become established as the preeminent rite of royal consecration in many parts of Asia.
It is apparent that the Cōla rāja-gurus (ācārya) were held in enormous respect, and considered as the spiritual guardians of the country. They came from Śaiva-Siddhānta lineages (santāna), and their functions included the supervision of the construction of temples, and the keeping of documents and records of temple endowments. Rāja-gurus could be householders or bachelors (most were householders) but not samnyāsins. 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-rakṣa, during which the king was annointed 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. One of the matha-s most influential in supplying rāja-gurus was the "my Lord" (svāmī/udayāh), who he adores as Śiva himself. According to the Kamikāgamā (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 Cōla brought śaiva-ācārya-s south, from Banaras and the Godāvari region (Nagaswamy 1998:20–28).

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

According to the tradition pertaining to the Cōla rāja-gurus, five ās (Kauśika, Kaśyapa, Bharadvāja, Gautama and Agasṭya [or Ātreyā]) were initiated by Śiva. (This group of ās is often to be found in Śaiva-Siddhānta Agama texts; see Brunner 1964:457.) The ās produced five lineages (pātāca-santānas: Duvāsa, Dadći, Ruru, Śveta, and Upamanyu), which resulted in the establishing of five matha-s in the south: Mantāna-Kālīsvaram (at the centre), surrounded by Āmardaki, Gοjlakī, Puspagiri, and Raṇabhadra. Mantāna-Kālīsvaram was most probably in the Godāvari region, while the latter four matha-s (particularly Āmardaki) played a central role in the development of the temple movement in south India. According to several Tantra-s, Duvāsa is the preceptor of the Āmardaki matha (ARE 1917, part II, para. 37 [1986:124]). Aghora Śiva came from the Āmardaki matha and was a resident of Kaṇcī. Though not a rāja-guru (Nagaswamy 1998:28ff.), he was an influential and prolific systematiser of a dualist form of Śaiva Siddhānta. His Kṛṣṇa-krama-dyotika (Aghora-śivācārya-paddhati), written in 1158, is still one of the most important texts in the south (Davis 1991:17).
A considerable number of the Śaiva-Siddhānta matha-s were named after either the famous Brahman śaiva saint, Tīrūjñānaśambandar, or the non-Brahman śaiva saint, Tīrunāvukkaraśar. With regard to Vaishnavism, 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 mudaliyar. It seems probable that from the middle of the thirteenth century onwards, there was an increased participation of non-Brahman teachers in the establishment of Śaiva-Siddhānta matha-s. The example of the Gojak matha also traces its lineage to Durvāsa, and was probably established in south India by Yuvarājadeva I (r.915–945?), a king of the Kalacuri dynasty. The matha had several lineages (santāna), and by the fourteenth century it 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 ‘Siva’ or Sambu’) came from the same lineage (i.e. Śaiva-Siddhāntin) as those of the Mattamayūra sect, though there is also evidence that the matha may have had Pāṇḍūpata adherents and related Tantric associations at the time of its founding. The name ‘Gojak’ may indeed derive from ‘Gola-giri’, indicating a circular Tantric yogin temple, such as that at Bhedaghat, near Jabalpur (Mahalingam 1962:447; Swaminathan 1990:119–121; Nilakanta Sastri 1992:118; Misra 1997:78). The Golla/Gojak or Lakṣadhāyi lineages (of the twelfth to fourteenth centuries) trace themselves from the Golla matha of Banaras (which may be connected to the Bhikṣa matha of Banaras; see Rajaminiokam 1964:227). The Gojak matha supplied raja-gurus to the Kalacuri, Kākatīliya, Mālva, and Telugu Cōla dynasties. One of the matha’s most influential preceptors, who founded several branch mathas, was Viśvesvara Śiva (mid-thirteenth century). While it is possible that the Gōjakī matha supplied the raja-gurus for the Tamil Cōlas (Rajamanickam 1964:229), evidence indicates that it was the Āmardaki matha which supplied most of their śaiva-ācāryas (Nagaswamy 1998:30–33). Nothing is heard of the Gōjakī matha after the sixteenth century, most probably because the matha was overshadowed by the growing influence of the śamrta 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].)
century, many of the matha-s were founded by disciples of Meykantar" (Rajamanikkam 1962:222–223). The ascetic frequenters of Śaiva-Siddhānta matha-s were generally known as śivayogīns or maheśvāra-s, who are recorded in a large number of epigraphs. 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 Dharwar and Shimoga districts of Karnataka (Lorenzen 1991:97). Between the middle of the eleventh and the end of the thirteenth century, the Kālāmukha rāja-gurus of south India came from either Balligāve (Balligāme), Kuppṭāṭur, Āsandi-nāḍ or Śripuravata (Śrisailam), the first two places being most important, particularly Balligāve (in the Śikāripura tālukā of Shimoga district, in Karnataka), which from the eleventh to the thirteenth century was hardly matched by any mediaeval Deccan city, famous for its splendours, with over fifty temples, and seats of learning.

The earliest record of the presence of Kālāmukhas at Balligāve is in 1019 (Settar 1999:70), while it is recorded in 1036 that Balligāve had five Kālāmukha matha-s (Saleore 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 Kālāmukhas being the most important and

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44 Meykanṭār is one of the most important figures in the development of Śaiva-Siddhānta in the south. His Civaṇānāpōtam, 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).


46 Before approximately 1100, the place was called Vailūgāme, and then Belipura (Seetar 1999:56).
influential of the orders (Settar 1999:65–66). The Kālāmukha influence spread all over Karnataka under Hoysala and Cāḷukya patronage (Venkataraman 1950:74), the most prominent division of the Kālāmukhas being centred in the Koḍiya matha, at the Kedareśvara temple in Balligāve, from where many of the Kālāmukha rāja-gurus came. The Koḍiya matha first appears in records in 1139, from when it appears in records alongside the original five mathas. It received substantial patronage from the Kalaśeṇa king, Bijjala, who was closely involved with Basava, the key figure in the development of the Vīrāśaiva order. The short-lived prominence of the Koḍiya matha was overshadowed by another Śakti-parīṣad branch, the Mūvarkoneyasantani of Parvatāvāḷī (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 paṇḍamathas, as an institution, patronised vaisnava-s and supervised the transactions 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, varna-s and āśrama-s. Nevertheless, vaisnava 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 viceroys and provincial officials, who were often entitled Mahāmāṇḍaleśvara (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 establishment of a five-matha within the Kālāmukha tradition? 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).

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

The Vīrāśaivas, Prabhudeva and Akkamāhādevī, were also connected with Ballīgāve. Vīrāśaivas took over mathas of the Kālāmukhas after the latter declined (Settar 1999:78).

Epigraphia Carnatica VII (Shikapura), 131, 132.

51 EC VII (Shikapura), 131, 99.

52 The Mahāmāṇḍaleśvara, Kundamarasa, made grants in 1019 after washing the feet of his guru, Mūliga Śivaśakti Paṇḍita of Ballīgāma. Govinda Rāja, the younger brother of Kṛṣṇa Rāja, made endowments to Someśvara Paṇḍita Deva. See Saletore (1936:38) for other instances.
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) Pāśupata 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 matha-s was partly in view of the irrevocable nature of royal grants (sāsana-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 mahant, 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 matha 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 (diksā) rituals, thus furthering their sphere of influence. The matha-s also attracted itinerant trade on account of their organisational network, contributing significantly to urban growth (Champakalakshmi 1996:210). Itinerant traders were also significant donors to matha-s, some of which were named after them.

Misra (1997) discusses the power of matha-s and their pontiffs in central India in the ninth and tenth centuries, based on records of nine Śaiva-Siddhānta matha-s. The initiates promoted vaiśesika philosophy and Agamic 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 matha-s traced their lineages back to the Mattamayūra ('drunken peacock') sect at Kadwaha. From the seventh to the thirteenth century, these monasteries supplied many of the 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

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54 EC, 10, Srinivasapur tāḷukā, 29. The grant, by Kunnayya, was also made to the servants of five (presumably resident) mahants.
55 Champakalakshmi (1996:385) draws attention to the close relationship indicated between the increase in trade activities, craft production—especially oil and textiles—and the institution of śaiva matha-s. The Kālāmukha (Pāśupata) matha-s of the ninth and tenth centuries (in centres such as Mayillāppūr and Tiruvanniyūr), the bhakti matha-s named after śaiva saints (of the eleventh and twelfth centuries), and the well organised matha-s of the Gollā/Gōjaki or Laksādāyāi lineages (of the twelfth to fourteenth centuries, which trace their lineage from the Gollā matha of Banaras), were all invariably located in trade and craft centres.
56 See Davis (2000) for further details of the Mattamayūra sect.
from the state. Nominally celibate, several of the pontiffs wrote religio-philosophical texts that became relatively widely known. It has been estimated (Misra 1997:74; Dehejia 1986:89) that the dispensation in grants and land to the pontiffs of these matha-s amounted to one third of the revenue of the entire Kalacuri state, indicating the importance of saiva matha-s to Kalacuri polity.

The matha-s employed not only artisans and tenant farmers, but also a contingent of law-enforcement officers (virabhadra-s and vajramuṣṭi-s) 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 matha-s appear to have been ranked higher than Brahmans and the chief priest, in other words, second only to the regent himself. The pontiffs also held more land than the ksatriya-s, who were subservient to them. The matha-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 maintenance 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. Taxes were also levied by the matha-s themselves on many items, including a wide range of animals and farm produce, taxes being another source of the matha-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 matha-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 matha-s, particularly those of Śrṅgerī and Kāṭiṭpuram, 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

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 matha should be a gṛhaśṭha. It is apparent that the matha had been occupied by various non-celibate Pāṣupatas, nominally a strictly celibate order.
58 These include the Vyaṃati-tikā of Vyomaśīva, the Priyavacītta Samuccaya, Naimittika-kriyā-anusandhana and Soma-sambhupadhati (Misra 1997:76).
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.
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 Cālkukya empires, four dynasties arose in south India; the Yādavas of Devagiri, the Kākaṭiyas of Warangal, the Hoysalas of Dvārakamādura 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 1335–1378), the Bahmani sultanate (in 1347 at Bijapur, Karnataka), and the kingdom of Vijayanagara, whose capital was modern-day Hampe (Hampi), Karnataka.61

Up to 1565, three dynasties ruled Vijayanagara; the Saṅgama (1336–1485), Sājuva (1485–1505), and the Tuļuva (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 Kaṁpana, being famed for the conquest of Toṇḍaiṅḍalam, defeating the Muslim governor of Kaṁṇānūr (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 Śrīgerī, 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 Virūpākṣaṇa, Hosapaṭṭana or

62 The Saṅgamas are frequently referred to in inscriptions as ṛṣya ('king').
63 The other four brothers were Kaṁpa, 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 Kaṁpana’s wife, Ganga Devi, in her epic, Madhurāvijayam. After the victories, Kaṁpana’s commandant, Goppana, brought back and facilitated the reinstallation 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 Kufīr in 1310–1311, and during the Tughluq incursions in 1327–1328 (Nilakanta Sastri 1992:126).
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 \textit{Mahārajadhirāja paramēśvara}, but only in 1368, shortly before his death. Initially, all brothers had the title \textit{Mahāmanḍaleśvara}.

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 1406–1422. 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 İmmadi 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 \textit{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-Taṅgaḍl, also known as the battle of Tālikota. The Vijayanagara capital was sacked and temporarily occupied by the Muslim armies, thenceforth ceasing to be an imperial capital. Northern Karnataka came under Muslim control, and as the empire disintegrated, independent feudatories arose. Tirumula, Rāmarāya's brother, moved to Penugonda\textsuperscript{66} in the Anantapur district, founding the Aravidu dynasty (1570–1646) there with the puppet ruler, Sadaśiva. 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).

\textsuperscript{65} Venkataranayya (1974:34) maintains that there is insessional 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-rāja', and governing from Vijayanagara (Sewell and Aiyangar 1932:191 [\textit{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 insessional evidence.

\textsuperscript{66} Penugonda, Delhi, Kolhapur and Jina Kañci are counted as the four Vidyāsthānas of the Jainas (Desai 1957:161).
Many historians have presented the glorious history of the Vijayanagara empire in terms of a Hindu empire established in the face of Muslim aggression and persecution.67 The Vijayanagara rulers have been presented as Hindus whose patronage of and association with Hindu institutions, particularly the advaita matha at Sringeri, 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 Saṅbuvarāyas, the Reddis of Koṇḍavīdu, the Velamas and the Gajapatis (Vergheese 1995:3). Muslim soldiers also fought in the armies of the Vijayanagara 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 Sangama 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, Vidyāranya, and to have built a Hindu empire. However, the evidence indicates that the Sangamas began their career under the Hoysala king, Ballala III, and were never converted to Islam.69 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 Cāḷukyas and Hoyalas exhibit an almost uniform pattern, beginning with an invocatory verse in praise of Śiva, Viṣṇu, Jina or Śakti.67 See, for example Saletore (Vol.1, 1934:1): "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).

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 1928, then elaborated by Nilakanta Sastri in 1946, and then repeated by subsequent historians—of "histories" contained in two sets of texts: (i) Ishāmi’s Futūḥ al-Salāṭīn, written in Gulbarga between 1347 and 1350; Baranī’s Ta’īrkh-fFiruz-Shāhī, written at the Sultanate court of Delhi; Rihlah or The Travels of Ibn-Battūta, written in 1354; (ii) Rajakātanīrṇaya, Vidyāranya-kālavīrīna, Vidyāranya-vrttāna, and Vidyāranya-śāka, written in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. The latter set of texts is particularly unreliable historiographically. The Vidyāranya-kālavīrīna contains distinct motifs in common with other texts, notably the Pratāparudra Caritraṇu and Koli Ojgu, indicating a common source for the accounts.
However, this is not a characteristic of Vijayanagara inscriptions, most of which begin with a short obeisance:70 “Salutation to Viśūpakṣa”, “Salutation to Gaṇapati”, or “Salutation to Viśrabhadra”, all of which are saiva deities.71 In general, the inscriptions mention a variety of both vaishnava and saiva deities, goddesses such as Sarasvati, and also refer to various characters from the Mahābhārata. The Vijayanagara rulers extensively promoted important Hindu institutions, in endowments to Śaiva and Vaishnava temples and advalita mathas, and in the patronage of commentary on the Veda. But the earlier Vijayanagara rulers were essentially saiva, and like many of the other kings and regents of previous times, were initiated by saiva gurus.

Kāśivilāsa Kriyāśakti Ācārya, almost certainly a Kālāmukha, is known from several inscriptions to have been the rāja-guru of the first two Saṅgama rulers, Harīhara I and Bukka I, the founders of the Vijayanagara empire, and perhaps also of Harīhara II and Devarāya I.72 The precise lineage of this particular Kriyāśakti is difficult to determine. He is also referred to as Rāyārajaguru-mandalācārya (Rama Rao 2000:44). There were two other Kālāmukha gurus, Kriyāśakti Deva and Kriyāśakti Paṇḍita, who headed two of the five Kālāmukha mathas in Balligāme in 1113 (Saletore 1935:39).73 Kriyāśakti is also a common name for Pāṣupatās (Lorenzen 1991:161–164), but it seems that this Kriyāśakti was a Kālāmukha of the Śakti-parīsad 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), Kāśivilāsa Kriyāśakti was also the guru of one Mādhavamāntrī,74 who was the great minister of Mārappa, one of the five Saṅgama brothers (Saletore 1935:33 n. 2). Between 1347 and 1442 at least three different Kālāmukha Kriyāśakti gurus are mentioned in Vijayanagara literary and
epigraphic sources, namely Kāśi vilāsa, Vānī vilāsa and Candrabhūṣana. After the reign of Devarāya II (1424–1446) there are no further references to Kālamukha gurus.

The tutelary deity of both the Kālamukhas and the earlier Vijayanagara rulers was Virūpākṣa, who was housed in the Kālamukha Kōdiya (or Kōṭi) matha at Balligāve, and not in the royal temple of Vijayanagara at Pampā-śetra (Saletore 1935:38–39), which housed Pampādevī, originally a local goddess, who had become the consort of Virūpākṣa. The Prakāśikā of Cannibhatta, 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 Vijayanagara end with the honorific 'signature' "Śrī Virūpākṣa", at least until 1570 (Rajasekhara 1985:103). However, after the decisive defeat of the Vijayanagaras at the battle of Tāḷikōta in 1656, the Āraṇīḍu king, Veṅkaṭa II, who was established in Penugonda, replaced "Śrī Virūpākṣa" with "Śrī Veṅkaṭeśa" (the vaisnava deity of Tirupati) as the official signature. The later Vijayanagara regents were primarily vaisnava.

Whatever their personal initiation or religious inclination, like many successful politicians the Vijayanagara rulers patronised a variety of religious institutions, including

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76 Kriyāśakti is mentioned as the kula-guru of Harihara II in a copper-plate grant of 1378. Rāja-guru Vānī vilāsa Kriyāśakti is referred to in a record of 1379. In two copper-plate grants (of 1388 and 1389) Harihara II is praised as the worshipper of the feet of rāja-rāja-guru-plāmaha Kriyāśaktideva. Devarāya I is referred to in an inscription of 1410 as having received supreme knowledge by the favour of rāja-guru Kriyāśakti, who is also mentioned in a grant made in the same year by Vijaya Bhūpti, Devarāya's son. In 1429, Harihara II made a grant to Brahmans, with Kriyāśakti at their head. Kriyāśaktideva is mentioned in a record of 1431, the last inscription referring to a 'Kriyāśakti' being in 1442, when rāja-guru Kriyāśaktideva Odēya is referred to. Cancrabhūṣaṇa Kriyāśakti appears in the court of Devarāya II, in a work of Śrīnātha, a Telugu poet (Verghese 1985:8, 112).

77 Most probably the author of the Sarva-dardana-saṅgraha (see below).

78 In one example the honorific signature names both Virūpākṣa and Śrīkanṭhanātha (Śiva) (UVAT 1985:83).

79 The Vijayanagara rulers remained śaiva up until Virūpākṣa II (1466–1485), the first Vijayanagara ruler to convert to Śrī-vaśnavism being Śāluva Narasimha, who usurped the throne in 1485. He was a devotee of Veṅkaṭeśvara of Tirupati (Tirumalai) and Narasīṁha of Ahobal. Under the later Tuḷuvas the Veṅkaṭeśvara 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-vaśnavism ascetics such as Govindarāja—who is called his guru—and Veṅkaṭa Tāṭācārya. The Telugu vaisnava tradition maintains that Tāṭācārya was the guru of Kṛṣṇadevarāya. There is also a story that Vyāsārāya temporarily occupied Kṛṣṇadevarāya's throne during an inauspicious conjunction of planets (Nīlakanta Sastri 1992:128). Kṛṣṇadevarāya's favourite deity was Veṅkaṭeśvara of Tirupati, one of the main centres of Śrī-vaśnavism. The last Tuḷuva emperor, Śadāśiva, and his regent, Rāmarāya—whose guru was Pañcamatāharījanam Tāṭācārya—also owed their primary allegiance to Śrī-vaśnavism. Patronage for śaiva institutions seems to have more or less ceased under Śadāśiva and Rāmarāya, the last of the Vijayanagara rulers (Verghese 1995:9; Champakalakshmi 1966:343).
Viraśaivas, followers of Madhva, and Jainas. Devarāya II, although initiated into Śaivism, endowed the Śrī-Vaishnava 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 Näths in south India during this period. Some records also seem to mention a Christian divine (chief minister) to Devarāya II in 1445 (Nilakanta Sastri 1923:127). 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

The Viraśaivas, also called Lingayats, were widely active in the Vijayanagara period, particularly in Karnataka and Andhra Pradesh. The most important figure in the development of Viraśaivism was Basava, who was minister to the Kalacuri king Bijaḷa from 1162–1167. The most important Viraśaiva matha-s were at Śrīśailam, Saṅgameśvaram and Ummattūr (Nilakanta Sastri 1992:129). It is known that Devarāya II patronised Lingayat gurus, and some Lingayats, such as the Generals Lakkanna and Camarasa, rose high in state service. Grants were made to various jāṅgamas (wandering Viraśaiva priests), and it is assumed that there were many Viraśaiva matha-s, though there are but a few records. There is no evidence, however, to support the claim that Devarāya and his immediate successors were Viraśaivas (Verghese 1995:8,112,117). For an account of contemporary Viraśaiva renouncers (v/raktaḥ), see Bradford (1985).

Little is known about the presence of Vaiṣṇavism in Karnataka 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 Vedasamhāta as authoritative, also accepted Mahābhārata, Vālmīki's Rāmāyaṇa, Pūrāṇas agreeing with these, and the entire Pāñcarātra (Zydenbos 2001:113,116). The temple of Kṛṣṇa at Udupi, which is the centre of the Madhva school, is first 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 Udupi. This led to the founding of eight matha-s in Udupi, 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, Madhava and Akṣobhyatīrtha. 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 Uttarārā matha-s (Verghese 1995:113). The Madhva sect is currently the largest vaiṣṇava sect in Karnataka State (Śiauve 1957:iv).

Bukka I was behind the Jaina-Vaiṣṇava accord of 1388, which specifically mentions, along with others, the Jainas of the Penugonda Nadu. 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 Natha, the seventeenth Tīrthankara (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 Dandanayaka—perhaps the greatest patron of the Jainas amongst Vijayanagara officials—who was a pupil of Puspasena, and is also associated with other Jaina centres, such as Śravaṇa Belgola (white tank of the Jainas') and Tiruparuttikunrū (Nilakanta Sastri 1992:129).

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 Kāñchipuram", indicating that Buddhism continued to be practised (Sewell and Aiyangar 1932:195 [Memoirs of the Batavian Society of Arts LIV, 1902]).
Ahmad Khān (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 Kumbakonam, notably the vaishnava Sārangapāṇi, Rāmasvāmī and Cakrapāṇi temples, and the śaiva Ādi Kumbeśvara 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 (Turukavāda). 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 dargāhs (tomb) 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-gurus, and the patronage they extended to various traditions, we now turn specifically to their founding and patronage of a new orthodox śaiva institution at Śrīnerī.

6.4 The Saṅgamas' patronage of the Śrīnerī matha and its pontiffs

Crucial to our inquiry into the Daśanāmī order is the origin of the monastic tradition at Śrīnerī. In this section, an attempt will be made to disentangle epigraphic evidence from

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There is a claim that a sage of the Madhva sect, Vyāsaṛaya (Vyāsatīrtha), was the rāja-guru of Sāluva Narasimha and of the Tuluvas, Vira Narasimha, Kṛṣṇadevarāya and Acyutarāya. Eleven samādhis (known as brindāvana-s) of Madhva saints are to be found at Vijayanagara, indicating their influence there between around 1324 to 1623. Vyāsaṛaya was a significant presence in the courts of Sāluva Narasimha and the Tuluva rulers—down to Acyutarāya—from around 1499 until his death in 1539. Although Kṛṣṇadevarāya and Acyutarāya are known to have venerated Vyāsaṛaya, there is little supporting evidence for the claim that Vyāsaṛaya was a rāja-guru. There is another claim that Virūpākṣa II was a Śrī-Valēṣṇava. However, both of these suppositions are principally based on accounts to be found in sectarian hagiographic works (Verghese 1995:8-9,113–114).

Kṛṣṇadevarāya repaired the Virūpākṣa temple at Hampe soon after his succession, and made gifts to the śaiva temples at Tiruvaṅkālamalai, Ĉidambaram, Kālahasti, Śrīsallam and Amarāvatī. Gifts were also given to the vaishnava temples at Kāṅči, Tiruḷaṭi, Śimhācālam and Aṅhobālam. Amongst those in his service were śivasūtras, Jains and vaishnava-s (Nilakanta Sastri 1992:126). Acyutarāya, on the occasion of his coronation, gave an equal number of villages to the temples of Ekāmbaranātha and Varadarāja at Kāṅči.

This temple was built during the Vijayanagar period, and hosts a twelve-yearly Mahāmākām 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 Sārangapāṇi in the seventeenth century, has become an important vaishnava pontifical seat in south India.
tradition, in order to establish the identity of the most important figures in the earliest decades of the matha, namely its first three pontiffs (Vidyātīrtha, Bhāratītīrtha and Vidyāranya), Śaṅga (the commentator on the Veda-s), and at least two individuals named Madhava (one of whom is often mistakenly identified with Vidyāranya). We have surveyed the importance and influence of various Śaiva-Siddhāntin matha-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, śāiva, 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 matha and its first pontiffs. It is well known that the Saṅgamas extended significant patronage to the matha 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 Vidyātīrtha guru, "whose friendship gained is never lost" (UVAT8 8 1985:71-73).89 Saletore believes (1935:39-40) that Vidyātīrtha was the pontiff of Śrṅgerī at the time, and in league with the famous Vidyāranya, to whom we shall return, was responsible for considerable financial aid90 to the rulers in their military campaign—which brought on them the envy of their contemporaries—and this was why a pledge of eternal friendship was made to the head of the Śrṅgerī matha. Although the traditional guru-parampara of the Śrṅgerī matha records the death of Vidyātīrtha in 1333,91 several epigraphic records, from Śrṅgerī and other places, clearly indicate that Vidyātīrtha

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87 The wife of the late Hoysala king Ballala III, Kikkayītal, 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 (Śrī 1), p. 82.
90 There is a legend (Saletore, Vol 1, 1934:142) of Vidyāranya bringing down a shower of gold for three and three-quarter hours.
91 See Aiyer and Sastri (1962:164); Venkataraman (1959:28), who also refers to Vidyātīrtha as Vidyāśāṅkaratīrtha.
continued to be alive at least until June 14th 1375.\footnote{On this date (Śaka 1296, Rākṣasa, Āśādha, Śukla, 15) a gift of land was made by Panḍarideva Oḍeya (viceroy over the Mangaluru-rājya) to Vidyātīrtha for conducting worship in the Śiva temple at Uḷajyēṣṭu in the Mangalore tālukā. In an inscription dated 1377, Vira Bukka Oḍeya (Bukka I) is spoken of as having become "very great" with the assistance of Vidyātīrtha. A stone record at Śrīgērī of 1365 restates the founders' friendship with Vidyātīrtha (see SalFORE [1935:40] for further details of the relevant inscriptions). The evidence does not seem to exclude the possibility that Bhāratītīrtha took over the gacchi at Śrīgērī after 1356, yet Vidyātīrtha continued to perform functions and receive grants.} SalFORE (1935:40) believes that Vidyātīrtha remained guru of the Śrīgērī maṭha until this date. However, in 1356 Bukka paid homage to Vidyātīrtha, and also made land grants to Bhāratītīrtha and his disciples “to live and carry on their religious observances in sacred Śrīgērī” (UVAT 1985:70, v. 1; 72, v. 3). According to tradition, Bhāratītīrtha (=Bhāratīkṛṣṇatīrtha) followed Vidyātīrtha (=Vidyāśaṅkara) as pontiff of Śrīgērī,\footnote{According to tradition, Vidyātīrtha founded eight maṭha-s and installed therein eight of his disciples: Śaṅkarānanda, Saccālānanda, Śāṇdrānanda, Advaitānanda Śēvadīn, Māhādeva Śīva, Advaita Śukhānanda, Śivaśyogi and Pratyaṅgīyoti. Vidyāranya and Bhāratītīrtha (Advaita Brahmananda) remained at Śrīgērī (Shastry 1982:18).} and it seems probable that Bhāratītīrtha was, for some time, head of Śrīgērī, 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.\footnote{Bhāratītīrtha wrote a commentary on the Brahmasūtra-s, the Adhikararāmāla (or Vaiyāsikaratnamāla). The Parāśara Sūtra is attributed to both Bhāratītīrtha and Vidyāranya, and the Jīvannuttikvivaktas is attributed to Vidyāranya (Venkataraman 1959:37–38), though the authorship of many of the texts attributed to Vidyāranya is problematic (see fn.125).} While Vidyātīrtha appears not have left any written works, both Bhāratītīrtha and Vidyāranya wrote several advaita-vedānta texts which are considered to be important works within the Vedānta tradition.\footnote{Annual Report of the Mysore Archaeological Department.}

At Śrīgērī there is the splendid temple of Vidyāśaṅkara. It is the main temple of the tīrtha, and tradition associates it with the founding of a maṭha in Śrīgērī by Śaṅkara. Although this temple may have been erected in memory of Vidyātīrtha, the notion that the temple was consecrated either in 1356, under the supervision of Bhāratītīrtha—who granted 120 vṛtti-s (stipends) to various Brahmans on the occasion (ARMAD,\footnote{Epigraphs of 1346 and 1356 make no reference to any temple, and Michell doubts that a record of 1375 (ARSIE 1929, no.460) from Kudupu (near Mangalore), which refers to offerings to be made to the Śaṅkaradeva temple at Śrīgērī, refers to the Vidyāśaṅkara temple.} [Śrīgērī] 1916:15)—or constructed as late as 1380 (ARMAD, [Śrīgērī] 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 Vidyāśaṅkara temple, which has a līṅga representing Śaṅkara, was constructed in the mid-sixteenth century.\footnote{Inscriptions of 1390, 1430 and in the Tuluva period (1515–1545) refer to the deity Vidyāśaṅkara, 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 thesis, that around the time of the construction of the temple in the mid-sixteenth century, the legend of Śaṅkara founding pīthas may first have been disseminated.

According to tradition, Vidyāranya is connected with both the founding and the success of the Vijayanagara project (UVAT 1985:25). There are four early insessional references to Vidyāranya: in a copper-plate grant of 18th April 1336, the village of Yāragudi is renamed Vidyāranyapura (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 Vidyāranya, "comparable to Lord Śiva Himself, the one of supreme austerity and devotion...". In these inscriptions Vidyāranya 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] Vidyāranya” (UVAT 1985:66, vv. 14–16).

The first genuine epigraphic mention of Vidyāranya 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 Pāṇḍarideva—[to] “the holy feet of Vidyāranya of Śrīnerī” (UVAT 1985:60, v. 1), who had by now, it is

98 According to this copper-plate inscription (vv. 27–28)—the “Bestarahaili” grant—this was the date of Harihara’s coronation, in the presence of the god Virūpākṣa and his consort Paripā.  
99 The “Kāpaluru” grant. 
100 See also EC (X, no.70:241).
assumed, become pontiff of the *matha*.\textsuperscript{101} This would agree with a *kadita* of the Śrīnerī *matha* that states that Bhāratīrtha died in 1374 (ARMAD, Šg. 1933:226–227). The land-grant was for the feeding of Brahmans and daily offerings to Lord Vidyāśankara, the deity later housed in the temple built in honour of Vidyātīrtha. Saletore (1935:41) believes inscriptions indicate that it was to Vidyātīrtha, and not to Vidyāranya, that the Saṅgamas credited their success,\textsuperscript{102} even though in later tradition the honour goes to *Paramaharīśa Parivrajaḥakācārya* Vidyāranya *Śripāda*. Vidyāranya 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 (Vidyāśankara), Bhāratītīrtha (Bhāratīkṛṣṇatīrtha) and Vidyāranya who are intimately connected with the politics of the early Vijayanagaras, Vidyāranya perhaps awarded the *gaddi* of Śrīnerī 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, v. 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 Vidyāranya”.

While there is inscriptive evidence for the association of the triumvirate with the (Tuṅga) Śrīnerī *matha*, they are also all claimed by the Kuḍali *matha* at Śrīnerī (Antarkar 2001:61–62). Vidyātīrtha is also claimed by the tradition of the Kāṇći *matha*. The *guru-paramparā* of the *Punyaślokamaṇjarī*, by Sarvajanasadā-śivabodha (56th pontiff from 1424 to 1539), the earliest account of the pontiffs of the *matha*, states that Vidyātīrtha, a disciple of Candracūḍa,\textsuperscript{103} ruled there for seventy-three years (from 1297 to 1370), as the fifty-first preceptor, retiring with his disciple, Śaṅkarāṇada, to the Himalayas, where he died (Rama Rao 1931:83).\textsuperscript{104} The fifty-fourth pontiff, according to the traditional account,

\textsuperscript{101} Other grants were made: in 1377, in the presence of Vidyāranya of Śrīnerī; in 1378, under the orders of Vidyāranya (UVAT 1985:89, 93).

\textsuperscript{102} A copper-plate grant dated 1377 states that Bukka Oḍeyā was born to free the land of *méccha*-s, and became the sole lord of the earth by the grace of Vidyātīrtha-svāmī. Another grant of 1380—which gives details of previous grants—relates that, in 1346 the five brothers (and Bukka Oḍeyā in 1356) had gone to the *senior* Śripāḍa (Vidyātīrtha). Saletore (1935:41) believes this inscription and the other evidence referred to “demolishes the contention of all those who have erroneously maintained that Vidyāranya Śripāḍa was instrumental in the founding of the Empire of Vijayanagara”.

\textsuperscript{103} Vidyātīrtha was called Sarvajñāvīṣṇu, son of Śarangapāṇi of Bivāranya, before *samnyāsa*. Also, Candracūḍa was previously Gaṅgeśa according to this account.

\textsuperscript{104} See also Mallappa (1974:20); Kuppuswami and Seshadri (2001b:6).
was Vyascala Mahâdevendrasarasvatî, who wrote one of the early hagiographies of Śaṅkara, the *Vyascala-Śaṅkara-vijaya*.

As previously noted, the first mention of Vidyāraṇya in connection with Śrīṅgerî is in an inscription of 1375; no earlier inscriptions at Śrīṅgerî mention Vidyāraṇya, but only Bhāratiṇīrtha and Vidyātiṇīrtha, 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 Śrīṅgerî and granted land for his maintenance, in Kikunda-nāḍu.105 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 Śrīṅgerî matha, from October 1375 to his death, on May 26th 1386.106

In 1386, before he died, Vidyāraṇya was present when Harihara II made a grant, recorded on copper-plate, to Nārāyaṇa Vaijapeya-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).107 Shortly after Vidyāraṇya’s death, Harihara II made further grants, in 1386, of land in Kikunda-nāḍu, which were named Vidyāraṇyapura, in his honour (ARMAD 1933:134–146). Significantly, in an inscription dated May 3rd 1384 (UVAT 1985:102)

105 This particular account of Vidyāraṇya’s return from Banaras is repeated in the Guru-vamśa-kavya and in a kadīta at Śrīṅgerî (ARMAD 1933:226–227). A kadīta is a long piece of cloth covered with paste, and used for records (see Shastry 1982:9–12).

106 The putative date of Vidyāraṇya’s succession is supported by a kadīta at Śrīṅgerî (ARMAD 1933:226–227). A kadīta is a long piece of cloth covered with paste, and used for records (see Shastry 1982:9–12).

107 A disciple of Vidyāraṇya named Śaṅkararaya-Śrīpāda made an endowment to a temple at Chantāru in the Udipi talukā in 1402 (Annual Report on South-Indian Epigraphy 1928:81).
Vidyaranya is referred to as Kriyāśakti-Vidyāranya, indicating the probability that Vidyaranya was a Kālēmukha before his accession to the Śrṅgerī gaddi, a gaddi that had already been occupied by two other saṅhā-s, Bhāratītīrtha and Vidyātīrtha, Vedāntins who represented a new orthodox tradition. We have seen that Vidyātīrtha and Bhāratītīrtha are mentioned in a number of inscriptions, dating from 1346. However, as Vidyaranya is first mentioned in 1375, it seems highly improbable that he was associated with the founding of Vijayanagara or a matha. 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 Vidyāranya. 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 Aruḷāla-Perumāl temple at Kaṅcotpuram. This record is dedicated to Sāyaṇa, of the Bhāradvāj-gotra, Sāyaṇa being the famous commentator on the Vedas. His mother Śrīmāyi is named; as is his father, Mayāṇa; his younger brother, Bhogāṇatha; and his elder brother, Mādhava. This Mādhava, of the Bharadvāj-gotra, and the brother of Sāyaṇa, is one of the great mediaeval commentators on dharmaśāstra, whose fame in the south stands second only to Śaṅkarācārya (Kane HDS, Vol.1, pt.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].)

During the middle of the fourteenth century, Mādhava [B]—sometimes referred to as Mādhava-ācārya—served as a minister and advisor to Bukka I. There are five works that may be attributed with some certainty (Rama Rao 1930:703) to this Mādhava, who

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108 This has been interpreted by some as referring to two individuals, but the text (UVAT 1985:98, I.1–7) seems to indicate one person, as the relevant case endings are in the singular.
109 The distinction between Mādhava [A] and Mādhava [B] was first clearly analysed and demonstrated by Narasimhashar (1916a, 1916b, 1917). It was further commented on by Rama Rao (1930; 1931; 1934), and subsequently endorsed by Kulke (1985).
110 Due to the erroneous identification of Mādhava with Vidyāranya (see below), it has sometimes been assumed that Mādhava/Vidyāranya was also a minister to Harihara I, Bukka I and Harihara (see, for example, Venkataramanayya [Majumdar] 1990 [4th edn.], Vol.6:323)
was philosophically orientated to advaita. This Mādhava [B] has also been identified with the author of the Śaṅkara-dīg-vijaya, the most well-known of the hagiographies of Śaṅkara. In the opening verse of the SDV, author pays obeisance to his guru, Vidyāṭīrtha. This work was originally entitled Śamkeṣa-Śaṅkara-jaya, and in some current printed editions is attributed to Mādhava-Vidyāranya. The colophons at the conclusion of each of the sixteen chapters of the SDV state that the work was written by Mādhava (not Mādhava-Vidyāranya). 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 Vidyāranya. The identification of Mādhava [B] with Vidyāranya has led to numerous works being wrongly attributed to Mādhava [B] (Rama Rao 1930:705–706).

In his seven known works, which include his Vedic commentaries, Śāyaṇa also provides corroborating information concerning his family, mentioning his parents, his younger brother Bhoganātha, and his elder brother, Mādhava [B]. Śāyaṇa first lived at the court of Prince Kampa (a younger brother of Harihara I), in the east of Vijayanagar.

111 Pārāśarasmrti-vyākhyā (Pādāsāramādhaṭhavīya), Vyavahāra-mādhava, Kālamādhavīya (Kālānirnaya), Jīvamuktī-viveka, and Jaiminiyāyamālāvīstara The Pārāśarasmrta-vyākhyā and Vyavahāra-mādhava provide rules on dharma, while the Kālamādhavīya is concerned with the requisite timing for dharma acts. The Pārāśarasmrta-vyākhyā considers renounce life, but primarily for the three lower classes of renouncers, whereas the Jīvamuktī-viveka focuses on the life of the paramāhamsa, the highest type of renouncer (Olivelle 1977, part II:25). This latter work is also attributed to Vidyāranya by some (see Vidyāranya 1996:Translator's Preface). The author salutes Vidyāṭīrtha in the opening stanza. The Jaiminiyāyamālāvīstara examines the sūtra-s of Jaimini.

112 The Anandārama edition.

113 Such as Vidyāmādhavīya, Mādhavaṇidina and Sarva-dārśana-saṅgraha. Some scholars, such as Lorenzen (1983), have revised their former opinion (also held by Hacker 1995:ch.1) that the author of the Sarva-dārśana-saṅgraha and the Śaṅkara-dīg-vijaya were one and the same person, namely Mādhava-Vidyāranya. The evidence indicates that Mādhava [B] was certainly not the author of the SDV, and probably not the author of the Sarva-dārśana-saṅgraha, 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 Śāyaṇa-Mādhava, and also Mādhava, “the Kaustubha-jewel of the milk-ocean of the fortunate Śāyaṇa” (Mādhava-Āchārya 1892:1.9–4). It has been suggested that this work may have been by Mādhava [C], also known as Śāyaṇa, one of the two sons of Śāyaṇa, who was neither Mādhava [A] (see below), governor of Banavase (and minister to Harihara I, Bukka I and Haihara II), nor Mādhava [B], minister to Bukka I (Rama Rao 1930:714; Venkataraman 1969:34). The author of the SDS (1.2) states that he daily follows his guru, Sarvajña-Viṣṇu, son of Śarhgaṇa, who knows all the Āgama-s, thus ruling out Mādhava [A] and [B]. However, a most insightful analysis by Thakur (1961) indicates that the author of the SDS was Cinnabhaṭṭa (Cinna or Cennu), son of Sahajasarvajña Viṣṇu Bhāṭṭopadhyaya, who was also a preceptor to Śāyaṇa and Mādhava [B]; Cinnabhaṭṭa was a younger contemporary of Śāyaṇa and Mādhava, author of a sub-commentary on the Pancapādikāvivāraṇa, and worked in the Vijayanagara court under the patronage of Harihara Mahārāja. The SDS shares many passages and quotations from Cinnabhaṭṭa’s other works. Thakur suggests that the plan of the work may have originated with Mādhava, and been written by Cinnabhaṭṭa, with the help of Śāyaṇa and Mādhava.

114 Subhāṣita-sudhāṇidhi, Prāyaścitā-sudhāṇidhi (Karmavipāka), Alakāra-sudhāṇidhi, Dhātuṅgītī, Puruṣārtha-sudhāṇidhi, Yajñatāntra-sudhāṇidhi.

115 ‘Śāyaṇa’ also was not an uncommon name during the period under consideration. Filliozat (1973:xxxi) records six different Śāyaṇas from inscriptions, as: son of Harihara I, son of Kampa I, son of Bukka I, son of Mārappa, son of Kampa II, and minister of Kampa I.
and then, following Kampa's death, served as advisor and minister to his young son, Sangama II, who became ruler of the eastern province. Mādhava [B] became the mahāmantri (Kane Vol.1, pt.2: 789), and Bhoganātha a minister-chamberlain for Sangama II (UVAT 1985:80–83).116 This latter inscription, of 1356, was composed by Bhoganātha, who states his veneration for the preceptor Śrīkanthanaṅātha,117 a śaiva advaitin who lived in the early twelfth century (Suryanarayana Sastri 1930:1–35; Nagaswamy 1982:97). This Śrīkantha, who is also referred to in an inscription as a Kālāmukha,118 was most probably the rāja-guru of Vikrama Cōla (c.1121) (Rajamanickam 1964:229; Nagaswamy 1998:35).119 Having served mahāmanḍalesvāra-s in the eastern provinces, Śaṇaya and Mādhava then appear to have moved to Vijayanagara and both became ministers to Bukka I, but in different capacities.

Śaṇaya lived to see Bukka II's son, Harihara II, enthroned as king of Vijayanagara, in 1377, and died during the latter's reign. Śaṇaya's guru was Vidyātīrtha. In Śaṇaya's Vedic commentaries and some other later works, the term "Mādhaviya" occurs in the colophon. However, it is clear from the introductory verses of the Purusārtha-sudhāndhi and the Yajurveda-bhāṣya that Mādhava was approached by Bukka I to write the texts, but Mādhava entrusted their composition to his younger brother, Śaṇaya (Rama Rao 1930:709). There is also no evidence, apart from a copper-plate inām of dubious authenticity,120 that different sections of the Veda-bhāṣya were written by a team of Brahmins under the guidance of Śaṇaya. A reference was made previously to three Brahmins who received grants at Śringerī in 1386 for their commentaries on the four Vedas. However, Śaṇaya does not acknowledge anyone's assistance in his works (Kulke 1985:131), and this gift to Brahmins does not necessarily indicate that Śaṇaya

116 Rama Rao (1930:711), however, doubts that Mādhava served Sangama II, believing that, at Vijayanagara, Mādhava was only ever a minister of Bukka I.
117 This Śrīkantha (nātha) is not to be confused with the Śrīkantha who was the preceptor of the Pādopatas.
118 Epigraphia Carnatica VII (Shikapur), 99 (1113 CE).
119 Śrīkanṭha, like Śāṅkara, Rāmānuja and Madhva (Ānandatīrtha), commented on the Brahma-sūtra of Bādarāyaṇa, and spearheaded the non-dualist Śrīvādvala school, which is particularly important in the south, and based on his commentary, the Śrīkanṭha-bhāṣya. These four philosophers could be considered as the most influential philosophers up until the fourteenth century, their systems being the subject of a commentary, Catur-mata-lesa-sangraha, by Appaya Dīkṣitā, who flourished in the latter half of the sixteenth century. Śrīkanṭha was a contemporary, or near contemporary, of Rāmānuja, with whom he had many philosophical similarities, both of their systems being variants of viśiṣṭādvaita. But for minor details, the philosophy of Śrīkantha is essentially advaita. Śrīkantha is associated with Cidambaram, though may have come from the north (Suryanarayana Sastri 1930:16;28;73;285). He may have come from the Gōkali matha (ARE 1936, para.19 [1986:67]). The significance of support by the Vijayanagara rulers for particular advaita traditions is discussed below.
120 The authenticity of this copper-plate, of 1386, is doubted as it refers to Vidyārāṇya as living some months after his death (Rama Rao 1930:711).
was assisted in his commentaries. The works of Sāyaṇa and Mādhava [B] also indicate that Mādhava [B] was also a minister to Bukka II (one of the three sons of Harihara II), who asked both Sāyaṇa and Mādhava to compose treatises on the Veda-s, Purāṇa-s and Smṛti-s.

Besides Mādhava [B], it is also apparent that there was another Mādhava, [A], who was governor of Banavasi (Goa), and the author of Tatparyadīpikā, a commentary on the Sūtasamhitā. On his instruction, Brahmans were brought from Andhra Pradesh and Kashmir, and settled with land in Karnataka (Rama Rao 1930:709 n. 1). From several inscriptions, including one from Goa, dated 1391, it is known that his parents were Mācāmbikā and Cauṇḍabhaṭṭa; that he served as minister to Harihara I, Bukka I and Harihara II, from 1347 to 1391; and that his guru was Kāśivilāsa Kriyāsaṅkā (Filliozat 1973:136). 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 samnyāśi would never state. This Mādhava [A] also clearly never became Vidyāraṇya (Kulke 1985:128).

According to tradition at Śringerī (Venkataraman 1959:28–39; Sawai 1985), Sāyaṇa is the elder brother of Vidyāraṇya, and this and other references are explained by claiming that Vidyāraṇya was called Mādhava before his taking samnyāsa from Vidyāśankararāṭhī ( = Vidyāṛīthī), the tenth jagad-guru of Śringerī, Vidyāraṇya becoming the twelfth jagad-guru after Bhāratīṛthī. The editors of UVAT (1985:33), in accord with the Śringerī tradition, also maintain that Sāyaṇa was named Bhāratīṛthī after samnyāsa and that the Mādhava acārya [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, Bhāratīṛthī, who, according to tradition, would have been his brother with a new name.

While there 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 Bharadvāj-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 epigraphic evidence that neither of the Mādhavas changed their name to become Vidyāraṇya, the samnyāśī (Rama Rao

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121 Inscription No. 146.
122 See Venkataraman (1959:29).
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1930:712–717; Filliozat 1973:135; Kulke 1985:129–132). In the five authentic works of Mādhava [B], particular features are common: invocatory verses addressed to Bhāratītīrtha and Vidyātīrtha, and references to his first work, Pārāśarasrītvāyakhya, in which full details of his parentage are given. He also calls himself a minister (amātyāḥ), 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), Māyaṇa the son of Mādhava is mentioned, while the Śiva-tattva-ratnākara (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 Vidyārāṇya, however, are all of the reign of Harihara II. Moreover, the tradition relating to Vidyārāṇya, including the narratives of Nuniz and Ferishta, depicts Vidyārāṇya 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 matha-s, Vidyārāṇya was a poor Brahman, unable to marry. The Vidyārāṇya-kālajīta, Śivatata-vratnākara and Guru-vamsa-kavya also speak of Vidyārāṇya 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 samnyāśī Vidyārāṇya 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 Vidyārāṇya 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 Vidyārāṇya. Nor is an identity made between Mādhava and Vidyārāṇya 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 Vidyārāṇya. As already observed, Sāyana lived into the reign of Harihara II,

123 One of the most useful studies of the Mādhava-Vidyārāṇya identity issue is presented by Rama Rao (1930, 1931, 1934, 2000). See also Raghavan (1976). Besides Mādhava [A] and [B], Vidyārāṇya has also been identified with Vidyāmādhava—son of Nārāyana-pūjyapāda of the Vasīṣṭha gotra, author of Vidyāmādhavīya, an astronomical work—and with Mādhava, son of Indukara, author of the medical work of the sixteenth century, Mādhava-vidīna (Rama Rao 1931:82). Another Mādhava, Venkata Mādhava, wrote a commentary on the Rg Veda, the Rgarthā-dipikā, a work composed on the banks of the Kāverī river, at the time of the inauguration of the Cōla empire in the tenth century, under Parāntaka I (Nilakanta Sastri 1992:124); and yet another Mādhava, Mādhavatīrtha, a disciple of Ānandatīrtha, became a vaisnava pontiff around 1333 (Sewell and Aiyangar 1932:184 [El, vi, 260]).

124 According to the Manimarjñānabhedini and Guru-vamsa-kavya (Rama Rao 1934:804).
yet Śāṇya refers to his brother as a performer of Vedic sacrifices, and not as a samnyāśī, nor as Vidyāranya. Also, as previously observed, Mādhava invokes Bhāratīvīrtha as his guru, yet Vidyāranya does not once refer to Bhāratīvīrtha. Vidyāranya, in his works,\textsuperscript{125} instead acknowledges Vidyātīvīrtha and guru Śaṅkarānanda.\textsuperscript{126} Despite the fact that Vidyāranya's importance and role in the affairs of Vijayanagara was most probably projected back from a later time, it is clear from inscriptive and other evidence that Vidyātīvīrtha, Bhāratīvīrtha, Vidyāranya, Śāṇya 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 Śrīnerī. We now turn to the issue of Śaṅkara's putative involvement with that tradition.

6.5 Śaṅkara and the founding of the Śrīnerī matha

Tradition associates the founding of Śrīnerī and the other main matha-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 inscriptive evidence also reveals no connection between Śaṅkara and either the founding or early history of any matha. We have seen that the early pontiffs of Śrīnerī were śaiva, and we will also see that the Kāṇčipuram matha appears to have been consistently śaiva. Śrīkāṇṭha(nātha), 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, Mattamayuras and Śaiva-Siddhāntins—to a new Brahmanical advaita institution that was established at

\textsuperscript{125} Anubhūti-prakāśa, Vivarana-prameya-samgraha and Pañcadasī. The authorship of the Pañcadasī is slightly problematic, as the author first pays salutations to the lotus feet of his guru, Śrī Śaṅkarānanda (Vidyāranya 1975:1.1). According to tradition (Venkatraman 1959:52), Śaṅkarānadbhāratī was the sixteenth pontiff of Śrīnerī, taking samnyāsa in 1428, and occupying the gaddī from 1448 to 1454. We have seen that Vidyāranya died in 1386, so for his guru to been Śaṅkarānanda would have been impossible. Numerous other works are attributed to Vidyāranya (see UVAT 1985:23-24). Vidyāranya's literary activity was exaggerated in later times, first occurring in the Vidyāranyakālajñāna, a work of semi-prophesy, composed between around 1664—after the collapse of the Vijayanagara empire—and 1709. In this work Vidyāranya is credited with initially composing numerous works that were then written by Śāṇya and Mādhava, including the Veda-bhāṣya. This attribution to Vidyāranya is repeated in the eighteenth century Guru-vamśa-kāvyā. Vidyāranya's hagiography is contained in the Mani-mañjarī-dhēdī, where he is identified with Mādhava and credited with the authorship of many works. Mādhava's identity with Vidyāranya is propounded in several other works emanating from the Śrīnerī and Kāṇčī matha-s (Rama Rao 1993:80).

\textsuperscript{126} There is one tradition that links Vidyāranya with Tantra, indicated in a list of the heads of the Śrīnerī matha, in the Gadyāvalli, a work on Tantric ritual by Nīlātmaprakāśayogindra (Antarkar 2001:48).
Śrīnagara. Śaṅkara has been shown to be vaisnava, and it will become evident that his immediate disciples were also vaisnava. It will also be argued that it is improbable that Śaṅkara inaugurated either devī worship or the smārta tradition at Śrīnagara, with which tradition credits him. Finally, it will be suggested that Śaṅkara’s projection onto the Śrīnagara project, and the attachment of specific legends to his name concerning the founding of matha-s and the instigation of an order of ascetics, developed in a three-stage process.

We will first consider the earliest evidence of any matha at Śrīnagara. The two oldest inscriptions at Śrīnagara, found in the Pārśvanātha bastī, date from 1150 and 1160. The first praises the Jina-sāsana, and the second contains information about a donation from Jaina merchants, indicating that Jainism was established in Śrīnagara in the twelfth century (Kulke 1985:132). It is a 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 bastī of Śāntinātha, built at Kārakala by the disciples of the Jaina preceptor Kumudacandra-bhāṭṭārakadeva. 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 tīrthaṅkara Pārśvanātha, and worshipped at the feet of the Jaina preceptor Cārukiṛti. However, the Āḷupas were predominantly śaiva, as were the early Vijayanagara rulers.

The first record of any kind concerning an advaita presence at Śrīnagara dates to 1346 (UVAT 1985:71–73), an inscription in which obeisance to Sambhu (Śiva) and Vidyāśīrtha 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 Bhāratītīrtha (who, as we have seen, is an advaita-vedāntiḥ), his disciples and forty Brahmans. But this inscription only refers to Śrīnagara as a tīrtha, and not as a having a matha. The first mention of a matha at Śrīnagara is in 1356, when Bukka I again donated villages for the maintenance of those at the Śrīnagara matha (Kulke 1985:132).127 While we cannot be certain that there was no advaita matha at Śrīnagara much before 1356, some circumstantial evidence may

127 Tradition credits Vidyāraṇya with establishing eight advaita matha-s, but this remains uncorroborated. Besides Śrīnagara two other advaita matha-s are known from records, one being the Vidyāraṇya-svāmī matha, centred on a well, and located to the west of the Virūpākṣa temple at Vijayanagara. This matha was associated with the Śrīnagara 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, Narasiṁhabharati, traces his lineage from Vidyāraṇya. The other advaita matha is the Cintāmani matha in Anegondi, believed to have been established in the early fourteenth century (Verghese 1995:116).
indicate the former presence of Jainas, as Bhāratītīrtha is praised as having demolished the teachings of the Jainas and Buddhists.\textsuperscript{128}

An outstanding puzzle is the precise sectarian situation at Śrīnerī just before the founding of a \textit{matha}. As mentioned previously, Vidyātīrtha left no written works. But in both texts and inscriptions, Vidyātīrtha is referred to as a Maheśvara,\textsuperscript{129} which may possibly indicate a Śaiva-Siddhāntin. However, as noted at the beginning of this section, Bhāratītīrtha did leave a text, which is \textit{advaita-vedāntin} in perspective. The exact processes which led to the establishing of an \textit{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 \textit{advaita matha} increased enormously, multiplying approximately five-fold in that period, indicating the importance of Śrīnerī to the Vijayanagara rulers.\textsuperscript{130} 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 \textit{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 Śrīnerī \textit{matha} originally instituted by the Vijayanagaras (Shastry 1987).

As we have seen, the Vijayanagara inscriptions bestow praise on various deities, including Śiva, Gaṅeśa, Virūpākṣa and Rāmacandra; and the \textit{ācārya}s Śrikaṇṭhanātha, Vidyātīrtha, Bhāratītīrtha and Vidyāranya. Given that eulogies in many of the inscriptions are quite lengthy, and considering that Saṅkara is so intimately connected to Śrīnerī in later tradition, it is remarkable that Saṅkara, later so particularly associated with \textit{advaita}, is not mentioned. In an inscription of 1346 praise is bestowed on Vidyātīrtha, Bhāratītīrtha, and on Vidyāranya's knowledge of \textit{advaya (advaita)} (UVAT 1985:116, v. 10), yet Saṅkara, later so particularly associated with \textit{advaita}, is not mentioned. In a \textit{kañcita} copy of Harihara's

\textsuperscript{128} Kulke (1985:133); ARMAD (1933:211–218, l.66ff.).

\textsuperscript{129} See Mallappa (1974:26): Vidyātīrtha is referred to as a Maheśvara in EC VI-Sg 2, 5, 12, 14, 24, 28; in the works of Sāyana; at the end of every chapter of \textit{Anubhuti Prakāśa}; and the beginning and end of every part of the \textit{Veda-bhasya}; at the beginning and end of \textit{Jīvanmuktiviveka}; and in Saṅkarānanda's \textit{Śrīha-aranya-dipika}.

\textsuperscript{130} In the first ten years, from 1346 to 1356, the income from the villages at Śrīnerī amounted to between 250 and 360 \textit{gadyānas} (=610 g.). During Vidyāranya's stay at Śrīnerī, income was between 1419 and 1871 \textit{gadyānas} (Kulke 1985:133).
inscription of 1380, Bhāratītīrtha is praised for defeating Bhaṭṭa (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 Carīta, the manuscript of which is to be found in the archives of Śrīgerī. Composed by “Viṣṇu”, and belonging to the fifteenth century, the first three chapters give an account of the ācārya-s of Śrīgerī, from Vidyāśaṅkara to Candrasekharabhaṭṭārī 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 Śrīgerī matha. Here also, remarkably, no mention is made of Śaṅkara.

It was suggested in Chapter 5 that Śaṅkara was relatively unknown during his lifetime, 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, Śāiva adherents of a philosophy favoured, as we have seen, by the Kālāmukha rāja-guru. Potter (Vol.1, 1977:15) remarks that even the advaita system scarcely receives any mention by Nyāya-Vaiśeṣikas until the time of Śrīharṣa (c.1075–1125), who critiques Nyāya and espouses Vedānta.

Our brief survey of the inscriptional evidence from Śrīgerī and Kāṇci also reveals no trace of the name of Śaṅkara, even in the fourteenth 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 Saṅgamas, their rāja-gurus, and the early advaita pontiffs, was distinctly Śaiva. We have seen that Vidyāśirīthra, the first pontiff claimed by Śrīgerī to have any genuine inscriptional reference, is also referred to as a Mahēśvara, 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 from the introductory invocations (maṅgalācaraṇa) to the available works of Śaṅkara’s disciples.

Toṭaka begins his Śrutisārasmuddhāraṇam with an invocation to Hari; Vyāsa is also mentioned.131 The other references in the text that might provide a specific clue to Totaka’s religious orientation are in verse 85, where he refers to Śrī Rāma; verse 148, 132 See Comans (trans., 1996). The only other work attributed to Totaka is the Totakāstaka (Rajagopala Sastri 1968:63).
where he refers to Hari (of the *Bhagavad-Gītā*) as the teacher of all teachers; and the final verse, v. 179, where bows down to Lord Viṣṇu. Toṭaka makes no reference anywhere to Śiva, and is particularly critical of the Śāṅkhya, Nyāya and Vaiśeṣika systems.  

Sureśvara also offers obeisance to Viṣṇu in the first verse of his *Naiṣkarmyasiddhi*, 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 *brahman*; 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* (the sacred ashes worn by Śaivas), 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 Śaivas. This might be contrasted with a description of, for example, Sadāśivasarasvatī, pontiff of the Kāṇṭī *matha*, who was referred to in an inscription of 1527 as an incarnation of Śiva, wearing holy ash and *rudrākṣa-mālā*. There is little in the *Pañcapādikā* to indicate Padmapāda’s religious orientation. However, at one point, when discussing *brahman* (I.3.49) Padmapāda refers to the (transient) bliss of Hiranyagarbhaloka (the abode of Kṛṣṇa), and then quotes from the *Bhagavad Gītā*. 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 Hastamalaka, Śaṅkara’s fourth disciple.

Sarvajñātman, author of the *Saṅkṣepaśārīraka*, was a pupil of Sureśvara. In the introductory invocation he invokes Viṣṇu, and then, having saluted Vyāsa, Śrī Śaṅkara and Śrī Sureśvara (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

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122 See, for example, vv. 140–141.
123 See Balasubramanian (trans., 1988).
124 This is his only known authentic work (Potter 1981, Vol. 3:563).
127 To Hastamalaka is attributed the *Hastamalaśālokāḥ*, but this is probably spurious (Potter 1981, Vol.3:19). Amongst other important Vedāntins, Ānandabodha invokes Viṣṇu, while Vinuktatman bows to his own self (Hacker 1995:38).
noted by Veezhinathan in his introduction to the text, Sarvajñātman is associated with the Kāmakoti pīṭha at Kāṅcī. According to tradition he took samnyāsa directly from Śaṅkara, and was nominated successor to the matha, 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 Kāmakoti pīṭha at Kāṅcī is particularly associated with Śaivism. This is substantiated in other sources also. Appar (seventh century), one of the sixty-three Nāyānārs, refers to saiva mathās at Kāṅcī (Balambal 1999:32), and makes one of the earliest known reference to Kāmākṣi, the presiding deity of the Kāmakoti pīṭha. Sambandar, Appar’s contemporary, refers to Śiva in union with Kāmakoti of “Kacci”, which refers to Kāmākṣi of Kāṅcī. The saiva bhakta Sundaramūrti, who lived in the eighth century, also refers to the kāmakoṭtam of Kāṅcī (Nagaswamy 1982:204–7). The term kāmakottam was used, from the eleventh century onwards, to refer to amman shrines, but crucially, from the time of Appar, kāmakoti referred to the consort of Śiva. The Kāmakoti pīṭha, as currently constituted, was built during the reign of Śrīraṅgarāya in the late sixteenth century (Balambal 1999:39), though the present Kāmākṣi temple may well be at the same site visited by Sundarar (Nagaswamy 1982:207). As observed in the previous chapter, it was only in 1686 that the name Śaṅkarācārya first appears in inscriptions of the matha.

The earliest insessional records of the pontiffs of the Kāṅcī matha, dating from 1290, also clearly show that the pontiffs of the matha were saiva. Yet the first three advaita samnyāsi-s claimed by the Kāṅcī tradition, namely Śaṅkara, Suresvara and Sarvajñātman, are evidently vaisnava. In the previous chapter, Hacker’s (1995:38–39) suggestion was considered, that the reason behind the rivalry between Śaṅkara and

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139 Traditional dates for Sarvajñātman place him in the fourth century BCE, but if he was a disciple of Śaṅkara, he must be placed around the eighth or ninth century.

140 From the thirteenth century onwards, devī shrines, known as amman shrines, became a prominent feature of temple worship in Tamil Nadu. Although from at least the eighth century devī images in the temple were common, separate shrines for the devī as part of the temple complex were rare until the thirteenth century. Among the most important devī-s were Durgā, Jyestha (the fearsome sister of Lakṣmī), and the Sapta-Mātākās. As the eleventh century onwards, the amman shrines were invariably called kāmakottam or tirukāmakottam in all temples, whence the name of the Kāmakoti pīṭha at Kāṅcī. 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, devī-s were associated with both Śaivism and Vaishnavism. After the eleventh century, amman shrines, those devoted to Pārvatī or Uma, gradually replaced other, older devī shrines. By the fourteenth century, most Śiva temples had such a shrine, known as a kāmakottam. Devī, with many names, also appeared as the consort of Viṣṇu in the main vaisnava centres of south India, enjoying a universalisation in the company of Purānic deities (Stein 1973:77–80; Nagaswamy 1982:204–206; Stein 1999:298).

Maṇḍanamīśra, as portrayed in the hagiographies of Śaṅkara, was most probably that Maṇḍanamīśra was a śaiva, which would have been in distinction from almost all other advaita vedāntins 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.

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 pūja for priests (pūjā-pād-pāddhati), the eleventh-century Somaśambhupaddhati of Somaśambhu (probably south Indian), is pertinent in this respect. The removal of līra (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 līra 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 vaśna, there is all the more reason to doubt their connection with the early monastic tradition of either Śrīgerī or Kāñcipuram.

The monastic traditions that developed at Śrīgerī and Kāñcipuram, 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 śaiva, yet, in accord with Brahmanical tradition, smārta 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 smārta advaita mathas.

The smārta tradition, centred on Śrīgerī, may have also been competing with Śrī-
Vaisñavism. Suryanarayan Sastri (1930:42, 74) remarks that under the Cōlas Vaisñavism had found little favour, but that there is evidence that the influence of Rāmānuja's movement, open to all castes,\(^{143}\) engendered a new aggression by vaishnava-s against śaivas.\(^{144}\) 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-tāratamya, 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 noted in the previous chapter 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 Upaniṣads) 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\(^{145}\) and philosophical erudition so suitable for elaboration into a digvijaya. Śaṅkara’s orthodox position would, of course, have been fully acceptable to Brahmans.

We now, finally, turn to the tradition that Śaṅkara inaugurated both smārta and devī worship at Śrīgeri. The predominant practice of the Śrīgeri matha is smārta,\(^{146}\) being the Brahman tradition of the worship of five deities, pañcāyatana-pūjā, namely Āditya (Sūrya), Ambikā (Devī), Viṣṇu, Gaṅeṣa and Śiva. At Śrīgeri a sixth deity, Kumāra (Skanda, Subrahmanya, Murugan), is also worshipped. Smārta adherents have as īṣṭa-

\(^{143}\) For the role, status and social mobility of śūdras in the early Śrī-Vaiṣṇava movement, see Stein (1968).
\(^{144}\) The reformist zeal of Rāmānuja may have contributed to the rivalry there between śaivas and vaishnavas for royal patronage (Champakalakshmi 1996:397–398).
\(^{145}\) For Śaṅkara’s relationship to Vedic orthodoxy, see Rambachan (1991).
\(^{146}\) See Venkataraman (1959:136–165) for details of temples, shrines and worship at Śrīgeri. See Dazey (1993:158–160) for the daily routine of the Śaṅkarācārya, and the festivals celebrated.
data either Śiva or Viṣṇu.147 Śaṅkara is credited by tradition with the initiation of smārta worship148 at Śrīgerī (Sawai 1992:23), yet our previous analysis of his religious orientation revealed his ranking of deivi and Gaṇapati 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 Śrīgerī—as projected by his hagiographers—or instituted smārta worship. It seems that his association with deivi worship was as 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 matha-s of Śrīgerī and Kāṇcī have presiding deivi-s, Śāradā and Kāmākṣī respectively. Deivi worship has been, and continues to be, an integral feature of the worship of the matha-s since the latter part of the fourteenth century, when the matha-s began to receive Vijayanagara patronage. According to tradition, Śaṅkara installed Śrī Śāradā deivi at Śrīgerī, and a great festival in her name is performed in January to celebrate the anniversary of Śaṅkara's inauguration of her worship at the Śrīgerī matha (also known as Śrī Śāradā pīṭha). Śāradā is worshipped daily and also during the festival of Navarātri (Sawai 1992:73). However, although Śāradā is associated with both Dvārakā and Śrīgerī, and while there is evidence of the worship of Durgā and Lakṣmī in Vijayanagara (Filliozat 1985:313), there is no mention of Śāradā deivi in any Vijayanagara inscription, the main deivi found in records being Pampā (consort of Virūpākṣa). The most important festival for the Vijayanagara rulers was mahānāvam, celebrated in honour of Durgā, and also Lakṣmī and Sarasvatī; 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 deivi-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 deivi 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 Kāṇcī or

147 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-pundra), usually of sandal-paste (candah), for vaishnava-s. In south India, smārtas generally follow the advaita tradition represented at Śrīgerī, or the dvaita tradition represented by Madhva. There are at least twelve divisions amongst smārtas, four of them being Vaḍagalai, and six of them being Teṅgalai, the two main divisions of Śrī-Vaishnavism (Nilakanta Sastri 1992:113). Smārta 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 markings usually also include a red round dot (aksata) between the eyebrows, which represents sakti.

148 For details of smārtaworship, see Bühnemann (1988).
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 Odvilāsā-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 Vaiṣṇavism.

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 Śiva149 (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.

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 matha-s.

1) Śaṅkara’s connection with Śrīmerī and Kāñcī was established some time after the founding of any advaita matha 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 matha. The Śaṅkaravijaya of Anantānandagiri, perhaps the earliest of the hagiographies, dated perhaps to post-fourteenth century (Bader 2000:24), and associated with Kāñcī, 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 matha in either Kāñcī or Śrīmerī (depending which stream of hagiography is referred to).

3) The third stage of hagiographic projection is to attribute to Śaṅkara the founding

149Hacker (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 Vidyārāṇya (assisted by Sāyaṇa).
of four *matha*-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 matha*-s. Many prominent Vedāntins bear one or another of the ten names of the Daśanāmī family. There are the first preceptors of Śrīnāgarī: Bharatītīrtha, Vidyātīrtha, and Vidyāranya.\footnote{The name Aranya is currently an unusual Daśanāmī name. As has been observed by Gerald Larson, although Śaṃkhya doctrine permeates Indian philosophy generally, followers of Śaṃkhya are practically non-existent. Larson found but one Śaṃkhya, *matha*, near Banaras. However, there is a lineage of Śaṃkya-s—named Aranya—at the Kāpiī *matha* at Madhupur in Bihar, which was founded in 1938 by Śvāmī Harharānandaranya, who is said to have revived Śaṃkhya (see Dharmamegha Aranya 1989). His guru was Advayānandasarasvatī. There appear to have been two individuals named Sadānanda who are occasionally confused (Ramachandran 1966:206), one being the author of the *Vedanta-sara*, the other being the author of the *Advaita-brhamasiddhi*.} Madhva (the dualist) was initiated under the name Pūṇaprajña, was named Ānandātīrtha when he was an ācārya, and later still, Madhva. The three important scholars (*muni*rayam) within the early Mādhva Vedānta tradition were Madhva, Jayatīrtha (1365–1388) (who codified Madhva’s doctrines), and Vyāsātīrtha (1460–1539) (Sarma [2003:17]).

Several of the prominent Vedāntins of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries bore the name Sarasvatī, including Sadānanda Yogendrasarasvatī (Sadānanda),\footnote{See also Hiriyanā (1929:17); Haramohan Mishra (1983:v).} who wrote the *Vedántasāra*, on which a commentary, the *Subodhini*, was written by his grand-disciple, Nṛsiṁhasarasvatī of Banaras, in 1588 (Nikhilananda 1978:xii).\footnote{Madhusūdana was a pupil of Viśveśvar(ānanda)sarasvatī (pupil of Sarvajña Viśeśa, and pupil’s pupil of Govindaśarasvatī) (Dasgupta Vol II, 1975:55). Besides the *Advaitasiddhi* to Madhusūdana are attributed the *Śiddhantabindu*, *Vedánta-kāpala-tikā* and *Advaita-ratna-rākṣana* (Rajagopalan 1968:255).} Other important Vedāntins of this period were Brahmanandasarasvatī, author of the *Brahmānandiyam*, and Madhusūdanarasasvatī—the author of the *Advaitasiddhi*—an *advaitin* but also a devotee of Kṛṣṇa (see Nelson 1998).\footnote{Some of the foremost Vedānta writers of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries flourished in a Vedāntic circle, directly or indirectly under the influence of Nṛsiṁhāsrama and Appaya Dīkṣita.} Jagannāthāśrama was a great teacher of south India, living in the latter half of the fifteenth century. His pupil, Nṛsiṁhāśrama, became one of the most reputed teachers of Vedānta in the early half of the sixteenth century (Dasgupta Vol II, 1975:53–55).\footnote{Some of the foremost Vedānta writers of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries flourished in a Vedāntic circle, directly or indirectly under the influence of Nṛsiṁhāsrama and Appaya Dīkṣita.}

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 Vedāntīs* 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 *samnyāsa* order begun by Śaṅkara, moreover a family also comprising militant Giris, Purīs 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.
Examined in the previous chapter was the claim that Śaṅkara founded mathā-s, in particular the Kāṇchi-puram and Śrīgerī mathā-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 mathā-s are quite unreliable, and that the earliest that an advaita tradition can be discerned at the mathā-s is 1155 at Kūḍāli, 1290 at Kāṇchi-puram, and 1346 at (Tuṅga) Śrīgerī. Evidence for the foundation of the other mathā-s, namely at Dvārakā, Purī, and Badarānāth, is even more elusive, and firm records do not go back more than a few hundred years. If Śaṅkara did not found the Daśanāmī-s, 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 Daśanāmī-s as a distinct order will be explored, the central hypothesis being that the Daśanāmī 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 nāgā and monastic traditions. It is suggested that around the time of the formation of the akhādā-s of the Daśasnāmī-s, a Daśanāmī identity was created—encapsulated in the all-India purview of the Mathāmnāya-s—integrating monastic and military samnyāsa-s, and enhancing the legitimacy of both sets of lineages, the instigation of which were attributed to Śaṅkara. As indicated in Chapter 2, of the thirteen militant akhādā-s currently functioning in India, the six non-Daśanāmī akhādā-s¹ are believed to have formed in this period, and it seems most probable that the Daśanāmī akhādā-s also formed around the same time, notwithstanding claims to greater antiquity.

### 7.1 The formation of militant ascetic orders

As early as the eighth century, Pāśupata 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

¹ The three Bairāgli (Rāmānandī) akhādā-s, and the three Sikh-affiliated akhādā-s (the Nirmala and two Udāsin akhādā-s).

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.
in the *Kabiira-Bijaka* (Abhilash Das 1997:56–57 [Ramaining 69]), most probably written in the mid-sixteenth century, scorn is poured on yogî-s, siddhas, mahanî-s and ascetics who resort to arms, keep women and collect property and 'taxes'.

Besides the Madari fakîr-s, (see below) the first groups of mercenary ascetics to be in any way organised appear to have been the Nâths (Orr 1940:6) and the Samnyäsîs. Perhaps the earliest recorded confrontation between ascetic fighters is that recorded in Abu-l-Fazl's *Akbar-nâma* (1972:422–424) when rival groups of Samnyäsîs and 'Jogîs' (Nâths) clashed, watched by Akbar, in the late sixteenth century. Other organised militant orders, such as

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3This particular section of the *Bijaka* appears to have been written not only after the time of Kabîr, 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 Kabîr to between the mid-fifteenth century and c.1525.

4The Nâth-siddhas—supposedly organised by Gorakhnâth, most probably in the thirteenth century (see White 1986:93–100)—were *hatha-yogî*-s, wonder-workers, power-brokers and mercenaries who played a significant role in political and military intrigues during the seventeenth, eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, particularly in Rajasthan. Nâth-Yogî-s maintained a stronghold at the gorge at Gattâ (near Jaipur) until usurped by militant *vaishnavas* in the sixteenth century (Orr 1940:8). The state of Jodhpur (and the wider area of Marwâr) was heavily influenced by the Nâths in the first half of the nineteenth century, particularly in relation to the rise to power of Mân Singh, whose guru was Ayas Dev Nâth (assassinated in 1815). Nâth-s 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 Nâth-Siddhas use yogic powers and intrigue to install patrons favourable to them on the throne (White 2001:5–6). For a resumé of the doctrine of the Nâth-Siddhas, see Ramana Sastri (1956:300–308); Bannerjea (1993; 1998); Vilasnâth (1998). 'Siddhas' were not only heterdox power brokers: the famous eleventh-century writer and Tantric, Abhinavagupta, was also a *siddha* (see Muller Ortega 1989:60–61).

5See Appendix 6.

6In his *Memoirs*, Jahângîr (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 DâdÎpanthîs or Gosains (Kolff 1990:28).
the early Sikh *khalsa,* the Udāsin and Nirmala orders,9 Dādūpanth,8 Rāmānandi (Balrāgī),10 Nimbarkī and Rādhāvallabhī *nāgās,11* all formed between the time of Akbar and the eighteenth century, with a substantial recruitment of low-caste *śūdra*-s into Sikh, Rāmānandi and Daśanāmī *akhādā*-s (Pinch 1996:26-27).

Even though there had been sporadic attacks on *samnyās*-s by Moslems—such as the massacre of a large number of devotees at Haridvār by Timur in 1398 (Nevilli 1921:254)—it seems that the formation of the *samnyāsi akhādā*-s was not primarily in response to Muslim harassment. Many follow Farquhar (1925b:483), who believes that Madhusūdanasarasvatī (1540-1647), the well-known Vedāntist philosopher, approached Emperor Akbar (1542-1605) to seek advice on the protection of the order to which he belonged from harassment by armed Moslem *fakīrs.* He was advised by his trusted Rājā Birbal, who was present, to initiate a large number of non-Brahmans. Thus were many *kṣatriya* and *vaiśya*-s—and, says Farquhar, “multitudes of *śūdra*-s at a later

8 According to the Sikh tradition, the *khalsa* (‘brotherhood’) was founded in 1699 by Guru Gobind Singh, the tenth guru in descent from Nānak, the founder of the order. However, it appears that the *khalsa* formed gradually from bands of roving 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 Akāls), a subdivision within the *khalsa,* were formed, according to tradition, in 1690, by Mān Singh (see Farquhar 1926a:340).

9 The Udāsin order was founded, according to tradition, by Śrī Cand, during the seventeenth century, and was the other Sikh-related *akhādā,* 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 *dhūn* (*=dhūn*) (McLeod 1980:35 fn. 2, 103, 203). The three militant, ascetic, Sikh-related orders are the Nihang, Udāsin and Nirmala. See also Appendix 5.

10 Towards the end of Akbar’s reign, Dādū (d. 1604), a cotton-cleaner from Ahmadābad, organised a new sect of Rāma devotees, the Dādū *panth,* which comprises *vīrakta*-s (ascetics), *vītarāṇāmī*-s (householders), and *nāgās* (*khāli* (=ash-clad) *vīrakta*-s). The Dādū *panth* *nāgā*-s had a prominent role in the armies of some princes, notably in Jodhpur, and still retain a small *akhādā* that bathes with the Nirmohī *an* at Kumbha Melās. The Dādūpanthīs claim that their *nāgā*-s are descended from Sundārās, 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 *akhādā*.

11 The *vaiśṇava* Rāmānandīs appear to have constituted their military branches between approximately 1650 and 1720 (Ghurye 1964:177; [Thiel-] Horstmann 2001). According to Rāmānandi tradition, the decision to arm *vaiśṇava* ascetics was taken at the meeting of the *catuḥ sampradāya* at Galta (near Jaipur), in 1713 (Burghart 1978b). However, Rāmānandīs were already armed and organised by 1693 (see below).
date"—admitted into the order. It is said that half the Bhāratīs refused to accept this and went to Śrīṅgerī to remain 'pure', thus making three-and-one-half lineages 'pure'. The recruitment of nāgā-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 Sūfis. 12 Farquhar's conclusion was based on anecdotal evidence, and the historical evidence (see Appendix 6) indicates that the main conflicts of the period were between sects of Hindu renunciates—more specifically between vaiṣṇava Bhairāgīs and saiva Saṃnyäsīs 13 (also known as gosain-s)—rather than between Saṃnyāsīs and militant Sūf orders (Sikand 1998). A further problem with Farquhar's thesis is that Akbar is recorded witnessing a fight between Saṃnyāsīs and yogī-s (see Al-Badāoni 1986 Vol. 2:94–95; Abu-I-Fazl 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. 14 Rāmānandī and Dādūpanthī traditions maintain that their military organisation was in response to the aggressive activities of the Saṃnyāsīs. However, the evidence indicates that nāgā military activity flourished under direct state patronage, 15 and was not primarily religiously sectarian, even though inter-sectarian battles did take place at Hindu melās.

The organisation of Saṃnyāsīs and other ascetics into military akhādās 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. 12 Although the story of the founding of the akhādās cannot be confirmed, it seems that Madhusūdana Sarasvatī 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 Kachāvā kingdom of Amber-Jaipur a major dispute finally erupted in 1864 concerning vaiṣṇava and saiva affiliation. Under Maharājā Rāmsingh II, zealous saiva-s had chased vaiṣṇava-s from the capital of the kingdom, Jaipur. For many months the wearing of the vertical vaiṣṇava tiḍak had been effectively banned, and only those wearing the horizontal three-line tiḍak 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 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 Daśānamī nāgā-s, he maintains, formed for the protection of non-nāgā land and monastic property. Though the Daśānamī nāgā-s may have protected monastic property, there are no available historical records of this.

15 For example, in the reign of Auranĝzeb (1668–1707), 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; Pinch 1997:17).
over wide areas of India. Soldiers, naked and theoretically beyond identifiable caste, are *cela*-s 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 *samnyāsa*-s (see Lochtefeld 1994). However, if the practice of tapas (‘asceticism’) is considered in its Indian context, epic and Purāṇic 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-s are quite reconcilable with their mythological counterparts. In the construction of an identity for the Daśanāmīs, 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 Daśanāmī 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 century, Bijapur (also known as the Bahmani state) was a Sufi stronghold in India. The Bahmani state was a region contiguous and frequently at war with Vijayanagara, with which it had considerable

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16 Pinch (1997:12–15) comments on the historical change in attitude towards tapas, comparing Vālmīki’s *Rāmāyana* (usually dated to around the first century) with the *Rāmcaritmanas* of Tulsidas (c.1543–1623), particularly in the Bālakāṇḍa. In short: Vālmīki elevates it, in the traditional way, as leading to power; but Tulsidas 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-s and fakirs. Disdain for this kind of lifestyle was also shared by the *nirguna bākta* Kabir.

17 The first Muslim conquest in the subcontinent was of the Sindh region, in 711/712, by Ibn al-Qasim (see Schimmel 1980:3–4).

18 The first major Sufi to settle in the subcontinent was al-Jullabi al-Hujwīlī (c.1009–1071). Called Dātā Ganj Baksh by his followers, he is the author of the first major treatise on Sufism in Persian, the *Kashf al-matbuat*. His tomb (in Lahore) subsequently became a ‘gateway’, visited by all Sufis who migrated to the subcontinent (Rizvi 1978:112–113; Schimmel 1982:3).
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 1972:36–48), and were what might be called 'warrior Sufis', who are virtually indistinguishable in many respects from Dāshanāmī nāgas. The first of these warrior Sufis to gain renown was Shaikh Sūfī Sarmast (d.1281),19 who, with his army of seven hundred ghazīs ('religious soldiers')—according to his hagiography—killed many Hindus and engaged in battle with a Hindu king.20 During a crucial fifty-year period, from 1296 to 1347, militant Sufis seem to have been extensively involved with Muslim military expansionism in the Deccan. In this period, the Sufis, 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 khanqāhs (simple monastic dwellings) (Eaton 1972:46).21

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 (bāiy'ā)22 and authorative transmission is known as khilāfat, and is a direct parallel with the guru-parampara arrangement that operates within the Hindu domain. Integration through the khilāfat system is the single most important criterion for being a Sūfī.23 From the fourteenth century onwards, an institutional network of khanqāhs became established, based on a silsilā ('chain') from a founding pīr (or shaikh). By the mid-fourteenth century, warrior Sufis—who had not been affiliated to any order—had

19 All dates in this and the following sections are given as CE. For the conversion of dates—given in many sources according to the Muslim calendar (A.H.)—to other calendars, see Sewell and Dikshit (1896:105ff.).

20 Another warrior Sufī, Pīr Ma'bari Khiciyat, 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 Kufūr—whom 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 Sufis 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 All Pahlavan (a companion of Sufī Sarmast), Shaikh Shahid, Pīr Jumna, and Tīgh Brahna.

21 In the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, khanqāhs also functioned as travellers' rest houses (sarah), thus facilitating the spread of the fame of saints. There were up to 120 khanqāhs 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 khīra (a garment of, usually, patched wool). Some were also given a licence or diploma (called jāza or khilāfat-nāma), authorising them to act as deputies (khilāfāt), and disseminate the principles and practices of their respective orders (see Rizvi 1978:102).

23 For an analysis of the pīr-murid (teacher-disciple) relationship, one of the basic pillars of Sūfī organisation, see Islam (2002:385–396).
more or less disappeared from the Bijapur area. They were replaced by Sufis who were affiliated to 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 Bahmani court at Bijapur was Shaikh Siraj-uddin Junaidi (d.1380), who assisted with the coronation of the new king, Ala-uddin 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 Nizamuddin (-al Dīn) Aulia, the great Chishti of Delhi. As a consequence, his successor Muhammad Sāh Bahmanī, was able to obtain a declaration of allegiance from virtually all the Sufis of his kingdom (Eaton 1972:60–61).

It will be recalled that the first land-grants to Śringeri were just a year earlier, in 1346, in somewhat parallel circumstances; namely, patronage of a samnyāsī institution in return for favours presumably rendered. In another parallel with Daśanāmī 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 (wilāyat).25 There were frequent challenges to various claims of jurisdiction and ‘protection’, both from within the order and from rival orders (Digby 1986:63–72), one example being the cult of Dattātreya,26 one of several Hindu devotional cults that arose in Maharashtra in this period.27 Tulpule believes (1979:352) that the Dattātreya cult probably arose as a

24 Their occupation of the Deccan was in part as a consequence of Muhammad bin Tughluq’s order of 1327 that the khanqahs of Delhi be vacated. Resident Sūfis 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 sīlās dispatched their khalīfās to various provinces, called wilāyat. Khalīfās, in their turn, appointed subordinate khalīfās 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 khanqahs spread over the country. Medieval records show numerous instances of such territorial distribution (Nizami 1961:176–177). At the beginning of the fourteenth century, Shaikh Nizām al-Dīn of the Chishti sīlā was identified with the well-being and fortune of the city of Delhi, over which the Shaikh exercised his ‘governance’. In an account of the late fourteenth century, Amīr Khwurd describes how Mu'in al-Dīn’s wilāyat extended all over India (Digby 1986:72). The notion of ‘divine jurisdiction’ is perhaps most amply exemplified in the person of Mu'in al-Dīn 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 festivals of Muslims in the Indian subcontinent.

26 Nṛṣiṃhasarasvatī (1378–1458) is regarded as the second avatāra of Dattātreya (a deity comprising the trinity of Brahman, 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).
reaction against the activity of Sūfīs, 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 Daśānāmīs 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, śāśa and vaṁśa 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-suratrānā)” 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 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 Vallabhīya and Gauḍīya vaṁśa-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

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30 However, in the latter inscription (vv. 10–13) Devarāya is compared in numerous virtues with Rāma, son of Daśaratha.
(1627–1680) led successful campaigns against the Mughal rulers. However, the projection in hagiography\(^{31}\) 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 \textit{dīn}.'

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 Pranāmī sect, which was founded in the same period in the Jamnagar district of Gujarat. Its first preceptors were Devcand (b.1581) and Prāṇānāth (1618–1694).\(^{32}\) Prāṇānāth 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 Sūfis and Hindus became increasingly violent in the Deccan, with many

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\(^{31}\) Notably, the Śivabhaṅgara, commissioned at the time of Śivājī's coronation in 1647. The writing of historical biographies (\textit{cari-te-bakhāh}) began in Maharashtra with the advent of Marātha rule under Śivājī (see Wagle 1997:135).

\(^{32}\) Prāṇānāth's mother tongue was Gujarati, but he was well acquainted with Persian, Arabic, Sanskrit, Sindhi, Rajasthan and Hindi. He twice made tours of Muslim Arabia, and had an extensive knowledge of Islam. All Pranāmī literature is in Hindi, written in the \textit{devanagāri} script, and Prāṇānāth was the first Hindi poet to use the word \textit{hindavi} (Hindustani), considering it as the 'national' as well as a link language.
Sūfis participating in various conflicts in the region. Under a *farmān* (‘royal decree’) of 1679, Hindu temples were destroyed, and a tax (*jaziyyā*) 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 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 1972:244–246).

Regarding Hindu/Muslim relations, changes in government perceptions and policy can be seen in developments within the sultanate of Bijapur. Eaton (1972:99–114) discusses the cultural syncretism of the sultanate under Sultan Ibrahim II (1580–1627). The sultan, a Sunni Moslem and a Deccani, was a noted scholar, with a considerable knowledge of Sanskrit. He is hailed as one of the great poets of the age, and actively supported various Hindu religious and cultural institutions, one of his popular epithets

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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 (1985:191) believes Aurangzeb’s ‘titl’ towards Islam may have been to build up local support against the power of Hindu zamindārs.
36 During periods of conflict between Mughal and Hindu rulers, up until the eighteenth century, it is important to recognise that the political battles were not in any way similar to, for example, the religious wars waged in Europe between Protestant and Catholic regimes. By contrast, in India, no Muslim enclaves were siezed; populations were not expelled on the basis of religion; there were no forced conversions; banks maintained branches in both Hindu and Muslim regions, extending credit regardless of religion; and Hindus and Muslims served in respective governments and armies on both sides. (For further details, see Gordon 1999.)
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 1972:100).
38 He composed one of the landmarks of Dakani literature, the *Kitāb-i Nauras*, a treatise on the nine sentiments (*rasād*) of Sanskrit literature, which also discusses the subject of Indian musical *rāgas*. Instead of the usual Muslim invocation, *bism-ullāh*, the book opens with a prayer to Ganespati. 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, *lūl-i Nauras*, in which thousands of Hindu musicians participated. He issued orders ensuring the rights of pilgrims to perform rituals to the Hindu deity Khanda Rao (Mallari), and supported the upkeep of a Hindu temple at Chinchvad, near Pune (Eaton 1972:111).
being jagadguru.39

The religious eclecticism of Ibrahim II was not shared by his successor, Sultan Muhammad Ādil Śāh (1627–1666), 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 1972:115). Muhammad styled himself a mujahid (‘wager of jihād’) and ghāzi (‘religious fighter’) in his campaigns, from 1638 to 1649. Government regulations (Dastur al-Amal) issued under Muhammad, for the first time in the history of Bijapur specifically separated the Hindus and Muslims as distinct and unequal communities.40 Reaction to the religious eclecticism came not only from government but also from the Sufi orders of Bijapur, primarily from the newly-arrived Qadiri and Shattārī orders. The reformist Sufis of Bijapur were often hostile to Brahmans, Hindu ascetics and yogīs. There are several semi-hagiographic accounts of the time that describe various spiritual battles between Sufis and Hindu yogīs and gosainś; the Sufis, of course, emerging victorious. Even though warrior Sufis 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 (ghāzi) 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 Sufis began to exert considerable influence on the administration in Delhi, some gaining very prominent status. Amongst Chishtis, Khwaja 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 dispersed royal funds and land to Sufi shrines, frequently regulated by appointed trustees (Ernst and Lawrence 2002:21). Also, contrary to certain preconceptions concerning the nature of Islam, some Sufis of the mediaeval period in the subcontinent enjoyed a particular kind of prestige, as they acted as priests at dargahś.
(‘tombs of departed pīrs’), and also performed rituals as intermediaries between God and supernatural forces (Gaborieau 1989).41

Besides the more orthodox Sufis of the dargāhs there were also many mājūb (‘dervish’/Mādān)42 Sufis wandering around. In the Dabistān (p. 223)—written in the mid-seventeenth century—they are compared with Saṁnyāsī-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 bhang. In terms of life-style and appearance there is little to distinguish them from Nāths and Dāsānāmī nāgās.43

During the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries arose what has been called the “the Nakshbandi reaction”, an orthodox Sufi movement against religious eclecticism in Mughal India, represented by Akbar, and against ‘unorthodox’ Sufi orders and practices. This movement roughly parallels events during this phase of Bijapur’s history (Eaton 1972:124). 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 adventures 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 bābās, though there seems to be no evidence of proselytizing or conversion of non-Muslims (Digby 2001:7–8). The influence of the Nakshbandis may also be seen in the pattern of marriages between Nakshbandis and the royal house (Damrel 2000:180–187).

41 Gaborieau’s study is limited to Nepal, but it seems probable that the situation was similar in north India.
42 An order founded by Šāh Madar (=Shaikh Badi’u’d-Dīn, b.1315) (Rizvi 1993:318).
43 These kinds of Sufis were known by various names in different regions of India, including: Madāris, Haydaris, Malamatīs, Torlaks, Bābs, Abdās, Jamīs, Malangs, Jalālis, and Qalandars. This radical form of Sufism is also known as qalandar. The early Qalandārī 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 Sufis were noted for being quarrelsome and sometimes violent, giving rise to anxiety when they stayed in khanqāhs 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 fakir-s in Hyderabad, the RufayTs, descended from Sayed Ahmad Kabir Rafat (d.1160), see Hunt (1994).
44 The Nakshbandi order derives its name from Baha’u’d-dīn Naqshband (d.1390), who came from central Asia. His most successful successor was ‘Abdu’l-Khāliq Ghijdawānī, who taught ‘the way of the Khojas (teachers)’, tariqa-yi Khwāja-gān, and established connections with trade guilds and merchants. Under Khwaja Ahrar, 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).
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 khulaf/khalifa-s (Rizvi 1993:226, 293) that, according to Jahangīr, 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-Quddus Gangohī (d.1537), agreed on the principle of prohibiting kafir-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 pir-s. From around the mid-seventeenth century, the khānqāh-s of the Bijapur region, which were previously occupied by the early migrant pir-s, were replaced by dargāh-s, which sometimes included a courtyard, a small mosque and the graveyard of the pir-s descendants. Spiritual power ceased being transmitted from one pir to another, and began to be transmitted from the pir to the dargāh where he was buried (Eaton 1972:210–213; Lapidus 1988:460). Also, whereas previously the pir holding the office of kālītā (or sajjāda-niṣīn ‘one who sits on the prayer carpet’) had been succeeded by initiated disciples (murīd-s), the criterion for succession changed, and it passed to a hereditary heir and his family, pirzadā-s (‘sons of the pir’), 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 pir and his descendants.

Although for many centuries the devotion of a pir to his deceased teacher (Shaikh) had been frequently expressed by pilgrimage to his tomb—a local pilgrimage 46 Sirhindī—also known as ‘Mujaddid’ (‘saviour’) Afl 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.). 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 Qadiri (and maybe also the Suhrwardi) order, and then, finally, into the Nakshbandi order. Sirhindī traced his line of allegiance to the Prophet through twenty-one Naqshbandis, twenty-five Qadiris and twenty-seven Chishtis. He maintained Chishti ties even after he became a Nakshbandi (Damrel 2000:182).

The relationship between Sirhindī and Jahangīr, see also Sharma (1937–1938:312–313).

46 See Rizvi (1993:216–329) for a comprehensive account of Sirhindī.
that in some instances was considered a Great *hajj* (Shackle 1976:162–163)—Sufism changed from being a discipline for a small elite, to becoming a movement of popular devotionalism, many *dargāhs* becoming general places of pilgrimage. Although the *pirs* of some *khānqāhs* had acted as spiritual preceptors to sultans, ties between *pirs* and sultans remained largely informal. However, a significant development in the late seventeenth century was that many *pirizadās* entered into formal association with the state, and permanent land-grants (*āinām*) 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 Sufi institutions, which began enjoying power and prestige within the state in a new and significant way, as the “Brahmans of Islam” (Eaton 1972:212–221, 247). The influence of Sufis may be gauged from the fact that there was more Persian Sufi hagiographical literature produced in India than in all of Persia and Central Asia combined (Ernst and Lawrence 2002:48).49

Sufi 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 Sufi and Dašanāmī schemes of their respective orders. During the middle ages it was very common for Sufis to trace their lineage to the four Caliphs, and thence to the prophet Muhammad. Hagiographers also retrospectively assigned such lineages to famous Sufis, such as Jālāl al-Dīn Rūmī (1207–1273), author of the *Mathnawī*. In the *Al-Jawahir-ul Mudiyya* of Shaikh Muhyiddin Abdul Kadir (d.1373), and other works, Rūmī was attached to the lineage from Abu Bakr’s family. However, this is contradicted by epigraphic and other evidence (Güven 1991:24–27). The Maulawī sect of Sufis, 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 Sufi orders as teaching lineages first crystallised (Rizvi 1978:83),51 a link to the lineage of

49 One of the earliest works of Sufi hagiography was Muhammad Ja'far al-Khuldī’s *Hikayat al-Awliyā* (late ninth or early tenth century), a work no longer extant (Islam 2002:3).
50 The four Caliphs reigned as follows: Abu Bakr (632–634); ‘Umar (634–644); ‘Uthmān/Usman (644–656); ‘Ali [bin Abi Talib] (666–661).
51 An example is the Indian Chishtīyya order, which has a tradition of twenty-two masters. Many Chishtis trace their lineage to the archangel Gabriel, and reckon the 21st successor as Shaykh Nizām ud-Dīn Auliya (d.1325), and the 22nd as Shaikh Nasir ud-Dīn Mahmūd Chiragh-i Dīlī (d.1366). However, the branch of the Chishtīyya order that predominates in the Deccan starts with the Prophet Muhammad, and counts Shaikh Nizām ud-Dīn’s successor, Burhan ud-Dīn Gharīb (d.1337) as the 21st successor, and Zayn ud-Dīn Shirazi (d.1369, as the 22nd (Ernst and Lawrence 2002:23).
the Prophet Muhammad being crucial. 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 Dabistân, written in 1645, comparing the Hindus and the (celibate) Moslem Sûfis:

[The Sûfis], as they have heard that there ten classes of sanyâsîs, and twelve of yogîs, 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 Hossain, then [4] Khaja Hossen of Basora, also was his disciple and a khalif; these four personages are the four sages (Dabistân pp. 220–221).

The text continues with a list of fourteen families, which are said to descend from two

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52 Most Sûfî orders regard ‘Ali as their Shaikh, and trace their descent from either ‘Ali, or from Hasan al-Basri (666–661), who was born in Medina and settled in Basra. According to Sûfî 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 pantha (baropanths) of Nâth-yogîs/siddhas, which are: Satyanâth, Dharma, Râm, Nâtešvar, Kântar, Kâpil, Vairâga (Bhartrhari), Mannâth (Gopicand), Ayae, Pagal (associated with Cauranginâth or Puran Bhagat), Dhavja (associated with Hanumân or Mahâvîr), Gangânâth (associated with Bhišma, son of Gângâ) (see Banerjea 1988:13–14). For the complete guru-parampar of the Nâths, descending from the ‘nine Nâths’, see Vîlasnâth (1998:61–81).
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.
55 In the eleventh century, the Persian Sûfî, Shaikh Ali Hujwîrî classified twelve Sûfî orders, linking each to a famous Sûfî master, despite the fact that there was seldom a correspondence between these early ascetics and the well-known Sûfî orders of later times. Sultanate and Mughal tazkîra (hagiographical family-tree) writers added two more Sûfî orders—to make fourteen—but the lists are not consistent (Ernst and Lawrence 2002:24).
Caliphs. Similarities between the Sufi and Samnyāśī overviews of their respective orders is evident.

It is not only Sufi orders that trace their descent from four preceptors. Also, as previously noted, the śaiva Pāśupata order traces its origin to the four disciples of Lakulīśa. The vaishnava Vaikhānasa tradition also traces its origins to four Vedic schools, represented, according to the Ānanda-samhitā (XVII, 38–39), by four Vedic ṛṣis who were disciples of Vīkhānasa: Marīci, Atri, Kāśyapa 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, Pāila, and Vaiśampāyana (see Kramisch 1924:2). According to the Jain Śvetāmbara tradition, four pupils of Vajrasvāmin (fifth–sixth cent.?) founded four kula-s (‘clans’) for the mendicant community: the Candra (sometimes -kulā), the Nirvṛti (sometimes -kulā), 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

The text continues: “They say besides, from Khaja Hossen, of Basora, sprang two branches: the first was that of the Khalif Hossen Basori Habib Ajemī, from whom nine families proceeded, named as follows: Jibīnān, Tālkerīn, Kharkīn, Sīkātīn, Jendīn, Gazerīn, Tunīn, Ferdusīn, and Soherwandīn. From the second Khalifat of Hossen Basori, which was that of Shaikh Abdul Wahid Zaid, came forth five families with the following titles: the Zebīn, Ašiāin, Adhamīn, Hubīrīn, and Chešīn, and these are the fourteen noble families.”

The Ām-i Aqbar of Abu-i-Fazl (Vol.2:393–420) also provides a somewhat different list of the fourteen Sufi orders that existed in India at the time of Akbar (r.1556–1605): Habibi, Tayturi, Karkhi, Saqati, Junaydi, Kāzruni, Tusī, Firdausi, Suhrowardi, Zaydi, Iyāzī, Adhami, Hubayri, 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, Habib-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). Besides these sects, there were five other Sufi sects that played an important role in India from the fourteenth century onwards: Shattarī, Qādirī, Qalandari, Naqshbandi, and Uwaysi (Siddiqi 1989:35).

The earliest sīlīś was the Qādirī, founded by Shaikh Abdul Qādir Jilānī (d.1166) (Rizvi 1993:6 fn. 1). From the beginning of the thirteenth century, the most important of the organised Sufi 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, Sufis were often initiated into both orders (Rizvi 1993:13; 217; 272). The Qādirī and Shattarī orders became influential in India in the fifteenth century. The Shattarī 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 resume of the history of the Qādirī, Suhrawardī, Kubrawī (which has two Indian branches, the Firdawsī and Hamadani), Naqshbandī (Khwajagān), and Chishti orders, see Rizvi (1978:84–120). For the Shattarī order, see Rizvi (1983:62–64).

Sufi and Daśanāmī traditions have parallels even today. During initiation, Daśnāmī-Samnyāsīs receive instruction on their mahāmāya, and usually receive a paper, such as the Daśnām-kāp-vrks, providing the four mathe scheme. A largely parallel procedure still operates at the Amin-uddin daragāh on Sāhpur Hill, near Bijapur (Eaton 1972:304). On induction to the order, muriṭs are issued with printed certificates linking them, through Amin-uddin, to the Chishti Sufis of Dehlī, and ultimately to the Prophet.

The earliest part of the Vaikhānasa corpus dates from the ninth century, while the bulk was composed in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries.

See also Caland (1941:1–xxvi).
(Dundas 1993:251–252; Cort 2001:42). The Sikh-related Baṛa ('large') Udāsin akhāḍā was founded, according to tradition, by Śrī Cand, the eldest of the two sons of Guru Nānak (1469–1539). The akhāḍā is divided into four divisions, namely: Balu Hasna; Phul Sahib (or Mīān Sahib); Almast; and Bhagat Bhagvān (or Gonda). These four dhūnīs (dhūnī) are said to have been instituted in 1636 by the four disciples of Bābā Gurdita, who followed Śrī Cand on the gaddī. According to the Bhaktamālā (v. 32) of Nābhadāsa (c.1600), Rāmānuja had four disciples; and it seems the organisation of the four vaisnava sampradāya-s may have first formally arisen in the sixteenth century.

This is not to suggest that the Samnyāsa-s necessarily borrowed the idea of four "disciples" from the Sūfī or any other tradition, as Śaṅkara may possibly have had four disciples. 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 samnyāsa-s and yogī-s; the heightened power and presige 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 nāga-samnyāsa-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 akhāḍā-s. It is suggested that it was in this context that the Mathāmnāya-s emerged as an ideological response to the samnyāsa-s' social and political situation. The Mathāmnāya-s built onto the notion of Śaṅkara as a saiva 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 Bhāratis, with other monastic lineages, producing the compound order of “Tirtha, Āśrama, Vana, Aranya, Giri, Parvata, Sāgarā, Sarasvatī, Bhārati and Purī”.

Some of the activities of the nāga-s and akhāḍā-s will now be discussed to

60 There is some evidence that all of these four gaccha-s were extant in the late fourteenth century, but by the sixteenth century only the Candra gaccha was still flourishing. The gaccha-s, as organisational units, gradually replaced 'the four kula-s' during this period.
61 Besides the four dhūnī-s, seven bhakṣā-s were founded, that is, centres of Sikhism in different parts of India, but mostly in Punjab (Singh 1951:64–66). There is here also some kind of a parallel with the seven Daśanāmī akhāḍā-s.
62 See Ch. 3.1.
63 See Pollet (1963:76,171).
64 Śrutiprasājña, Śrutidvāra, Śrutidhāmā, and Śrutidadhi.
65 See Appendix 4.
illustrate the diversity of Daśanāmī activities, by this time with some kind of orthodox identity.

7.4 Mercenary and military activities of nāgās 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, Balrāgī 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 eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries they were employed, in many instances as a regularly paid standing army, in service to Maharājās of Jodhpur, Jaipur, Jaisalmer, Bikaner, Udaipur, Baroda, Marwar (western Madhya Pradesh), and Bhuj (capital town of Kachch).

In an official bond-letter dating from the 1730s, addressed to the Maharājā Jaisingh II (r.1700–1743),66 the Rāmānandī, Vrijānand, abjures the carrying of arms and allowing armed monks to attend Rāmānandī communal feasts. This indicates their conspicuous presence.67 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 presumably modelled on the seven akhādās of the Daśanāmīs). The Daśanāmīs, along with Sant and other vaisnava orders, were similarly requested to sign such bonds ([Thiel]-Horstmann 2001:3–4). However, this did not prevent their extensive military campaigns.68

The militant Dādūpanthīs were supported by the Maharājā of Jaipur, Mādhav Singh, who reigned from 1750 to 1767. Court records reveal that, beginning in 1768, the

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66 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.

67 They were permanently established at a small fort at the base of Nahargarh hill (Orr 1940:11).

68 Rāmānandī warriors under Vrijānand subsequently engaged in battle in 1744 in the neighbouring states of Koṭa and Būndī with forces that were threatening Tāvārsingh, Jaisingh II's successor. Although the Rāmānandīs fought on behalf of the Maharājā of Jaipur, they were not on his regular payroll. Vrijānand died in 1752, and was succeeded by Bālānand, who 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-Bihāratpur region, and as far away as Jagannāth Puri. Bālānand died in 1795, his funeral being attended by numerous dignitaries, testifying to his power and influence. He had been an aca/c/ya for forty-three years and had accumulated much wealth and several important temples; he was succeeded by Govindānand.
nāgas began to receive ever more lucrative land-grants and payments. By 1803, eight years after they had officially joined state forces, 4,000 nāgas were a part of the 13,000-strong state army of Jaipur.69

There are other documented instances of large bands of gosain nāgas being hired for specific military offensives. In 1763, Prthvī Nārāyaṇ Śāh, king of Gorkha, and the founder of modern Nepal,70 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-sidhā, Bhāgavantnāth, 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 nāgas who were fighting on behalf of one of his opponents, Jayaprakāś Malla, king of Kathmandu. The leader of the nāgas, 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 nāgas were slaughtered by the Ghorkalese army. Gulābram, however, escaped. During the 1780s, some seven hundred nāgas died in battle in another Himalayan province, Kumaon. 1,400 nāgas 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, Garhwal (Agrawal 1993:325).

The careers of three prominent Dasānāmī gosain nāgas, namely Rajendra Giri Gosain (d.1753), and his celās, 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).71 Their studies reveal the extent of some gosains' power, wealth, influence and duplicity. At the height of their careers the gosains commanded a force of up to forty thousand horse and foot soldiers. The movement and

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69 Crooke (1896, Vol.4:238) reports that the Dādūpanṭhī nāgas 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 Dādūpanṭhīs 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).

70 See Burghart (1965) for the king's attempt to found a "Hindu" kingdom.

71 See also Kolff (1971) and Barnett (1987) for further details of their activities and political developments.
recruitment of troops was greatly facilitated by a network of weapon-stocks and grain-stores in the countryside. *Gosain*-ś 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. 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 (Pinch 1997:6).

7.5 *Samnyāsīs, Fakīrs* 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 *samnyāsīs* and *fakīrs* had become organised in roving bandit/dacoit groups, sometimes known as Piṇḍaraś. These bandits were also called Thag (Thug/Thugi/Thagi) by the British, a term that had already been used in South Asia to refer criminal assassins for about a thousand years. 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*-ś 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.

72 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).
73 For a résumé of some of their campaigns, see Appendix 12.
74 After the battle of Panipat in 1761, the Marāṭhas were forced to rely on mercenaries, some of whom received the name ‘Piṇḍārī’ (Gordon 1969:426).
75 Bhāsarvajña (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 *thags*. The term *thaka/thaga* may be derived from the Sanskrit root *sīhag* (‘cover/conceal’). See Halbfass (1983:13, 24 fn. 61) for further details and references.
with bands of *samnyâsâs* and *fâkîrs* in Bihar and Bengal (Ghosh 1930; Chandra 1977). The British version of events is, by and large, endorsed by Ghosh, whereby the ash-clad, *bhâng* -drinking *samnyâsâs* and *fâkîrs* 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; *samnyâsâ* and *fâkîr nâgâs* were frequently at the spearhead of the movement.

Groups of *samnyâsâs* and *fâkîrs*—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 fakirs 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 sanads (‘deeds/grants’) to ensure the rights of the fakirs 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 samnyāsīs 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 samnyāsīs and fakirs (Chandra 1977:84,101–114), and attempts were also made to remove settled samnyāsīs—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 samnyāsīs 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 nāgās who remained in south Bihar in 1809/1810 were reported to

78 Visited by samnyāsīs and other Hindus in this part of India were places such as Janakpur (in the Terai), Mahāsthānghar (near Bogra), places along the Brahmaputra river, Gāṅgā Sāgar (on the bay of Bengal, about fifty miles east of Calcutta), Jagannāth Pūri and Kamākṣī (near Guahati). Many samnyāsīs began their annual pilgrimage cycle from the Magh Melā at Allahabad in January/February. The fakirs and other Muslim pilgrims, who entered Bengal by the same route as that followed by the samnyāsīs—and who were generally better received in Muslim dominated Bengal—went to dargahs, several of which are located in Dinajpur and Malda districts, and to the famous Adina mosque, near Pandua, also in the Malda district. Some pilgrimage places were common to both samnyāsīs and fakirs, one being a bath in the river Karotoya at Mahāsthānghar, where there is the dargah of Pt Śāh Sultan (Ghosh 1930:24–28). Another was at Makanpur, in the district of Cawnpore, 140 miles from Agra, where the headquarters of the Mardāri fakirs and the tomb of Śāh Madār are situated. Hindus also frequented the place, believing the saint to be an incarnation of Lakhan (Ghosh 1930:27).

79 In 1659 Shuja ud-Daulah issued a sanad to the fakir Janab Śāh Sultan Ṣāh Mūriā (of the Burhana sect, which is the same as the Madāris, who, of all Sufi sects, most closely resemble samnyāsī nāgās) whereby within the countries of Bengal, Bihar and Orissa he was free to roam with all the paraphernalia of the julīs (‘procession’), and confiscate properties with no heir, or which are rent-free. Although no contributions were to be levied, the fakir “will be supplied with provisions”, according to the sanad (Ghosh 1930:22).

80 Five or six thousand armed samnyāsīs undertook raids in 1773, in the pay of Darpa Deo, rāja of Balkantapur. In the same year another large raiding group was reportedly in the pay of the Bhutanese (Chandra 1977:72–73).

81 A law was passed in 1773 to prohibit the carrying of arms by samnyāsīs and fakirs, and certain sects of samnyāsīs, barāgīs and fakirs were expelled from Bengal and Bihar, becoming “prohibited sects”. Farmers found to be harbouring members of prohibited sects were to be severely punished (Chandra 1977:80).
have abandoned arms (Pinch 1996:31). Nevertheless, it is apparent that some samnyāsīs were still involved in criminal activities in the nineteenth century. In the 1830s a government ‘Department of Thagis and Dacoits’ was set up to oversee their activities by William Sleeman (a British official who is responsible for the stereotyping of the word ‘Thug’), who believed that three-quarters of Hindu and Muslim mendicants were criminals, and that the Thugs—who worshipped Kālī, and either strangled or poisoned their victims—constituted an organised criminal sect. 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 sādhus 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, which was quite successful in catching and punishing several thousand criminals. Marauding Piṇḍarī 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 (1838–1894), Ānandamath. The influence of this image is apparent in that Bande Mataram, the samnyāsī song from the novel—which was set to music by Rabindranath

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82 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 samnyāsīs and fakirs for that purpose. Under the Permanent Settlement of Bengal Act of 1793, responsibility for law and order then passed from the zamīndārs to a newly created police force (Chandra 1977:165). Some zamīndārs granted land, in a religious donation (sībbat), rent-free, to ascetics. Landlords thereby enhanced their own status in the area, and gained a protection force of armed samnyāsīs to guard their estates. Samnyāsīs were also given land after they had assisted landlords’ own forces in repelling aggressors (Chatterjee 1984:3). In north and east Bengal, some samnyāsīs still live on the produce of endowed lands (Ghosh 1930:160).

83 See Sleeman (Vol.1,1903:96–111) for his account of the iniquity of the Thugs.

84 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).

Tagore—became the unofficial anthem of the Independence movement. However, we have seen that the situation regarding sādhus in the eighteenth century cannot simply be characterised as a Hindu samnyāsī uprising against British rule: Sufi takīrs were involved with samnyāsīs in the Bengali rebellion, and the gosain fighters formed substantial alliances with not only the Mughals but also the British. Samnyāsīs performed various roles in the period under discussion, both in support and against the rule of various powers. Nor can samnyāsīs and takīrs be characterised, as they were by the British, as simply ‘Thugs’. This is to ignore the complex, various and shifting roles of many samnyāsīs 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 traders and bankers had settled in Bengal and other parts of India, many of them being ex-soldiers from disbanded armies of various regents. These settled gosains, some of them rich from war, engaged in money-lending, banking and trading, involving significant amounts of money overall. Evidence of samnyāsīs’ 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

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56 M. K. Gandhi also took up the song as constituent of his nationalist ideology (Pinch 1997:3). 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 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 sādhus, samnyāsīs and takīrs 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 Mahāsabha from 1937 to 1944 (MoKean 1996:73–77). See Savarkar (1989) for his conception of Hindutva.

57 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).

58 The numbers of ṣālva and vaśnavā ascetics in north India in the last decades of the eighteenth century is considerable, around 500,000, comprising around five percent of the population (Bayly 1992:126,183).
forty of the leading business houses, representing a significant sector of the economy. Established also in Mirzapur, the gosains, 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 gosains 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 are reported to have land-holdings amounting to 44,784 acres, income deriving also from rent and money-lending.

By the 1780s gosains had become the dominant money-lending—frequently at exorbitant rates of interest—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 Pune (Clarke 1998:58). There was, however, often a very thin line indeed between tax-collection, dacoity and money-lending.

In the 1780s, European banking houses were also established to finance trade, with the resultant consequence that samnyāsīs' profitable loan business was 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 Narāyaṇ 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 Narāyaṇ Śāh helped finance his campaign with cash loans from samnyāsīs.

In 1786/1787 the total value of the samnyāsīs' imports and exports which passed through the customs houses of Banaras and Mirzapur, was Rs. 1,614,759. 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).

Aware of the samnyāsīs' profitable money-lending business, the British government enacted various measures in 1772 to cap loan rates (at 2%) and restrict the samnyāsīs' business.

Chatterjee suggests that the increase in money-lending activities of the samnyāsīs 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 samnyāsīs 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 samnyāsīs' trade (Cohn 1964:177).

Marāṭhā tax records of the mid-eighteenth century illustrate the nexus between 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 gosains (Gordon 1971).
traders, who had trade agencies in several cities in the valley. The gosairs were repaid, and as a reward they were awarded charters to trade freely in his domain. The gosairs 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 gosairs 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 mathās—which were occasionally fortified (Ghosh 1930:20)—became, effectively, storehouses for the trade in goods (including raw silk, shawls, opium, gold, silver, copper and spices) which was carried out by celās of various mahants over wide areas of north India. Samnyāsī 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 yaktails were brought from there (Clarke 1998). A network of mathās and pilgrimage routes throughout India greatly facilitated contacts, trade, resting places and loan facilities. Armed nāgās were available to protect the transportation of goods and bullion traded from as far afield as Ahmadabad, Baroda, Pūne, Nāgpur, Bengal, Kashmir, Nepal and Tibet. The nāgās' religious status and their fearsome reputation also made them virtually immune from prosecution or police harassment (Bayly 1992:184). In 1792, the rājā of Nepal complained that “although the fakir is full of faults and deserving death”, he could only expel them from his territory and could not confine or kill them, as that would be contrary to religious law (Ghosh

93 The first request for a loan was made in 1745, addressed to Mahant Kamala Bana, Mahant Lakṣman Pūrī, and Dāyal Pūrī. This was in a period when Jayaparakāś Malla was in exile—but not abdication—from his throne in Kathmandu. In 1748, Jayaparakāś Malla, alarmed at the threat to his realm, then borrowed 20,000 Rs., after extensive bargaining, from Kamala Bana Gosain and Rakham Pūrī Gosain to help finance his bid to reclaim the throne, which was successful.

94 In 1764 Jayaparakāś issued a charter requesting that the gosairs—Durbasa Bana, Lakṣman Bana, Jageśvara Bana, Bhagavati Bana (disciple of Kamala Bana), Bhor Bana, Navāl 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 gosairs. In 1786 he issued another charter, addressed to to the first four of the above-named gosairs, permitting them to conduct trade to Tibet, subject to statutory checking and taxes. It is curious that this lineage of Dasaṇāṁīs, the Bana (Van), although so prominent in Nepal in the eighteenth century, is very meagrely represented these days.

95 Sometime after 1792 the gosairs 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).

96 In Nepalese records of this period, the term fakir is used also for samnyāsī.
The *gosain*-s were all members of a religious fraternity whose rules and codes of practice are 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). *Matha*-s also received religious donations, particularly at *melâ*-s when pilgrims frequently donate handsomely to a *mahant*, and generally used rent-free land. The passing of wealth from a deceased *mahant* to, frequently, a sole *celâ* or a closed group of *celâ*-s, ensured that institutional wealth, which was sometimes considerable, remained 'in house'. 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. 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 *gosains*—a

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97 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 Brahmancial ascetics were land-grants that were made to them in newly-settled countyside; 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.

98 Clarke (1998:53) suggests that the *gosain*-s may have been either *vaishnava* or *śāiva*. However, *gōvinda* (*gosain*) followers of Caitanya and Vallabhaōārya are not, to my knowledge, ever mentioned in ethnographic reports of the period. The information supplied concerning *gosains* indicates that they were followers of Śāṅkara (i.e. Daśanāmiś), most of them having one of the 'ten names'. However, *vaishnava* Bārīgīś are mentioned as traders at Chhartarpur, in Madhya Pradesh (Kolff 1973:215). Pinch (1998:43) remarks that the term *gosain* began to lose its specific *śāiva* and Daśanāmiś connotations only in the nineteenth century in Bihar and eastern Uttar Pradesh where it generally referred to *nāgās*. By the end of the century *gosain* had become a general term for both *śāiva* and *vaishnava* sādhus.

99 In a case which reached court in Calcutta, the disputed wealth of one *mahā*-not considering immovable property—amounted to 242,000 Rs. (A. K. Mishra 1975:99).

100 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).
 popularity the colonial masters did not enjoy—and attempted to blacken the name of the gosain-s. The gosain-s, however, were no economic partisans: in 1857 the gosain mathas 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 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 akhadas adapted astutely to changing economic patterns, diversifying rapidly into urban property ownership after 1802.\textsuperscript{101} Following the construction of the railways, the gosain-s also capitalised on the rapidly rising value of urban properties. Although the gosains' involvement in trade and banking declined in the nineteenth century, they still enjoyed considerable income from rent,\textsuperscript{102} and maintained their position as a major money-lending 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 Maharaja of Jaipur employed a group of naga-s as tax collectors (Farquhar 1925c:452).

\textsuperscript{101}It has been estimated that around 250,000 acres of land are still owned by the Daśanāmi akhadas, about half being the property of the Jūna akhada. Until recently, the entire Girnar hills area in Gujarat was under the control of a nāgā from the Jūna akhada (Gross 1992:163).

\textsuperscript{102}In Banaras district in 1909, the gosain-s owned 10,304 acres of land (Nevill 1909:114). Sinha and Saraswati (1978:262) provide a list of nine paramahamsas of Banaras who, between 1926 and 1931, had substantial bank deposits at the kothī (banking house) of the Jangambari 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 Śvāmī Svārūpānanda Mandaśīvarā, was of over 25,000 Rs. Joint families of 'respectable' city bankers could earn around 20,000–80,000 Rs. per annum towards the end of the nineteenth century (Bayly 1873:41). It seems that up until around 1928 there were a few wealthy mathas in Banaras which 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 mahant and his servants who entertained wealthy people and high officials. It seems that some of the paramahamsa mathas of Banaras were once affluent, namely the Bihāri Puri, Bodh Gayā, Paramārtha Giri, Dakṣināmūrti, Dhurbeśvara, Jageśvara, Hathiyā Rāma, Narsimh Cauk, Annapūma, Hari Gītika, and Prakāśānanda mathas.

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 Śvāmī Rāmcaran Purī, who describes himself as a landlord (zaminār) and a banker, and not a paramahamsa. 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 Mahārājā of Banaras. (Per year, he paid 2,000 Rs. to the government, 35,000 Rs. to the Mahārājā, 200 Rs. in municipal taxes, 206 Rs. in income tax and "some annas" 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 Laksńī, Mahādeva and Bhagavati, and he would feed and distribute alms to visiting Brahmins, sādhus and fakirs. 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 charitable activities only, without constraints that would be incumbent upon an endowed property.
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 Samnyāśi-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 centers and trade in sugar, indigo, opium, ganjja and bhang. 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 ghāts, community shrines and religious trusts (Bayly 1973:29-43). In terms of life-style, there was little difference between bankers and samnyāśi-s.

On another front, in Calcutta, it was believed in 1912 that an akhādā was being used as a cover for the Midnapore revolutionary society, plotting against British rule (Taylor 2001:52). At the meeting of the National Congress in Nagpur in 1920, over a hundred nāga-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 nāga-s to visit military camps and advise the soldiers to give up their employment (Pinch 1996:5). Sādhu-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, nāga sādhu-s had been involved, even though not militarily to any large extent (Pinch 1997:5).

It is apparent that during the twentieth century, and particularly since Independence, the Daśanāmi-s have turned towards other activities, establishing colleges and āśrama-s, many paramahamsa-s preaching as a means of livelihood in big

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103 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 mahājani family, food remained strictly vegetarian and servants were few (Bayly 1973:41–42).
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 samnyāśī institutions and right-wing organisations such as the RSS, BJP, VHS and VHP. The VHP—which has recruited many sādhus to its ranks (Jaffrelot 1996:355)—supported the claim of Svāmī Vāsudevānanda to the succession to the Jyotir pītha in 1998, his rival being beaten up at the Kumbha Mela (Krishnan 2002:28). While attempting, to some extent, to remain outside political involvement, the Daśanāmī Śaṅkarācāryas have inevitably been drawn into the Rām Jánm Bhūmī dispute at Ayodhya, given their status as religious authorities. As of 2002, four of the Śaṅkarācāryas (of the four āmnāya matha-s) were opposed to the VHP's temple construction plan, while Jayendra Sarasvatī (of the Kāṇḍī 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 Jayendra Sarasvatī 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.' Finally, perhaps one of the most illustrative links between the Daśanāmī-Samnyāsīs and the modern political world is the case of Üma Bhārati, a samnyāsin who became a politician, and who was subsequently sworn...

104 By 1991, the BJP had six saffron-clad MPs (see Jaffrelot 1996:479).
105 The closing ceremony of a meeting of the Vishā Hindu Sammelan, held in Kerala in April 1982, was presided over by the Śaṅkarācārya of Kāṇḍīpuram (Chiriyankandath 1998:212).
106 One prominent example is the relationship between the VHP (Vidva Hindu Parishād) and the Divine Life Society (DLS). The DLS was founded in 1936 by Śvāmī Śivānanda, its headquarters being in Haridvār. Śivānanda (Sarasvatī) took samnyāsa in 1924 from the Daśanāmī, Śvāmī Viśvānandasarasvatī, though he subsequently makes virtually no reference to his guru. One of Śivānanda's early disciples was Śvāmī Cinnāyānanda (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 Śivānand'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 Kumbha Mela, on 22–24 January 1966. Among the 25,000 attending delegates were two Śaṅkarācāryas, from Dvārakā and Puri (Jaffrelot 1996:196; Bhatt 2001:180–185). For the involvement of Jayendra Sarasvatī (Śaṅkarācārya of the Kāṇḍī pītha) with the VHP in the 1980s, see Jaffrelot (1996:357).
107 Jaffrelot (1996:367) maintains that the Hindu nationalist movement made major advances in the early 1980s by mobilising Hindu leaders who could be seen as ‘ecclesiastical’ authorities.
108 For further details of the Śaṅkarācāryas' involvement with 'Ayodhya', see Jaffrelot (1996:413 fn. 3, 470–471)
109 'The Jewel of True Service'. See www.parliamentofindia.nic.in/rs/whoswho/vp/rvenkataraman.htm; (www.indiademocracy.com/resources/presidents/rvenkataraman.jsp
in, on December 8, 2003, as the first woman chief minister of the state of Madhya Pradesh.

7.8 Concluding remarks

In the Introduction to this thesis, 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 many contemporary anthropological and Hindu studies reviews, it is evident from our survey of Daśanāmī institutions in the first three chapters of this dissertation 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 current existence of numerous women samnyāsīs.

Several ethnographies were cited in the Introduction to illustrate how samnyāsīs 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 ākhādās and paramahamsa mathās. The role of samnyāsīs 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 thesis illustrates this.

Historically, there may well have been some old, male, Brahman ritualists who had renounced ritual life and wandered alone. However, these Brahman samnyāsīs 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 Brahmans—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), simultaneously constitutes both a renunciation of a former social life, and an initiation into a spiritual lineage via a guru. The samnyāsīs
not a ‘real’ and recognised samnyāsi unless he or she has passed through the virajahoma 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 difficult to substantiate. In general, lineages—inherent in guru-paramparās—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 samnyāsi communities, or amongst wandering sādhus.

The analysis of the samnyāsa rite in a modern context (analysed 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 akhaḍas. The ten lineages of the Daśanāmīs, spread between the dandis, paramahamsa-s and nāgās, are brought together not only through initiation rites, but through the adoption of an identificatory structure, encapsulated in the information contained in the Mathāmnaya-s, texts which were analysed in Chapter 4. When the samnyāsi is initiated, the guru imparts to the candidate the relevant details regarding how his or her new name fits into the scheme of the mathāmnaya-s, with its associated identificatory markers (brahmaṇa name, gotra name, and sampradāya name) and association of the name with one of the four pitha-s, which has its jurisdiction and founding acārya. Śaṅkara’s fame as an advaita philosopher, and his well established reputation for performing a digvijaya and founding four matha-s and an order of Brahmanical ascetics, provide the specific substance that bonds the identity of the Daśanāmīs as a sect of samnyāsīs. One of the central issues of this thesis was to investigate how this identity came to be forged, in the light of historical information which undermines the veracity of Mathāmnaya-s’ presentation of the founding of the sect.

In the latter part of Chapter 4, it was shown how numerous matha-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 Kāṅcipuram and the Śrīnerī matha dispute as to which one is the genuine southern pitha. Guru-paramparās were shown to be unreliable, and with the exception of the southern pitha-s, some of which appear to date from the thirteenth century, records of the other matha-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 matha-s, and that the four matha-s first appear in hagiographic
work in an ‘incomplete’ form in the late sixteenth century at the earliest. Regarding the founding of a renunciate order, amongst the twenty extant hagiographies, only in one of the later texts (Cidvilāsa’s Śāṅkara-vijayā) 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 (Toṭaka, Sureśvara and Padmāpada) 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 after, was projected as an incarnation of Śiva by hagiographers in the image of their Vijayanagara patrons, who—in common with other regents of the Deccan between the eighth and fifteenth century—were initiated into Śaivism by śaiva rāja-gurus. 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 maṭha-s and an order of ascetics.

In Chapter 6 it was also shown how the early Vijayanagara regents patronised Śringerī from the mid-fourteenth century, effectively establishing a lineage and a maṭha 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 maṭha at any of the places now recognised as Śaṅkarite pithā-s, including Śringerī. 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 akhādā-s of all the sects formed, and it was proposed that the structure of Daśanāmī identity may have been significantly influenced by the model of sectarian identity that had been developed by Sufi 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 parāmparas 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 Maṭhāmnāya-s is most
probably a contrived but convenient fiction.
APPENDIX 1

Numbers and percentages of orthodox, reformist and radical sādhus

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 sādhus in various sects.


<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. Kāpālikā (S)</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Nimbārkī (V)</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>4.2</td>
<td>28. Śākta (S)</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Brāhma Sampradāya (V)</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>Total:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Madhva Gauḍiya (V)</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>4.8</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Rāmanandī (V)</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>6.6</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Vāllabha (V)</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>5.4</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Sakhī (V)</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0.6</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Udāsī (V)</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Swāmī Nārāyaṇ (V)</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Dhāmī (V)</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0.6</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. Dhāmnīśvarī (V)</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. Mahānubhāva (V)</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0.4</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. Hariścāndī (V)</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0.6</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14. Malūkdāsī (V)</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15. Parināmī (V)</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0.8</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16. Rasik (V)</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0.4</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17. Parāśrāmi (V)</td>
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<td>0.2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18. Rādhā Vālābhi (V)</td>
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<td>1.2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>19. Rādhā Rāmni (V)</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>20. Daśanāmī (S)</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>12.0</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>21. Kānphaṭa (S)</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>12.0</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22. Aghori (S)</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>2.0</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23. Lingāyat (S)</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>2.0</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24. Kīnārāmī (S)</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>2.0</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25. Karalīṅgī (S)</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26. Gaṅpatya (S)</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0.8</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reformist sects</td>
<td>No.</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>Reformist sects</td>
<td>No.</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------------------</td>
<td>-----</td>
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<td>--------------------</td>
<td>-----</td>
<td>----</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Brāhma Kumārī (N)</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1.9</td>
<td>33. Bavari (N)</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Kabir (N)</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>34. Śivoham (S)</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>4.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Dādu (N)</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>35. Sat Sain (S)</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>2.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Nirmala (N)</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Bhagat (N)</td>
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<td>0.2</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>6. Bābā Lālī (N/V)</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Caran Dāsī (V)</td>
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<td>0.6</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Dariyaśā (N)</td>
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<td>0.2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Niraṅkārī (N/V)</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0.8</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Kāyam (N)</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. Rādha Soami (N)</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. Dariya (N)</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. Ghīsa (N)</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0.8</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14. Garībdāsī (N)</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15. Gulabdāsī (N)</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0.8</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>16. Lāl (N/V)</td>
<td>3</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>17. Naṅgī (N/V)</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18. Niranjanī (N/S)</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19. Nāmdhārī (N)</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>20. Niraṅkārī (N)</td>
<td>4</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21. Paltu Sahabī (N)</td>
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<td>0.2</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22. Prem Prakāśī (N)</td>
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<td>0.8</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23. Pānap (N/V)</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0.6</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>24. Rājdāsī (V)</td>
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<td>0.2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25. Rām Sanehī (N/V)</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0.8</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26. Śiva Nārāyaṇī (N/S)</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27. Satta Nāmī (N)</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28. Sītā Rāmī (N/V)</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0.8</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29. Sādh (N)</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30. Saheb (N)</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0.8</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31. Sūtharā (N)</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0.6</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>32. Seva (N)</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0.4</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Total:</td>
<td>140</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
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</table>
Radical Sects

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>0.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>0.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>0.4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Total: 6 1.2

Grand total: 500 100

1.2 The chart below comprises the various sects who were resident in the ascetic mat̐ha-s of Benares in 1968, as published by Sinha and Saraswati (1978:51).

(S) = šaiva. (V) = vaishnava. (SK) = sikh

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Daṇḍi (S)</td>
<td>(Daśanāmī)</td>
<td>237 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Nāgā (S)</td>
<td>(Daśanāmī)</td>
<td>85 6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Paramahamsa (S)</td>
<td>(Daśanāmī)</td>
<td>288 8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Rāmānandī (V)</td>
<td></td>
<td>253 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Rāmānuji (V)</td>
<td></td>
<td>75 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Nimbarka (V)</td>
<td></td>
<td>10 28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Madhva (V)</td>
<td></td>
<td>1 0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Gauḍiya (V)</td>
<td></td>
<td>3 0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Viṣṇusvāmī (V)</td>
<td></td>
<td>30 0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Kabīrpanthī (V)</td>
<td></td>
<td>35 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. Garibdāsi (V)</td>
<td></td>
<td>5 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. Dādūpanthī (V)</td>
<td></td>
<td>2 0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. Ghīsa (V)</td>
<td></td>
<td>3 0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14. Swāmīnārāyaṇ (V)</td>
<td></td>
<td>15 0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15. Gorakhpanthī</td>
<td></td>
<td>3 0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16. Nirmala (SK)</td>
<td></td>
<td>15 0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17. Udāsin (SK)</td>
<td></td>
<td>79 0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18. Nihaṅg Sikh (SK)</td>
<td></td>
<td>10 0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19. Bauddha</td>
<td></td>
<td>5 0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20 (Others)</td>
<td></td>
<td>35 41</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
1.3 Calculations for an estimate of the number of Daśanāmī sadhus
(danda, paramahamsa and naga)

Hartsuiker (1993:122) gives a figure of five million for the number of sadhus, without, however, citing a source for that estimate. If that figure were approximately accurate it would indicate that sadhus, 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 'Jogis', '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 Jogis; 43,139 Muhammadan Jogis; 45,463 Hindu Nāths (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 sadhus 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 sadhus has declined since the time of Tripathi's work in the early 1970s), then the total number of Daśanāmī sadhus 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 Kumbha Melā in 1992, the Jūnā akhāḍā, one of the largest sub-branches of the sect, initiated around 3,000 new samnyāsīs (Hartsuiker 1993:64). Bedi and Bedi (1991:85) comment that over 2,500 sadhus were initiated into the Jūnā akhāḍā at the 1989 Kumbha Melā at Allahabad.
Nearly all initiations into all branches of the Daśanāmīs, through the *samnyāsa* rite, are performed at the Kumbha 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 *samnyāsīs*. Given an average lifespan of sixty or seventy years, a figure of around 100,000 would be reached.
APPENDIX 2

Sri Mathamnayasetu, Mahanuśasanaṁ, Sesamnaya

Sri Mathamnayasetu

Sarada Mathamnayah

1. prathamaḥ paścimāṃnayaḥ śāradāmatra ucyate I
   kītavārah sampradāyas tasya tīrthārāmārau pade II
2. dvārakākhyāṁ hi kṣetram syād devaḥ siddheśvarah I
   bhadrankāli tu devī syād ācāryo viśvarūpakāḥII
3. gomatīṁśrīnām amalaṁ brahmacārī svarūpakāḥ I
   sāmavedasya vaktā ca tatra dharmam samācāret II
4. jivātmāparamāṭmaikya bodho yatra bhaviṣyati I
   tatvam asi mahāvāyaṃ gotro 'vigata ucyate II
5. sindhusauvātrasaurāstraḥḥaḥ tathāntaraḥ I
   deśāḥ paścimadikśāḥ ye śāradāmaṭhābhaṅgāṁ II
6. trivenīṁśānāgāṁ tirthe tattvāmāyādi lakṣāneI
   snāyattattvārtha bhāvena tīrthanāmnā sa ucyate II
7. āśrama-grahane praudha aśāpāśa-vivarjita II

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 Mathāmāṅnaya-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 Dazeys (1987:577–602), and the Hindi translations of Upādhyāy (1967:601–617) and Misra (1969:33–57). In the various published versions of the Mathāmāṅnaya-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 Mathāmāṅnaya-s (given below) generally follow the verse order of either Sarma (1963) or Mishra (2001). ["I" = line; 'v' = verse.]


2. Hastamalaka (Upādhyāy, v. 2)

yatayata-vinirmukta evāsrama ucyate

8. kīṭādayo viśeṣena vāryante yatra jantavaḥ
   bhūtānukampayā nityaṁ kīṭavāraḥ sa ucyate

9. sva-svarūpaṁ vijnāti svadharma-paripālakaḥ
   svānande krīḍate nityaṁ svarūpo bātur ucyate

Govardhana Mathāmṇayaḥ

10. pūrvāmnāyo dvitīyah syād govardhanamathah smṛtaḥ
    bhogavāraḥ sampradāyo vanāraṇye pade smṛte

11. purusottamam tu kṣetram syāj jagannātho 'syā devatā
    vimalākhyā hi devī syād ācāryaḥ padmapādakah

12. tīrthaṁ mahodadhīḥ praktaṁ brahmacārī prakāśakaḥ
    mahāvākyam ca tatra syaṁ prājñānaṁ brahma cocyate

13. āṅgavāṅgakalīṅgaś ca magadhakalabarbaraḥ
    govardhanamathādhīṁa deśāḥ prācī vyavasthitāḥ

14. suramyā nirjane sthāne vāsaṁ karoti yaḥ
    āśābandhavinirmukto vananāma sa ucyate

15. arāṇye samśṭhito nityam ānande nandane vāne
    tyaktvā sarvam idaṁ viśvam āranyam parikīrtyate

16. bhogo viśaya ityukto vāryate yena jīvinām
    sampradāyo yatīnaḥ ca bhogavāraḥ sa ucyate

17. svayaṁ jyotīr vijñāti yogayuktīvāradaḥ
    tattvajñānaprakāśena tena proktah prakāśakaḥ

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4  "eṣa" (Upādhyāy, v. 7); "etad āśrama laksanaṁ" (Chakrabarty, l. 4).
5  A few lines of a mathāmṇaya pertaining to the Govardhan matha that are not to be found in other texts, even though the information contained therein is substantially similar, are included by Chakrabarty (1973:181):
   "govardhana-maṭhe ramye vimalāpitah saṅgake
    pūrvāmnāye bhogavāre śrīmat-kaśyapa-gotrajah
    mādhyaśvāya sūtah śrīmān sanandana iti śrutaḥ
    prakāśa-brahmacārī ca ṛgvedi sarvasāstra-viś
    śrīpādādādatabhāmācaryatvenābhyaśjīyata" II

6  "suramyā nirjane deśe vāsaṁ nityaṁ karoti yaḥ" (Chakrabarty, l. 5).
7  "āśāpāśavinirmukto vananāma sa ucyate" (Chakrabarty, l. 6).
Jyotir Mathāmnāyah

18. tri'yas tūttarāmnāyo jyotir nāma maṭho bhavet I
śrīmaṭheś ceti vi tasya nāmāntaram udāritam II

19. ānandavāro viṁśeyah sampradāyo 'syā siddhīdāh I
padāni tasya khyātāni giriparvataśāgarāh II

20. badarīkāśramaḥ kṣetram devo nārāyaṇaḥ smṛtaḥ I
pūrṇāgiriś ca devī syād acāryas toṭakaḥ smṛtaḥ II

21. tīrthaṁ ca ālakaṇaṁdākhyaṁ ānando brahma-cārya abhūt I
ayam ātmā brahma ceti mahāvākyam udāḥṛtam II

22. atharvavedavaktā ca bṛGVākhyāṁ gotram ucyate I
kuruksmīrakāṁbojapārścālādivibhāgataḥ I
jyotirmathavaśa dēśa udīcīdvigavasthitāh II

23. vāso girivane nityāṁ gītādhyayanataparāh I
gambhirācalabuddhiś ca'ś girināmā sa ucyate II

24. vasan parvatamūleṣū praudhaṁ jñānam vibharti yaḥ I
sārasārāṁ viśnānti parvataḥ parikāryate II

25. tattvasāgarakaṁbhirā-jñānaratnaparigrāhī I
maryādāṁ vai na laṅghyeta sāgaraḥ parikāryate II

26. ānando hi vilāsāṁ ca vāyate yena jīvināṁ I
sampradāyo yatīnāṁ ca ānandavāraḥ sa ucyate II

27. satyaṁ jñānamanantam yo nityāṁ dhyāyet tattvavit I
svānande ramate caiva ānandāḥ parikāryate II

Śrṅgerī Mathāmnāyah

28. catuḥrtho daksināmnāyah śrṅgerī tu maṭho bhavet I
sampradāyo bhūrivaṁ bhūrbhuvo gotramucyate II

29. padāni triṇi khyātāni sarasvatī bhāratī purī I
rāmeśvarāhvayāṁ kṣetram ādīvārhādevatā II

8 “ānandavāro viṁśeyah sampradāyo ’syā siddhīkṛt” (Śarma, p. 649, v. 7).
9 “tīrthaṁvalakaṇandākhyaṁ nandākhyo…” (Śarma, p. 648, v. 8).
10 “vaso girivare(?) nityāṁ gītādhyāyase hi tatparāḥ” (Chakraborty, I. 9).
11 “svaddhiṣṭa…” (Chakraborty, I. 10).
12 “vaset parvatamūleṣu praudho yo dhyāna-tatparāḥ” (Chakraborty, I. 11).
13 “vaset sāgaragambhirā dhanarataṇa-parigrāhāḥ” (Chakraborty, I. 13).
14 “maryādāchānalanāṅghyena sāgaraḥ parikārtītaḥ” (Chakraborty, I. 14).
30. kāmākeśī tasya devī syāt sarvakāmaphala-pradā ācāryaś tuṅgabhadrī tīrthakam II
31. Caitanya-khyo brahma-carī yajurvedasya pāthakaḥ I
ahāṃ brahmāmi tatraiva mahāvākyam samiśritam II
32. āndhradravīḍakarnāṭaka-keralādiprabhedataḥ I
śṛṅgāryadhīnā deśās te īh avācīdīgavasthitāh II
33. svarajñānaraṭha nityaṃ svaravādi kaviśvarah I
saṃsārasāgaraśārā hantā 'sau hi sarasvatī II 17
34. vidyabhārenā sampūrṇaḥ sarvabāharaḥ parītyajan I 18
duḥkhabhāraṃ na jānti bhāratī parikīrtaye 19 I
35. jñānatattvena sampūrṇaḥ pūrṇatattvavade 20 sthitaḥ I
parabrahmarato nityaṃ purīnaṃ sa ucyate II 21
36. bhūriśabdena sauvarṇyaṃ vāyate yena jīvinām I
sampradāyo yatīnām ca bhūrvāraḥ sa ucyate II
37. cīṇmatraṃ caityaradhitam anantam ajaraṃ śivam I
yo jānti sa vai vidvān caitanyaṃ tad vidhiyate II

Mahānuṣāsanam 22

38. maryādaiśa suvijñeyā caturmaṭhavidhāyinī I
tām etāṃ samupāśritya acāryāh sthāpitāh kramāt II 23
39. āmnāyāḥ kathitāḥ hy ete yatīnām ca prthakaḥ prthak I 24

15 Suresvara (Upadhyaya, p. 608, v. 3); Prthvīdhara (Śarma, p. 649, v. 13). Śarma identifies Prthvīdhara as Hastamalaka.
16 "svarajñānavaśo"... (Chakraborty, l. 15).
17 "saṃsāra-sāgare sārābhijño ya sa sarasvatī " (Chakraborty, l. 16).
18 Mishra's alternative rendering of terms are utilised in this line, which corresponds to Chakraborty, l. 17.
19 "parīkīrtāḥ" (Chakraborty, l. 18).
20 "tattve" (Chakraborty, l. 19).
21 = Chakraborty, l. 20.
22 Śarma's version of the Mahānuṣāsanam omits vv. 38 and 65. Most of the verses of this text also appear in Śarma's Mathānmānayasetu (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 Śrīṛgerī mathānmāya, and begins the Mahānuṣāsanam at v. 39. Misra (1996:49–57) includes most of the verses of the Mahānuṣāsanam in the latter part of the Śesāmānaya (subsequent to v. 10).
24 "uktāsato-vāra āmnāya yatīnām hi prthakaḥ prthak I te sarve caturacāryaniyogena yathāvidhi II" (Śarma, Mathānmānayasetu, v. 14).
20. ताह सर्वाश caturācāryairniyogena यथाक्रमम्
21. prayoktavyaḥ svadharmeṣu śāsanīyās tato 'nyathā
kurvantu eva satatam ātaman dharaṇītaile
dharaṇītaile
22. viruddhācaraṇaprāptaḥ ācāryaṇāmaḥ samājāhyā
lokaḥ samśīlayanty eva svadharmāpratirodhataḥ
dharaṇītaile
dharaṇītaile
23. sva-svarāṣṭrapratīṣṭhityai saṅcāraḥ suvidhyatām
tathāte niyato vāsa ācāryasya na yujyate
dharaṇītaile
dharaṇītaile
24. varṇāśrama-sadācārāṁ asmabhīr ye prasādhitāḥ
dharaṇītaile
dharaṇītaile
25. rakṣaṇīyāḥ sadaivaite sva-sva-bhāge
dharaṇītaile
dharaṇītaile
26. yato vināśitī mahaśi dharmasyāya
dharaṇītaile
dharaṇītaile
27. māndyaṁ sāntyājyām evātra dākṣyam eva samāsrayet
dharaṇītaile
dharaṇītaile
28. parasparabāhge tu na praveśaḥ kadācana
dharaṇītaile
dharaṇītaile
29. paraspareṇa kartavyāḥ hy ācāryena vyavasthitih
dharaṇītaile
dharaṇītaile
30. maryādāya vināśena luyeran niyamāḥ
dharaṇītaile
dharaṇītaile
31. subhāḥ lokaṁ sāṃsārayanty eva svadharmapratītyah
dharaṇītaile
dharaṇītaile
32. sva-svarastrapratisthityai sancārayet
dharaṇītaile
dharaṇītaile
33. mathe tu niyato vasa acaryasya na yujyate
dharaṇītaile
dharaṇītaile
34. varṇāśrama-sadācārāṃ asmabhīr ye prasādhitāḥ
dharaṇītaile
dharaṇītaile
35. rakṣaṇīyāḥ sadaivaite sva-sva-bhāge
dharaṇītaile
dharaṇītaile
36. yato vināśitī mahaśa dharmasyāya
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dharaṇītaile
37. māndyaṁ sāntyājyām evātra dākṣyam eva samāsrayet
dharaṇītaile
dharaṇītaile
38. parasparabāhge tu na praveśaḥ kadācana
dharaṇītaile
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39. paraspareṇa kartavyāḥ hy ācāryena vyavasthitih
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40. maryādāya vināśena luyeran niyamāḥ
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dharaṇītaile
41. subhāḥ lokaṁ sāṃsārayanty eva svadharmapratītyah
dharaṇītaile
dharaṇītaile
42. sva-svarastrapratisthityai sancārayet
dharaṇītaile
dharaṇītaile
43. mathe tu niyato vasa acaryasya na yujyate
dharaṇītaile
dharaṇītaile
44. varṇāśrama-sadācārāṃ asmabhīr ye prasādhitāḥ
dharaṇītaile
dharaṇītaile
45. rakṣaṇīyāḥ sadaivaite sva-sva-bhāge
dharaṇītaile
dharaṇītaile
46. yato vināśitī mahaśa dharmasyāya
dharaṇītaile
dharaṇītaile
47. māndyaṁ sāntyājyām evātra dākṣyam eva samāsrayet
dharaṇītaile
dharaṇītaile
48. parasparabāhge tu na praveśaḥ kadācana
dharaṇītaile
dharaṇītaile
49. paraspareṇa kartavyāḥ hy ācāryena vyavasthitih
dharaṇītaile
dharaṇītaile
50. maryādāya vināśena luyeran niyamāḥ
dharaṇītaile
dharaṇītaile
51. subhāḥ lokaṁ sāṃsārayanty eva svadharmapratītyah
dharaṇītaile
dharaṇītaile
52. eka evābhīṣe cyah syād ante laksana-sammataḥ
dharaṇītaile
dharaṇītaile

20. "sarve" (Mishra).
21. "te sarve caturācāryā niyo genam yathākramam" (Upadhyāy, pp. 612, v. 1). vv. 39–64 (above) =Mishra, 
22. Śesāmnāya, vv. 48–73.
23. vv. 40–41 =Sarma, vv. 15–16.
24. "nityam" (Sarma, v. 22).
27. "...dharmasyatra..." (Sarma, v. 24).
29. "...tmāstraṁ" (Sarma, Mathāmnayasetu, v. 28); "...sāstraṁ sa madāsthānam āpnyāt" (?) (Mishra).
30. "...prīthe" (Sarma, v. 31).
32. "...evābhīṣe cyah" (?) (Mishra).
tattatpīthe kramaṇaiva na bahu yujyate kvacit II

sudhanvāh samautsukyanirṇītyai dharmahetave I
deva rājopacārāṃ ca yathāvad anupālayet II

kevalam dharmam udiśya vibhavo brahmacetasām I
vīhitaś copakārāya padmapatranayam vrajet II

dudhanvā hi mahārājas tathānaye ca naresvarāḥ I
dharmapāramparīṃ tālayantu nīrāntaram II

cāturvarṇyam yathāyogyam vāṃmanaḥ kāyakarmabhiḥ I

guroh pīthāṃ samarceta vibhāgānukrāmena vai II

dhārāṃ ālambya rājānaḥ prajābhyāḥ karabhāginaḥ I
krādhibhāra ācāryā dharmatas tadvad eva hi II

dharmo mūlaṃ manusyaṇāṃ sa ca ācāryāvalambanaḥ I
tasmād ācāryasumaneeḥ sāsanam sarvato (a)dhyikam II

tasmāt sarvaprayatnena sāsanam sarva-sammatam I

ācāryasya viśeṣena hy audāryabharabhāginaḥ II

ācāryākṣipta daṇḍas tu kṛtvā pāpāni mānavaḥ I
nirmalaḥ svargamāyānti santarḥ sukrūtīno yathā II

ity evaṃ manur apy āha gautamo 'pi viśeṣataḥ I

viśiṣṭa-śiṣṭācāro 'pi mūlād eva prasiddhyati II

tān ācāryopadesāsaḥ ca rājadaṇḍas ca pālayet I
tasmād ācārya-rājāvanavadyau na nindayet II

dharmasya padhatir hy eṣā jagataḥ sthālīhetave I

dravavarnāśramanāṃ hi yathāśāstrāṃ vidhiyate II

krte viśvagurur brahmā tretāyāṃ rśisattamaḥ I
dvāpare vyāsa eva syāt kalāv atra bhavāmy aham II

maṭhās catvāra ācāryā catvāraś ca dhurandharāḥ I

37 v. 52 = Sarma, Mathāmnāyasetu, v. 52; Upādhyāy, v. 14.
39 vv. 56–58 = Sarma, Mathāmnāyasetu, vv. 40–42; Upādhyāy, vv. 18–20. (References to Sarma below are to the Mathāmnāyasetu.)
40 v. 59 = Sarma, v. 46; Upādhyāy, v. 21.
41 v. 60 = Sarma, v. 43; Upādhyāy, v. 22.
42 v. 61 = Sarma, v. 45; Upādhyāy, v. 23.
44 "dharmapaddhatiresa..." (Sarma, v. 47).
45 v. 63 = Sarma, v. 47; Upādhyāy, v. 25.)
Sampradāyasya ca catvāra eṣā dharmavyavasthitih II

Śeṣāṃnaya

66. athordhvaroḥ śeṣa āmnāyaḥ te vijñaanauka-vigrahah I
    pāñcamas tūrdhva āmnāyaḥ sumerumātha ucyate I
    sampradāyō 'sva kāśi syāt satyajñānābhide pade II
67. kālīṣaḥ kṣetramitya utkārṇ devatā 'syā nīrañjanaḥ I
    devī māyā tathācārya iśvaro 'sva prakṛttītaḥ II
68. tīrtham tu mānasam proktam brahmataavaghāhi tat I
    tatra samyogamātreṇa samyāsaṃ samupāśrayet II
69. suksmavedasya vaktvā ca tatra dharma samācāreṇ I
    śaṣṭhāḥ svātmākhyā āmnāyaḥ paramātma maṭho mahān II
70. sattvatoṣaḥ sampradāyaḥ padaṃ yogam anumāreṇ I
    nabhaḥ sarovaraṃ kṣetraṃ parahamsa 'syā devatā II
71. devī syān mānasāḥ māyā ācāryaḥ cetanāhvayaḥ I
    triputṭīrthham utkṛṣṭaṃ sarvapūnayapradāyakam II
72. bhava pāśavināśāya samyāsaṃ tatra ca āśrayet I
    vedāntavākyavaktā ca tatra samācāreṇ II
73. saptamo niśkalāmnyāyaḥ sahasrārkadyutir maṭthaḥ I
    sampradāyō (a)sya sacchisyaḥ śrīguroḥ pāduke pade II
74. tatrānubhūtiḥ kṣetraṃ syād viśvarūpo (a)sya devatā I
    devī cichaktināmnī hi acāryaḥ sadguruḥ smṛtaḥ II
75. sacchāstraśravanaḥ tīrtham jagarāṃṛtyuvināśakam I
    purṇānandaprasādēna samyāsaṃ tatra ca āśrayet II

——v. 65 —Sarma, v. 39. Sarma's text concludes: "Ili śrīmatparamhamsaparivarājakacārya śrīmacchaṅkara bhagavatātmaḥ maṭhāṃnayāśatvaroḥ samāptāḥ". [Thus are the four-fold maṭhāṃnayā-s, written by the honourable, paramhamsa ascetic, Śrī Śaṅkara Bagavat, completed.]
——This section of text is referred to as 'Maṭhāṃnayāsetu' by Sarma; as 'Śeṣāṃnaya' by Upadhyay (pp. 310–311). Miṣra appendes this text to the previous section.
——"nabhiṇḍuḍali" (the centre of the coil) is given as the kṣetra by Kunhan Raja (1933:49).
——The tīrtha is given as Trikuti by Kunhan Raja.
——Kunhan Raja's text (Maṭhāṃnayogaśat) also details seven āmnāya-s (the four standard āmnāya-s, and three other śeṣāṃnaya-s). The main details of all seven āmnāya-s are similar to those presented above.
TRANSLATION

Śrīmāṭhamāṇyasetu [The division of the revered traditions]

Śāradā Mathāmāṇya

1. The first is the western tradition (āmnāya). The monastery (matha) is called Śāradā. Its sampradāya is kīṭavāra. The [samnyāsin] names ['titles' pādā] are Tīrtha [holy ford] and Āśrama [hermitage].

2. The kṣetra is Dvārakā. The male deity is prescribed as Siddhēśvara. The female deity is Bhadrakāli. The [first] ācārya is Viśvarūpaka.  

3. The tīrtha is the pure Gomati [river], the brahmaçāri [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 jīvatman and paramātman. "Tattvamasi" is the mahāvāky. The gotra is called Avigat.

5. Sindhu, Sauvīra, Saurāṣṭra, Mahārāṣṭra and other places also are the territories in the western direction apportioned to the Śāradā matha.

6. "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.

7. 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'.

8. Through [the distinction of] compassion for insects [kīṭā, he shoos away [living] beings [from] there. From [his] compassion for living beings, he is always called Kīṭavāra.

9. He who knows himself is surrounded and protected by his own dharma. He always amuses himself in his own bliss. A young lad [a Brāhmaṇ brahmaçāri] is called Svarūpa.

Govardhana Mathāmāṇya

10. The second tradition is the eastern, prescribed as the Govardhana matha. The sampradāya is Bhogavāra. The [samnyāsi] titles prescribed are Vana [forest]

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51 For the sense of specific terms used in the mathāmāṇya-s, see Chapter 5.2–5.3.
52 Hastamalaka (Upadhyay, v. 2).
53 "You are that".
and Aranya [jungle].

11. The kṣetra is Puruṣottama [and] its male deity is Jagannāth.
The female deity is Vimalā. The [first] ācārya is Padmapādaka.

12. The tīrtha is proclaimed as the ocean. The brahmaṇa [name] is Prakāśaka.
And the mahāvākyā there is “Prajñānām Brahma”.54

13. The Rgveda is studied, [and] the gotra is called Kāśyapa.
Aṅga, Vaṅga, Kaliṅga, Magadha, Utkala and Barbarā are the territories situated in
the east, presided over by the Govardhan mātha.

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 (yātr) 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 mātha called Jyotir.
It is also [called] Śrī-Mathā, which is its other name.

19. The sampradāya is known as Ānandavara, which confers perfection.
Its titles (padā) are called Giri, Parvata and Sāgarā.

20. The kṣetra is Badrikāśrama; the male deity is [to be remembered as]
Nārāyaṇa, and the female deity is Pūrṇāgiri. Its [first] ācārya is [to be
remembered as] Tōṭaka.56

21. The tīrtha is the Alaknanda [river]. Ānanda is the brahmaṇa [name].
“Ayamātmā Brahmac”57 is the mahāvākyā.

22. The Atharva Veda 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

54 “Knowledge is brahma”
55 “laksanam kila” (Chakraborty, I. 8, instead of “parikīryate”).
56 “Tōṭaka” (Śarma, p. 649, v. 9).
57 “The self is Brahma”.
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Jyotirmāthā.

23. Living in the forests and hills, he is eternally engaged in the study of the Gītā. [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 [sāgarā]. He who verily never exceeds his [moral or juridical] limits is called Sāgarā.

26. He distances himself from the pleasures and enjoyments of the world [living beings]. The sampradāya of the ascetics [here] is called Ānandavara.

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.

Śrṅgerī Mathāmānāya

28. The fourth tradition, then, is [that of] the Śrṅgerī mathā. The sampradāya is Bhurivāra [and] the gotra is Bhūrbhuva.

29. The three titles [padā] are named Sarasvatī, Bhāraṭī 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. Hastāmalaka68 is the [first] ācārya [and] the Tungabhadra [river] is the tīrtha.

31. The brahmaçāri name is Caitanya; he recites the Yajurveda. The mahāvākyā to be uttered there is “Aham Brahmasmi”.69

32. Āndhra, Dravida, Karpṭaka, Kerala, et cetera, are the apportioned territories which are included as being subject to [the authority] of Śrṅgerī.

33. Always intent upon self-control, uttering [the mantra] svāt; 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 Bhāraṭī.

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 Būrivāra.

68 See fn.16.
69 "I am Brahma".
37. Consciousness, freed from mental fluctuations, is infinite, undecaying, [and] auspicious. He who knows this is verily wise, [and] he is called Caitanya.

Mahānuśāsanam [The Great Instruction].

38. This rule giving the instruction for the four matha-s is to be well discerned. The acārya-s [who are] established in succession, are to be supported by this rule.

39. The traditions (amnāya) of the ascetics, which are declared, are [to be] separately distinguished. All of these four acārya-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 acārya-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 acārya-s.

42. Each one properly abiding in his own territory, wandering around is to be practised. The acārya 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 acārya 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] acārya.

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 pitha-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 *pitha*. Otherwise, even one who has ascended the *pitha* [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 *pitha*, he should be known by [his saying] "It is I", as one hears it said "*yasya deva*" (lord of whom).60

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 *pitha*, [and] only in succession; [and] there should not be more [than one ācārya] anywhere.

53. [Like] [king] Sudhanvā,61 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,62 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.63

55. The great king Sudhanvā and other rulers of men should should continuously protect the *dharma* that is traditionally handed down.

56. The *pitha* of the guru should be honoured with speech, mind, body and actions, according with the propriety of the four varna-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.

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60 A famous scriptural saying from *Śvetāsvatara Upaniṣad*, 6.23: *yasya deva parabhaktiryathādeva tathā gurau...*

61 A king from Kerala whom Śaṅkara meets in the *Śaṅkara-dīg-vijaya*.

62 *kevalam*, pertaining to a meditative ascetic, *kevala*.

63 Undisturbed by the muddy waters beneath.
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 [acārya-s] becomes [is made] well known, from the root [as it were].

62. The instruction of the acārya and the punishment of the king are for the welfare of the people. Therefore, the acārya 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 Brahmā is the world-guru; in the Tretā age it is the most virtuous rṣis [wise seers]; in the Dvāpara age it is indeed Vyāsa; now, in the Kāli age, it is "I [am]."

65. Dharma is maintained by these [things]: the four matha-s, the four acārya-s (who bear the burden [of responsibility]), and the four sampradāya-s.

Śešāmnāya

66. Next, there are the [other] remaining 'heavenly' [urdhva āmnāya-s, [which are] distributed in the form of knowledge. The fifth āmnāya is the 'heavenly' matha, called the Sumeru matha. Its sampradāya is Kāśi [Banaras]; its titles [pada] are distinguished as truth and knowledge.

67. The āsētra is said to be [mount] Kailās. Its male deity is Nirañjana, [and] its female deity is Māyā. And its acārya is worshipped as the Lord [Īśvara].

68. The tīrtha is proclaimed as the mental one64 [mānasā], which is absorbed in the essence of brahman. There, through union [with brahman], refuge should be taken in renunciation [samnyāsā].

69. The sixth āmnāya is one's own self. The 'subtle' Veda is spoken, and there dharma should be observed. The great matha is the the great Self [paramātma].

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 parahamsa65 [the highest kind of ascetic].

71. The female deity is Mānasī Māyā, and the acārya is said to be Cetan

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64 The notion of mental tīrtha-s is also recognised in classical sources. For example, Bhīṣma extols their virtues to Yudhiṣṭhira (MBh 13.111).

65 =paramahamsa
[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 Niṣkala [stainless?], the matha is Sahasrārkadhuti [the splendour of a thousand suns]. Its sampradāya is Sacchiṣya [the good student]; the holy footprints [or wooden sandals, pāduka] of the guru is the title [padā].

74. The kṣetra there is realisation [anubhūti]; the male deity is Viṣvarūpa [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.

66 Perhaps from niṣkalaṅka, or from niṣkala (to drive away).
APPENDIX 3

The history and mythology of the Kumbha Melā

Whether Daśanāmēśīs reside almost permanently in a matha or āśīrāma, or travel, the vast majority will attend the Kumbha Melā (or Kumbh Parv), particularly a Mahā ('great') Kumbha 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 some drops of the Nectar of Immortality (amṛtā) on the bather. The Kumbha Melā not only attracts pilgrims from throughout India and Nepal but is also a gathering of all major

1 The terms melā and parv both mean 'festival' or 'occasion for religious observance'; parv being the term generally preferred by saṃyastīs. 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 Kumbha for Mauna Amāvāsyā: 1906, (2.5); 1918, (3); 1930, (4); 1942, (1.2); 1954, (6); 1966, (7); 1977, (10); 1989, (15). Mauna Amāvāsyā is the most important bath of the Melā, and also a time most auspicious in the Hindu calendar for offering pīndātor ancestor (pitṛ) worship.

3 The main baths for the Kumbha Melā are as follows (the dates are for the 2001 Prayāga Kumbha; saṃkrānti is the term used for when the sun or a planet enters a new astrological sign; * indicates the most important baths for saṃyastīs). At Prayāga: Pauṣa Pūrṇīmā (full-moon, plus eclipse, 9th Jan.); Makar Saṃkrānti (14th Jan.); Mauna Amāvāsyā* (24th Jan.); Basant Paṃcimi* (28th Jan.); Māghe Pūrṇīmā (8th Feb.); Mahā-Śivarātri (12th Feb.). The akāśās perform the 'royal procession' (śaḥī juṭā) three times: Makar Saṃkrānti, Mauna Amāvāsyā, and Basant Paṃcimī. At Haridvār, the three most important baths are: Mahā-Śivarātri; the new moon day (krṣṇa-amāvāsyā) of Aries* (Caitra); the first day (saṃkrānti) of Taurus* (Valiśākhā). At Nāsik: when Jupiter, Sun and Mars enter Leo (Śrāvaṇa/Śrīma saṃkrānti)*; Leo (Śrāvaṇa) krṣṇa-amāvāsyā*; Śrāvaṇa full-moon*; Amāvāsyā of Virgo* (Bhadrapada); Ekādaśī (the eleventh day of either fortnight of the lunar month) of Scorpio (Kārtika). At Ujjain the most important baths are on; Meṣa (Aries) saṃkrānti*; Valiśākha (Taurus) krṣṇa amāvāsyā; the full-moon of Valiśākha. In 1921 plague broke out at Ujjain, since when there has only been one 'royal bath' (Pūrī 2001:173). The baths for the 1980 Ujjain Melā were: 31st March (Caitra Pūrṇīmā); 14th April (Meṣa saṃkrānti*); 15th April (Valiśākha amāvāsyā); 17th April (Aksaya Trīṭyā); 19th April (Śaṅkarācārya Jayantī); 30th April (Valiśākha Pūrṇīmā) (Sarma 1980:11).

4 See Stanley (1977:27–31) for an explanation of the significance of particular astronomical events, such as amāvāsyā.
Hindu religious and ascetic organisations. 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 nāga akhādas take place, and samnyāsas and nāga initiations are performed. The pageants of the akhādas arrive at the site, making their ‘entry procession’ (pēśvāt julūs), with mahants and svāmis 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 nāgas blowing nāgphani (a serpent-shaped horn), some on horseback. At the camps of the akhādas, bhūmi-pūjā will be performed, and the akhāda flag (dvāja) will be raised fifty feet high. On the occasions of the main baths, the akhāda will make a ‘royal procession’ (sāhi julūs) to the saṅgam. The Melā, crowded with multitudes of men and women 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 Prajahog, are the location of the headquarters of six of the seven Daśanāmī akhādas (see Ch. 2.1), the military wing of the Daśanāmīs.

The Kumbha Melā usually takes place every three years, rotating around four sites: at Prayāg (the ‘tirth-rāj’), at the saṅgam of the Gaṅgā and Yamunā rivers; Haridvār, on the banks of the Gaṅgā; Ujjain, on the banks of the Śiprā; and Tryambakeśwar (near Nāsik), on the banks of the Godāvarī. Śaṅga nāga initiations take place in Prayāg, Haridvār and Ujjain, whereas vaiṣṇava nāga initiations take place at Nāsik. There is a tradition that Śaṅkarācārya organised the Kumbha Melā, or that he organised attending groups of ascetics (Krasa 1965:181). However, there is no evidence to support this contention. We will see that both the astrological determinants of the

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2 There is scant evidence in the Veda for institutionalised pilgrimage (yātrā); Yāśaka’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 Purāṇic period (c200–1000). Bhāṭṭa Lakṣmidhara’s Kṛtya-kapālāru (‘the wish-fulfilling tree of general duties’; c late 11th–early 12th cent.) was a work that exercised a great influence in Mithila, Bengal, and northern and western India. Discussed in the text is how to properly discharge the traditional triple-debt (nārāyānas) to the seers, ancestors and gods: pilgrimage is stated to be one of the incumbent duties (Bharati 1963:147). On the significance of tīrtha (‘ford’, yātrā, Salomon (1979) translates and discusses a mediaeval text, Tīrtha-pratīṃnāyāḥ, the earliest extant version of which appears in the Smṛtyarthasāra of Śrīdhara, dating to c1150–1200. 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 (kroṣhta or prajapatyaka-roṣhta) (see Ch. 3.1). The fundamental feature of the system of the Tīrtha-pratīṃnāyāḥ is its emphasis on rivers, the text being organised around the main rivers of India.

4 The second most important Melā for the akhādas is that at Gaṅgā Sāgar, near Calcutta, held every year during Makar Sankrānti.

7 The extinct Sarasvaṭī river is also said to emerge from an underground at the saṅgam of the other two rivers.

6 The second most important Melā for the akhādas is that at Gaṅgā Sāgar, near Calcutta, held every year during Makar Sankrānti.

8 The three vaiṣṇava nāga akhādas belong to the Rāmānandī order (see Ch. 2.1).
festival and also the notion that the Kumbha 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’ (Aśīrābdhi-mañthana) and the production of the Nectar of Immortality (āmṛta). The story appears in both the Rāmāyana and the Mahābhārata, and later in more or less embellished variants in the Agni, Viṣṇu, Brahmāṇḍa, Vāyu, Kūrma, Padma, Skanda, Matsya and Bhāgavata Purāṇas. It is famously represented in architecture—dating from the twelfth century—at Ankor Wat in Cambodia.

The devas (gods), defeated by asuras (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 āmṛta 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 (kūrmarāja), and around it was curled Vāsuki (the king of snakes) as a rope, whose head and tail was pulled by, respectively, the asuras and devas, 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, Nīlakanṭha (blue-throat). Thereafter, fourteen extraordinary treasures were produced, including an aerial car (vimāna puspaka), Airavata (the elephant), the Pārijāta tree (erythrina indica), a flying horse, a priceless jewel (kaustubha), the waxing Moon, Rambahā (one of the celestial dancers at Indra’s court), five auspicious cows (Lakṣmī, Surīpa, Yamunā, Susīlā and Saurabhī), Viśvakarma (the cosmic architect), and, lastly, Dhanavantri (the divine healer), holding a pot (kumbha) of āmṛta, which they handed to Indra.

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8 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.
11 For Purānic references, see Mani (1975:31–32). The Śīlaṁ Bhāgavatam (Bhāgavata Purāṇa) (8.6–10) (for a translation, see Prabhupāda 1976) contains the most elaborate form of the myth (Long 1976:178).
12 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.)
13 Accounts vary slightly on what was produced.
14 The ‘patron saint’ of the Indian medical profession.
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 Kumbha Melā is the story whereby Brhaspati, the preceptor of the **deva-s**, assisted. This particular version of the conclusion of the fight between the **deva-s** and **asura-s** underpins the mythology of the sacredness and linkage between the four sites. In this story, Brhaspati 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 Nāśik; 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 Brhaspati to protect Jayanta from the demons, during which twelve-year period he was staying in the signs (rāṣi) of Aquarius (**Kumbhad**), Taurus (**Vṛṣā**), Leo (**Simha**) and Scorpio (**Vṛśčikā**), hence the origin of the twelve-year cycle of the Kumbha Melā and the determination of the timing of the Melā.
according to the position of Jupiter.\textsuperscript{16}

Whereas the story of the 'churning of the ocean' and the fight between the \textit{deva}-s and \textit{asura}-s is told in a number of texts, including the epics and \textit{Pur\=ana}-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 \textit{mela}\textsuperscript{17}. The myth of the spilling of 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 Pur\=ana}\textsuperscript{19}. The earliest publications of these 'Pur\=anic' texts are by Giri (1909) and Gauḍa (1947)\textsuperscript{20}. However, they are not traceable in any other printed editions of the \textit{Skanda Pur\=ana} (Bonazzoli 1977:115), and appear almost certainly to have been interpolated, most probably around 1860, if Maclean is correct about the origins of the Kumbha Melā (see below).

According to these texts the location for the occurrence of the Kumbha Melā is determined primarily according to the position of Jupiter (\textit{Brhaspati}), in its (almost) twelve-year cycle. Every twelve years the Mahā ('great') Kumbha Melā takes place at Prayāg. This is when Jupiter (\textit{Brhaspati}) is in Aqarius (\textit{Kumbhā} on both the Māgh (Capricorn)\textsuperscript{21} and Meṣa (Aries) \textit{saṁkrānti}-s. Some Mahā Kumbha Melās are hailed as particularly auspicious, such as the 2001 Prayāg Kumbha, during which was an

\textsuperscript{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 \textit{Devaloka} when the nectar drops at the sites. In another, Garuḍa brought the nectar from \textit{Devaloka} to release his mother, Viṇāṭā, from Kādrū, the mother of the serpents (\textit{nāga}-s). Viṇāṭā 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-Pur\=anic tradition, Garuḍa's bringing nectar for his mother is well known (\textit{MBh} 1.25ff.; \textit{Ram} 3.35.27; \textit{Garuda Pur\=ana} 1.240.26-28; \textit{Skanda Pur\=ana} 4.1.55-125).

\textsuperscript{17} Evidence occasionally cited in support of an ancient Kumbha Melā includes a reference in the \textit{Vāyu Pur\=ana} (2.15.47) to "\textit{kum} \textit{bha}" as a holy place suitable for performing śrāddha rites. Dubey (1987:120) believes that this reference does not refer to a Kumbha Melā but to a \textit{tīrtha} named Śrī Kumbha on the Sarasvati river. Bonazzoli (1977:107) observes that a verse from the \textit{Atharva Veda} (4.34.7) that states, "I give four pitchers \textit{[kum} \textit{bha], in four (several) places} (\textit{ca}t\textit{ura}ḥ \textit{kumbh}āṁ\textit{sa}c\textit{at}ūr\textit{db}ā \textit{c}ādā\textit{mi})" has been taken out of context by some commentators who believe this verse indicates the antiquity of the Kumbha Melā. Śaṅkara (fourteenth century) commented on this verse, but made no connection with either Prayāg or the Kumbha as a Melā, even though in his time \textit{tīrtha}-yātrās were common. It seems that the tradition of four Kumbha Melā sites was not current in Śaṅkara's time. For other spurious Vedic references, see Bhattacharya (1977:4).

\textsuperscript{18} There is, however, no clear reference to the astrology of the Kumbha Melā in any astronomical work (Bhattacharya 1977:2). See Roebuck (1992) for an introduction to Indian astrology.

\textsuperscript{19} It has also been claimed that the Kumbha Melā is referred to in the \textit{Viśn\=u Pur\=ana}, but there is no reference in any printed edition. The astrological prerequisites have also been erroneously attributed to the \textit{Śivasamhitā} (Bhattacharya 1977:3-4).


\textsuperscript{21} Also \textit{Makar} in Hindi.
astrological alignment that had not occurred for 144 years. Periodically, the Ādhā/Ardh (half) Kumbha Melā occurs at either Haridvār or Prayāg, in six-yearly cycles, while every year the Māgh Melā is held at Prayāg. The Māgh Melā begins at Makar Sankrānti (on January 16th) and finishes on Śivarātri, ‘Śiva’s night’, the main festival for Śiva, held on the 14th day of dark half of the month of Phalgun (Pisces). The full Prayāg Kumbha Melā takes place when Jupiter (Bṛhaspati) enters Aries (Meṣa; Hindi Cait) and both the Sun and the Moon are in Capricorn (Māgha).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 Prayāg 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 Prayāg is known as the Kumbha Melā, at Haridvār as the Meṣa Kumbha (as the festival coincides the large bath for the sankrānti of Meṣa), and at Ujjain and Nāsik as the Śiṁhāṣṭa (‘eight lion’) Melā.23

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>YEAR</th>
<th>PLACE</th>
<th>MONTH</th>
<th>ASTROLOGY</th>
<th>MELA</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0</td>
<td>Haridvār</td>
<td>Caitra (Aries)</td>
<td>Jupiter in Aquarius (Kumbha), Sun and Moon in Aries. Kumbha</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Prayāg</td>
<td>Māgha (Capricorn)</td>
<td>Jupiter in Aries (Meṣa) [or Taurus (Vṛṣa)] Sun and Moon in Capricorn (Māgha) on the new moon day in Capricorn. Kumbha</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6(a)</td>
<td>Nāsik</td>
<td>Śravaṇa (Leo)</td>
<td>Jupiter in Leo, Sun and Moon in Leo (Śiṁha). 1/2 Kumbha</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(b)</td>
<td>Haridvār</td>
<td>Caitra (Aries)</td>
<td>Jupiter in Leo, Sun in Aries.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(c)</td>
<td>Ujjain</td>
<td>Vaiśākha (Taurus)</td>
<td>Jupiter in Leo, Sun in Aries [or Taurus], Moon in Virgo (Tulā). Kumbha</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Prayāg</td>
<td>Māgha (Capricorn)</td>
<td>Jupiter in Scorpio (Vṛṣeṣṭikā), Sun in Capricorn. 1/2 Kumbha</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Haridvār</td>
<td>Caitra (Aries)</td>
<td>Jupiter in Aquarius, Sun and Moon in Aries. Kumbha²⁴</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Sinha and Sarasvati (1978:149–151) and Rai (1993b:47–57) note that, historically, the

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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 Sarasvati (1978:149).

24 According to Gauḍa (op. cit.) there are alternative astrological determinants:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Place</th>
<th>month</th>
<th>details</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Prayāg</td>
<td>Māgha</td>
<td>Jupiter enters Taurus on the new moon day in the month of Māgha, Sun in Capricorn</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nāsik</td>
<td>Āśādha</td>
<td>Jupiter, Sun and Moon in Cancer (Kārkā, new moon day (Amāvasāya))</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ujjain</td>
<td>Vaiśākha</td>
<td>Saturn in Libra (Tulā), Sun and Moon in Taurus on the new moon day</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Kumbha Melā fell strictly according to the cycle of Jupiter, which is 11.86 years, the retrograde movement taking it one house further every eighty-four years. Thus, the Haridvār, Prayāg, Ujjain and Nāsik Kumbha 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 melās 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 melās 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 Kumbha 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 (Kumbhā) and the Sun is in Aries. Hazra (1940:132) believes that this section of the Purāṇa is “comparatively late” (post 1000). The Khulāst-ut-Tawārīkh (34b), a description of India under Aurangzeb, written between 1693 and 1695, informs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Haridvār</th>
<th>Prayāg</th>
<th>Ujjain</th>
<th>Nāsik</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1915</td>
<td>1906</td>
<td>1945</td>
<td>1932</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1927</td>
<td>1918</td>
<td>1957</td>
<td>1944</td>
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<td>1938</td>
<td>1929</td>
<td>1968</td>
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<td>1950</td>
<td>1941</td>
<td>1980</td>
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<td>1986</td>
<td>1977</td>
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<td>2003</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>1998</td>
<td>1989</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2001</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

There was a dispute over this in 1956/7 and again in 1968/9 at the Simhāṣṭa Melā at Ujjain (Śarma 1980:10). On both occasions, the dandaśa, Saṅkarācāryas and others attended, but the melā was boycotted by the nāgā akhādās, 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 Prayag Kumbha Melā’s should be held, the Saṁnyāśī 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 sadhu-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-s, 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 akhādās, but is not attended by the Daśanāmī-Saṁnyāśīs.

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-s being the twelve-yearly Mahāmaṁ Mahām Melā at Kumbakonam, by the Kaverī river. This single-day festival is referred to as the Mahā Melā of the south, the last being held on the full-moon of March 1st 1980 when around 2 million people attended. It is celebrated when Jupiter is in transit across Leo, and the moon is conjunct with the constellation Mahām (?), when the sun is in Aquarius (Kumbhā). The mythology surrounding the festival involves nectar oozing from a pot into a linga of sand made by Śiva (see Subramaniam, 1980).
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 Haridvär (Rai 1993b:64). The text also mentions a yearly mela at Allahabad (Prayag). Although a yearly festival at Haridvär,36 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 amāvāsyā,39 the fifteenth day of the dark half of the month. The Anuśāsanaparvan of the Mahābhārata38 states that he who bathes with a restrained mind, observing strict vows, at Prayāga in the month Māgha is cleansed of all sins and attains heaven. Perhaps the earliest unequivocal reference to a congregation of people at Prayāga during Māgha occurs in the Narasimha Purāṇa (1.1.24), a text dated by Hazra (1958:242) between 400–500. Another early historical record of a large gathering of ascetics at any of the sites may be found in the account by Hsüan 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 Hsüan Tsang says is “age-old”. Bathing in the river washes away 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 Prayāga.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, dān kṣetra.34 Hsüan Tsang was in the company of King Harṣa Vardhana, the ruler of Kanauj, who was attending the sixth, five-yearly assembly of the Buddhist saṅgha. Harṣa attended every five years, holding

36 According to the Ā-īn-i-Akbar (3.9), at Haridvär (Māyā) large numbers of pilgrims assemble on the 10th of the month of Caitra (March/April).
37 The Prayāga Māhātmya Satādhvāyī recommends bathing there, and describes the benefits thereof. The Mātasya Purāṇa is the earliest Purāṇa containing this Māhātmya, which appears subsequently in the Padma and other Purāṇa-s. Besides the Mātasya (108.8; 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).
38 MBh XIII, 26.36.
39 Or Huien Tsang/Hwen-Thsang/Yuan Chwang.
40 See Beal (1864:230–234); Watters (1904:361–365); Cunningham (1963:327–329).
41 See Kane (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 saṅgam was a popular means of suicide (Bonazzoli 1977:144).
42 The area is still so called, and pilgrims still receive alms there during melās.
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 (Vol.II, 1990:76) 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 tirtha. Manucci also mentions that those who bathe must each pay six and a quarter rupees 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 Ār-īn-i-Akbarī (3.9) (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 takīrs—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). Mediaeval commentators such as Lakshmīdhara (late 11th–12th cent.) and Vācasspati Mīra (c. 9th–10th cent.), refer to the efficacy of māgha-snāna at Prayāga, as does Tulsidas (1532–1623) in the Rāmcaritmānas (Dey 1998:66).

Regarding Ujjain, 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 Gomati-tirtha—when the Sun and Jupiter are in Leo (Simha). The Brahma Purāṇa (152.38–39; 175.83–84) refers to this event as the Simhasta Melā. There is a temple at Rāmghāt, on the Godāvarī at Nāsik, that 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 melās at the respective sites, as previously noted, the linkage between the

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35 A small fortune at the time.
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 reference for the information.
sites is not evident in the epics or Purāṇas. Bonazzoli (1997:117) believes that the Kumbha Mela (or Kumbha Parva) 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 ṛāśi and that the traditional bath at Prayāga for Makar Saṅkrānti may have developed into the Prayāga Kumbha Parva. The name was applied to the other large festivals, even though no celestial body was in Kumbha ṛāśi at the time of their occurrence.

It is apparent that the current Kumbha Mela at Prayāg and the other three sites is a continuation of an ancient gathering of ascetics in those places, but Maclean's (2001; 2002) studies of the origins of the Kumbha Mela provides substantive evidence that the legend of the four sites and the astrological determinants may have been instituted around the middle of the nineteenth century. From Maclean's (2002:11–13) 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 ardha or 'full' Kumbha Melā.

The main agents behind the transformation of the site of the Māgh Mela into a site for one of the Kumbha Mela seem to have been the panḍās of Prayāg, the Pragvāls (prāyāg-vālās) (Maclean 2001:7–11), 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

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38 See also Ali (1983)
39 See also Bhattacharya (1977:7); Rai (1992:53–56).
40 The festival of Śivarātri, celebrated all over India and Hindu Nepal, and is another festival attended by many śaiva sadhus in śaiva holy places, including Pāṣpatināth in Kathmandu. Although there are references to the mythology of the Śivarātri in several Purāṇas (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 (Axel 1996:326).
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 Mela at Prayāg is referred to as a yearly event. The first mention that Maclean (2001:13–16) has been able to find in any document of a Kumbha 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 Kumbha Melā.
42 Panḍās 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.
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 exorbitant tax (one rupee per pilgrim) levied by the British antagonised the Pragvāls, as impoverished pilgrims would have less money to give to them (Maclean 2002:9). 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 to profit from the melā, taxing traders, barbers and others providing services. This was a source of increasing tension between the British and 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 mahants, samnyāsīs 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 Kumbha Melā, 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 akhāḍās. The only great arenas remaining for displays of the power and religious prestige of samnyāsīs and akhāḍās, and for the collection of alms and donations, were the Kumbha 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 melās could not have but furthered samnyāśīs’ economic and religious agendas.
APPENDIX 4

Catuḥ-sampradāya-s: the four vaishnava orders

The current formation of the catuḥ-sampradāya-s (as detailed in Ch. 2.1) does not correspond to the formation to be found in the important Rāmānandī hagiographical text, Bhaktamāla, by Nābhādāsa (Nābhā-ji), written at the behest of Agra Dāsa (disciple of Payahārī Kṛṣṇa Dāsa, who was a disciple of Rāmānanda) in the late sixteenth or early seventeenth century. In the Bhaktamāla (v. 28, l. 1–5), the four sampradāya-s are attributed to Rāmānuja, Viṣṇusvāmī, Nimbārkiya and Madhvacārya. Instead of the Rāmānandī sampradāya, the Viṣṇusvāmī is listed as one of the four sampradāya-s (see Pollet 1963:74, 168); it is now defunct. The Viṣṇusvāmīs (Rudra sampradāya) were almost entirely absorbed into the newer Vallabha-cāryi order (Gokulāstha sampradāya).

Van der Veer’s (1998:110) account of the current relationship between the ‘Tyāgīs’, ‘Mahātyāgīs’ and the Terah/Barah Bhāīs is slightly inaccurate, as it is based on earlier accounts of the catuḥ sampradāya-s as found in the Bhaktamāla. A link between the Gaudiya lineage of Caitanya (1486–1533) and the Madhva sampradāya seems to have been established only in the eighteenth century, by Bāladeva Vidyabhusana (Dimock 1963:106). For an interpretation of the conflict between the Rāmānandīs and the Rāmānujīs, which first began in 1918 and led to the most recent reclassification of the catuḥ sampradāya, see Pinch (1998).

The catuḥ sampradāya-s were organised into systems of dvāra-s, anīs and akhāda-s under the leadership of Bābā Abhay Rām Dās in 1720, according to Sharma (1998:128–135). However, Thiel-Horstmann believes the organisation took place in two steps during four successive conferences, in: Vṛndāvana (c.1713); Brahmāpurī (Japur) (c.1726); Jaipur (1734); and Galta (east of Jaipur) (1756). It was Bālānand who probably organised the army of nāgā-s (Rāmdāl/), for service to Madho Singh, regent of Jaipur. The 52 dvāra-s (‘door’/’gate’) or gada-s—which are essentially lineages—are assigned to places throughout India and mirror not only the 52 madhy-s of the Daśanāmī akhāda-s (see Ch. 3.2), but also the 52 phonemes of the Sanskrit alphabet, the 52 śākta-pīthas, and the legendary 52 clans of kṣatriya-s of Maharashtra.³ The four sampradāya-s each comprise several of the 52 dvāra-s: Rāmānandī (36); Nimbārki (10); Madhva (3);

¹ According to Pollet (1963:11); between 1595 and 1624; according to Varma (1977:5): 1585; according to Snell (1991:12); possibly before 1585.
³ “52 varnas and 18 jātis” was a standard expression for describing the entire class structure of Maharashtra in the late eighteenth century; see Wagle (1997:143).
Viṣṇusvāmī (3). This constitutes one of the three levels of organisation of the *vaishnava* orders. Another level of organisation is the system of *anīs* and *akhādās* (which does not directly correspond to the *akhādās* of the Daśanamīs). The three *anīs* of the Rāmānandī *sampradāya* are subdivided into eight *akhādās*: Nirmohi (3); Digambar (2); Nirvāṇī (3). The eight *akhādās* are further sub-divided into eighteen sections. The Dādū *panth* also has an *akhādā* (see Thiel-Horstmann 1991) which joins the Nirmohi *anī* for bathing at Kumbha Melās. The *catuḥ-sampradāyas*, which meet at the Kumbha Melā, have an administrative body, the Akhil Bhāratī Khālsā, which oversees 412 sub-branches known as *khālsās*, a system not more than 150 years old. This is a third level of organisation.
APPENDIX 5

A resumé of the founding and constitution of the Sikh-related akhādās

The Udāsin (Udāsīn/Udāsī) and Nirmala akhādās revere the Guru Granth Sahib, the Sikh text that occupies a central place in all gurdvāra-s. The tutelary deity of both Udāsin akhādās is Candra Bhagvān (believed to be an incarnation of Śiva), who was Śrī Cand, the eldest of the two sons of Guru Nānak (1469–1539). Upon Nanak’s demise, the leadership of the Sikhs passed to Guru Aṅgad, and not to his son. According to Udāsin tradition (Singh 1951:59–64), Śrī Cand was initiated by Nanak and founded the Udāsins. Although Śrī Cand is not recognised as a guru within the Sikh guru-parampara, 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), and who founded four dhūns (dhūān) in 1636, which are the four divisions of the Bada (‘large’) Udāsin akhādā. They are:

1. Balu Hasna; 2. Phul Sahib (or Mīān Sahib); 3. Almast; 4. Bhagat Bhagvān (or Gonda).

According to one account (Singh 1951:64), Mīān Sahib and Bhagat Bhagvān (=Bhagat Gir, a samnyāsī) did not found dhūāns, but missionary centres, known as bhaksīs. The Chota (‘small’) Udāsin akhādā was founded by Bhai Pheru, supposedly with the permission of Guru Gobind Singh (1666–1708), who is also believed to have founded the Nirmala akhādā (Ahuja 1994). However, Oberoi (1997:124–127) questions the antiquity of the Nirmalas, 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.
APPENDIX 6

Recorded conflicts between the akhādās

In this section, some of the recorded conflicts between various akhādās are presented, to illustrate the sectarian nature of the conflicts, the probable economic causes in some instances, and the ferocity of some of the encounters.

Prior to the twentieth century, there were several occasions when fights between samnyāsīs were recorded; and during melās there were occasionally pitched battles between the akhādās over bathing precedence. Perhaps the earliest record of a fight between identifiable akhādās is that of Abu-I-Fazl, who records (1972:422–424) how, on one occasion, during the latter part of the sixteenth century, emperor Akbar was camped at Thānesar (Sthānvīśvara), near Kurukṣetra, at the time of the melā there.¹ A fight ensued between the Pufī and Kur (or Gur, Giri?) samnyāsīs over occupation of an area by the lake, particularly suitable for the collection of alms from pilgrims. The Pufīs, 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 Pufīs were few in number, Akbar enlisted the assistance of some other tribes² on behalf of the Pufīs who routed the Kurs, slaying their leader (pir), 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 Bairagīs (also referred to as ‘Mundīs’) and ‘Sanyāsīs’ is described. According to the account, the samnyāsīs were victorious and killed a great number of Mundīs. The Mundīs threw away the rosaries of tuṣi 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 ‘Sanyāsīs’ and

¹ The same incident is referred to slightly differently by Al-Badāoni (1986 Vol. 2:94–95), who describes the two parties of combatants as “Jogī-s” and “Sannyāsī-s”, 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 “Sannyāsī-s” (numbering around 300), against the “Jogīs” (numbering more than 500). Many were slain on both sides, but the samnyāsīs were victorious. Akbar’s son Jahāngīr is also said to have witnessed a battle between Udāsīn and Vairāgī sādhus over bathing at the melā (Pufī 2001:181).

² These tribes are recorded as the Petamcahā (unknown to commentators) and the Cirūs, a wild tribe from Mirzāpūr.
In 1760 Bairágis and Saṃnyāsīs fought pitched battles in Haridvār over bathing precedence, with 1,800 dead, the Saṃnyāsīs again being victorious (Russell 1916, Vol.3:152; Nevill 1909a:254). In that year the British took control of the Haridvār area, and the Bairágis were then reportedly banned from the Haridvār melā for forty years (Lochtefeld 1994:597). The dominance of the saiva gosain-s 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 Ṭāhir Ṭāhir (Pinch 1997:10). The dominance of the saiva gosain-s 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 Śrīngar (Hardwicke 1801:309–347). They attended Makar Saṅkrānti, 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 “Sannyassees”) 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 Marāṭhas who were governing the region at that time. Wielding swords, they had effectively silenced all opposition to their regime, including that of the rival Bairágis. 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 Gosains took down the flag and plundered the Sikh party. The Sikhs sent a lawyer to the mahants, 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 Bairágis, Saṃnyāsīs and nāgā-s. 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 Rādhāmohandāsji of Nāsil (Ghurye 1964:177), a great massacre of Bairágis by saiva samnyāsī-s took place at the Śrīṁhasta Melā at Nāsil in 1690. Both sects were bathing at

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3 The samnyāsī-s had assembled at a Hindu pilgrimage site (unspecifed), when an army of naked Jelāfs and Madārs (sects of Sūfs) arrived, bringing a cow that they wished to slaughter. To avert the slaughter, the samnyāsī-s bought the cow. However, the Sūfs brought a second cow, which was also purchased. A third cow was brought, and killed, engendering a battle in which 700 Sūfs died. The boys amongst the ‘fanatics’ were taken prisoner and educated “in their own religion” by the samnyāsī-s.

4 See Chapter 7.4

5 Pinch (1997:11) comments 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.
the same place, Chakrāṭīrtha, and subsequently an arrangement was made whereby at the *mela* of 1702, the two orders bathed at different places—the Śaṅnyāsīs at Tryambaka Kuśavarta and the Bairāgīs at Rāmakunda—an arrangement that still continues. This incident, if true, may have been an important impetus for the organisation of the Bairāgi *akhaḍa*.

At the Simhasta Melā at Ujjain in 1789 a dispute between Śaṅnyāsīs and Bairāgīs led to intense fighting. The Peshwa eventually ruled that the two orders should bathe at separate places (Burghart 1983:374). However, at the *mela* in 1826, another battle ensued between the two sects. The Bairāgīs, assisted by the Marāṭhas, slaughtered many of the Śaṅnyāsīs and plundered their temples and monasteries in the vicinity of the city (Pinch 1997:11). 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 Bairāgīs were separated from the Śaṅnyāsīs, who were instructed to bathe earlier than the Bairāgīs, 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 (Pinch 1997:11).

It appears that the order of bathing for the *akhaḍas* was fixed first in Haridvār, and then subsequently in Allahabad in 1870 (Maclean 2002:15). Eventually, an agreement was signed with the British in 1906 (Nandan 2002:58), which is still adhered to. While there are records—particularly in the eighteenth century—of conflicts at Haridvār, Ujjain and Nāsik, there is no record in any account of any significant confrontation at Allahabad. Given the strategic importance of the Allahabad fort—adjacent to the *sārangam*—which was first garrisoned by British troops in 1765, if there had been any serious conflict there, it would no doubt have been recorded in a British report. Maclean (2002:22–23) suggests that the reason for the absence of conflict at Allahabad may have been that the Haridvār *mela* was a larger commercial market than Allahabad for trader-*sādhus*, and that dominance of trade and taxation by one sect or another led to bathing privileges. 

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7 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 Šāh Alām), the fort was occupied by British troops to protect the emperor. After its cession by Šādat Ali to the British in February 1798, the fort became, briefly, in 1832, the capital of the North-West Provinces (Maclean 2001:142–144).
8 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.
By contrast, Allahabad was a smaller commercial fair, and it was the *navāb*-s and then the British, and not *sādhus*, who taxed pilgrims. In 1938, the Uttar Pradesh State Legislature gave legal sanction for government participation in funding and overseeing the two Kumbha Melās in the state, at Prāyag and Haridvār. After Indian Independence, the U.P. government developed more permanent rules for the financial support and administration of both the Kumbha and Ādhā Kumbha Melās (Lamb 1999:196).

Despite control over bathing priorities, there are still occasions of disturbance. Low (1906:193–210), visiting the Kumbha Melā at Prayāga in 1906, records that the most turbulent of the attending sects and *akhādā*-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 Daśānāmīs over bathing priorities.

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

At Prayāga and Ujjain:
- first, *Mahānirvāṇī* with Aṭāl.
- second, *Nīrāṇjaṇī* with Āvahan, Jūnā with Ānand.
- third, *Nirmohī, Digambara* and *Nīrvaṇī* (the three Rāmnandī/Bairāgī *akhādā*-s)
- fourth, *Chotā Udasīn*.
- fifth, *Bārā Udasīn*.
- sixth, *Nirmala*.

At Haridvār and Nāsik:
- first, Jūnā, Nīrāṇjaṇī, Ānand and Āvahan.
- second, *Mahanirvāṇī* and Aṭāl.
- third, fourth, fifth and sixth, as above.
APPENDIX 7
Subdivisions within the Daśanāmī akhādās: madhīs and dāva-s

1. In the Mathēsvār Dharma Paddhati, an oral tradition has been recorded (Sadananda Giri, 1976:19), in which there is a list of 53 mathās, which are as follows:


2. Sadananda Giri (1976:21), Sinha and Sarasvati (1978:263), and Purī (2001:53–76) present somewhat inconsistent accounts of the formation of the eight dāva-s, comprising the madhīs. According to Sadananda Giri, they are:

   5. Saṃjñanāthī.

   8. Brahmanāthī (Elder).


   10. Ratannāthī.


4. Padmanāth Bhāratī.

In this scheme, the Puff, Bharatī, Sarasvatī, Tṛthā, Āśrama, Vana and Aranya samnyāśas belong to Dāvā groups E, F, G and H.

3. According to the Daś nām vans vīkṣa, a short text Hindi circulated amongst Daśnāmī initiates, the madhīs are constituted as follows (see also Purī 2001:57–85):

4 madhīs of the Bhāratīs: Viśva Bhāratī, Nṛsiṃh Bhāratī, Bāl Viśvamnātha Man Maheśa Bhāratī, Manmukunda Bhāratī.

4 madhīs of Van(a)s: Simhasan Van, Bhaṇḍārī Van, Sāropārā Van, Totārā Van.


13 madhīs of GIRIS: Meghnāthī, Baikuṇṭhānāthī, Bhāvnāthī, Jñānānāthī, Śītaḷānāthī, Viśvanāthī, Harivānāthī, Durgānāthī, Pramathnāthī, Bholānāthī, Saheśvānāthī, Rddhnāthī.

14 madhīs of GIRIS: Āparnānāthī, Prabhānānāthī, Bādalanāthī, Aumkārīnānāthī, Rudranāthī, Sāgarrnāthī, Nāmendranāthī, Bodhnāthī, Kumustnāthī, Ratannāthī, Molānāthī, Maheśvanāthī, Modunāthī, Rāmanāthī.

4. In the sources of the Mahānirvānī akhāḍā, used by Sarkar (1958:58–59), 52 madhīs are listed in the six groups, with the following divisions:


F. Lāmā. (The Lāmā madhyā/khaḍā has an uncertain status. According to Sadānanda Gīri (p. 19), nāgās believe that the Lāmā madhyā, which in some lists is the fifty-third madhyā, is included in the Gīri dāvā.)
APPENDIX 8

Summary of rules for renunciates in:
1. Dharmasūtra-s, Samnyāsa Upaniṣad-s and mediaeval texts on renunciation;
2. Oman (1903), Rose (1914), Sadananda Giri (1976), Puri (2001).

1. The earliest substantial Brahmanical accounts of rules for the renunciate to obey are to found in the Dharmasūtra-s, rules that are repeated, often in modified form, in many of the Dharmasāstra-s,1 the Samnyāsa Upaniṣad-s2 and mediaeval texts on renunciation, which frequently cite the Samnyāsa Upaniṣad-s as authoritative. According to Baudhāyana (2.17.42—2.18.27),3 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.4 In the Samnyāsa 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 a little food from many houses. Another method is to undertake the ‘python vow’ (aḷagaravratā), waiting

1 See Dutta (1987 [1906]): Yājñavalkya-samhitā (Vol. 1:56–66); Hārīta-samhitā (Vol. 1, ch. 6:1–23); Uṣanā-samhitā (Vol. 1:29–31). The Śatikha-samhitā (Vol. 3:7.1–32) also mentions three of the limbs of classical yoga; dhāraṇā, pratyāhāra and dhyāna. The overall cosmology centres on Viṣṇu (or Vasudeva), the all pervading.

2 See Olivelle (1992). Most of the Samnyāsa 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).

3 Similar prescriptions are given by Āpastamba (2.21.7–2.23.2) and Gautama (3.11–3.35). Vasistha (9.1–10.23) 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 participating 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 Pāṣupatas (see Kaundinya's comm., tr. Haripada Chakraborty, on Pāṣupata 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).

for food to come. The highest types of renouncers forego their begging bowls and eat
directly from their hands (pāṇīpātrīn), or the ground (udarapātrīn), as would an animal.

Four kinds of ascetics (kūṭācāka/kūṭācara, bahūdaka, hāṃsa, paramahamsā) are
explained in many texts, arranged—with minor modifications and inconsistencies—in a
hierarchy of 'detachment'. They are to be found in the Mahābhārata (Anuśāsanaparvan
(13).129.29), Viṣṇu Śrīmāta(4.11), Skanda Purāṇa, Saṃnyāsa Upaniṣads and many of
the mediaeval texts on renunciation. This four-fold classification is also referred to by
modern commentators on the Daśanāmī tradition. The four kinds of renouncer are graded

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1. Kūṭācāka; lives in a hut (kūṭi), wears saffron-coloured clothes, has a triple staff (tridanda) 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 tridanda, wear the sacred thread, recite the Gāyatrī
   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. Hāṃsa; 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. Paramahamsa; has attained knowledge and regard 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.

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8. See Āśrama Upaniṣad (the earliest of the Saṃnyāsa Upaniṣads, dated to around the third century CE)
   and Bhikṣuka Upaniṣad. In the Nāradaparvājaka Upaniṣad (vv. 174-175) several classificatory schemes
   are provided, including a six-fold scheme that includes the turyātittā and avadhūta, which, as Oliveville noted
   (1892:99), 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: kūṭācākas to the atmospheric world; bahūdakas to
   the heavenly world; hāṃsās to the Penance-world; and paramahamsās to the Truth-world. There is also a
discussion (vv. 204-205) of the relative frequency of shaving, eating and bathing, 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 kūṭācāka and bahūdaka, shave, bathe and eat more frequently than the higher kinds. The
highest kind, the avadhūta, obtains his food "like a python", does not shave nor does he apply any sign or
mark.
9. See the twelfth-century Yatīdharmasamuccaya (5.7); the Pārāśaramadhaviya and Jīvanmuktiveka attributed
to Vidyāranya; the seventeenth-century Yatīdharmaprabhāsa (4.1-113) by Vāsudevārāma. Vāsudevārāma cites several sources on classes of renouncers, including Vidyāranya's Jīvanmuktiveka,
the Skanda Purāṇa and the Yatīdharmasamuccaya. Kane (HDS Vol. 2: 939) notes that the four kinds of
ascetics to be found in the Mahābhārata, Sūta Saṃhitā (Mānayoṣkhaṇḍa ch.6), Bhikṣuka Upaniṣad and
Vaikhānasadharmaśāstra (8.9) are not consistently categorised, and that the categorisation in the latter text
is probably the oldest.
10. See, for example, Purī (2001:32-33).
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 Daśanāmī 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’ *viśiṣṭādvaśta* 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 *Sāṃyāsa Upaniṣads* it is explained that the top-knot and sacrificial thread were in fact retained despite renunciation, albeit symbolically.

Commenting on the different and conflicting classifications of renouncers to be found in the *Sāṃyāsa Upaniṣads*, Olivelle (1992:100) remarks that, “[they] point to the original variety of ascetic life-styles that...were conflated into the single institution of *sāṃyāsa* by Brāhmaṇic theology.” However, the Brahmanical concept of *sāṃyāsa*—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

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11 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 *Jābali Upaniṣad* (v. 6) adds that they “keep their conduct concealed, and... although they are sane, behave like madmen”.

12 Thus, for example, in the *Nāradaparvānīka Upaniṣad* (vv. 152–153), in response to the question as to how a man can be a Brahman when he has no sacrificial 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.
2. 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 samnyāśīs 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 kutišaka); 5. Not stay in one place more than a few days (except the kutišaka); 6. Sleep on the ground; 7. Not salute, or speak well or ill of anyone; 8. Bow only to Samnyāśīs 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-samnyāśīs: 1. Accept that all property belongs to the community; 2. Abstain from all narcotics; 3. Do not go to other akhāḍas; 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.

Pūrī (2001:149) provides rules and prohibitions (paraphrased below from the Hindi text) for mahānt-s and thānāpats of the Mahānirvāṇī akhāḍa. They will lose their power and office should they: 1. Misuse or destroy any of the moveable or unmoveable property of the akhāḍa, or use such for the benefit of any other than the akhāḍa; 2. Incur debt for the akhāḍa 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, Pūrī states some miscellaneous rules concerning the recording of the names of mahānt-s and
thanapatis at the headquarters at Allahabad, and their duties in the akhāḍā.
1. According to Baudhāyana (II.17.1-II.18.27), the procedures, in summary, are as follows:

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..." This last act of sacrifice is highly significant, being one of the central motifs within the complex of ideas concerning renunciation in the Brahmanical world: the external fires become internalised, as the renouncer's breath. Then, standing within the sacrificial area, he recites, three times softly and three times aloud: "Om Earth, Atmosphere, Sky! I have renounced! I have renounced! I have renounced!" (the prāsa mantra). Filling his cupped hands with water, he pours it out, saying: "I give safety to all creatures!" He takes the

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1 See Olivelle (1999:203–209) for a translation of the text.
2 RV III.62.10, also known as "entry into sāvitrī" or the gāyatrī mantra. "Om Earth! I enter Sāvitrī. That excellent [glory] of Sāvitrī. Om Atmosphere! I enter Sāvitrī. The glory of god we meditate. Om Sky! I enter Sāvitrī. 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 (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 gāyatrī mantra in contemporary Hinduism.
3 In most sources the internalised fires are identified with the breath or with the five breaths, but in the Āruni Upaniṣad (2) the external fires are deposited in the stomach and the 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.
4 The prāsa is the technical term for the mantra 'I have renounced', and constitutes an essential feature of the renunciatory rite. Olivelle translates it as 'Call'. Prāsa 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).
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. Entering the water, he controls his breath sixteen times while reciting the Aghamārṣaṇa 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.

2. According to Vāsudevāśrama, renunciation procedures are as follows:


5 The Surabhimati, Ablinga, Vārunī, Hiraṇyavānma and Pāvamāni verses.
6 See Olivelle (1976; 1977) for the full text. See Olivello (1977:38) for this resumé.
intention to renounce; (iv) makes an offering of water; (v) discards the sacrificial thread; (vi) plucks the hair of the top-knot; (vii) declares the ṭrāṣaṇa; (viii) gives the gift of safety to all creatures. 18. Either commits suicide (17.1-32; 21.115), or 19. Takes possession of the articles needed by the renouncer (18.1-13; 21.116-128). 20. Places himself under the guidance of a guru (19.1-53; 21.129-160).
APPENDIX 10

The date of Śaṅkara

Some of the more useful evidence concerning Śaṅkara’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 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 Gaudapāda, who may be dated to not later than 500–570 CE. Śaṅkara quotes from the Gaudapāda/Gaudapādiya (Māṇḍūkya)-kārikā (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 Gaudapāda-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 Gaudapāda. Śaṅkara’s understanding of Gaudapāda 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

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1 Three Buddhist scholars (Bhavya, Śāntarākṣita and Kamalaśīla) quote from Gaudapāda’s Māṇḍūkya-kārikā (Kunjunni Raja 1960:131; 1991:107). Bhavya quotes him in his Mādhyamaka-hṛdaya-kārikā (8.13), but Lindtner (1992:61) believes it probable that Bhavya knew but sections 1–3 of Gaudapādiya-kārikā. A date for Bhavya of approximately 500 to 570 is generally accepted (Nakamura 1983:81–86; Kunjunni Raja 1991:107; Qvarnström 1999:176). Nakamura’s dates for Śāntarākṣita (880 to 740) and Kamalaśīla (700 to 750) have been challenged (Thrasher 1979:138). Kunjunni Raja (1960:139; 1991:113) dates both Śāntarākṣita and Kamalaśīla forty-five years later: Śāntarākṣita wrote his Tattvasaṃgraha before he left for Tibet (around 763), and Kamalaśīla arrived in Tibet in 792, and died there shortly after 794.

2 Also known as Āgama-sāstra.

3 This concerns Gaudapāda’s use of the term ajñītī-samatā—one of Gaudapāda’s ‘fingerprint’ terms—which Śaṅkara understood differently to the sense intended by Gaudapāda.

4 See Aklujkar (1994:21): Śaṅkara criticises Bhartṛhari’s sphota doctrine. It is known from Punyārāja’s commentary on the Vākyapadīya (11.486) that one of Bhartṛhari’s teachers was Vसुरात्त, who was a younger contemporary of Vasubandhu, who was a teacher of Dignāga. Vasubandhu lived in the first half of the fifth century (Kunjunni Raja 1960:133).
(c.480–540)⁶ and Dharmakīrti (c.530–600⁹ or 634–673⁷). In his Upadeśasāhasrī (18.141–142), Śaṅkara quotes two verses⁸ from Dharmakīrti's Pramāṇavārttika (2.354).⁹

Sureśvara, Śaṅkara's main pupil, also cites one of these same verses from Dharmakīrti in his magnum opus, the Brhadāranyaka-bhāṣya-vārttika (4.3.476),¹⁰ and also names him (4.3.753).¹¹ 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,¹² who may have written his Bṛhaṭṭika between 630 and 640, in his old age,¹³ but Śaṅkara

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⁶ See Qvarnström (1999:178). Dignāga, in his Pramāṇasamuccaya (V), quotes two verses from Bhartṛhari's Vṛddhayādiya (II.155,158) (Lindtner 1994:200). Śaṅkara (BSB 2.2.28) quotes from Dignāga (Ālaṃbaraprakāśa, v. 6). This verse is also quoted by Kamalaśīla in his Pāṇījika, as that of Dignāga (Kunjunni Raja 1991:106).

⁷ Tārānātha, in his History of Buddhism, states that Dharmakīrti was alive during the period of King Sron-btsan-sgam-po (617–651). The Chinese pilgrim I-tsing (634–713) also mentions Dharmakīrti as Kumarīla's contemporary (Pathak 1892a, Art.VIII:90; Belvalkar 1929:211). This evidence has been cited to date Dharmakīrti to 634–673 (Nakamura 1983:76–77). Kunjunni Raja (1960:135) dates him to the early seventh century.

⁸ Dignāga's main work, the Pramāṇasamuccaya, was reworked by Dharmakīrti in his Pramāṇavārttika. When, in the BSB, Śaṅkara is attacking Vijnānavāda Buddhists, the ideas attacked—if terminology is taken into consideration—appear almost certainly to be those of Dharmakīrti (Nakamura 1983:76). There has been an attempt made by Sankaranarayanan (1995b) to suggest that some of the quotations of Dignāga and Dharmakīrti used by Śaṅkara—which have been cited above as evidence for Śaṅkara's date—are in fact from an earlier period. This would permit an earlier date for Śaṅkara, of earlier than 500 CE. However, as Kunjunni Raja (1995) observes, the arguments are weak.

⁹ A third verse (18.143), often cited in philosophical works, also appears to be a quotation of Dharmakīrti (Nakamura 1983:76).

¹⁰ This particular verse, beginning abhinno'pi hi buddhyātma..., is particularly famous and is quoted in numerous philosophical works, including Kumārila's Śīloka-vārttika and Mādhava's Sarva-dārśana-saṁgraha (2.206–207).

¹¹ Concerning an upper limit for Kumārila: firstly, his Śīloka-vārttika is quoted in the Tattva-saṁgraha of Śantaraksita (c.680–740) (Nakamura 1983:84–85). Secondly, Maheśvara, in his commentary on the Nīrūka, quotes from the Śīloka-vārttika. Maheśvara was a contemporary of Harśavīma, who wrote a commentary on the Śatapatha-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 Tattvīrya-bhāṣya) was attacking the views of Kumārila (Pathak 1892b, Art.XVI:217).
may have been a contemporary of Maṇḍanamiśra,\textsuperscript{14} whose literary activity was probably in the second half of the seventh century (Thrasher 1979:137–139).\textsuperscript{15} In conclusion, while Śaṅkara’s floruit may have been around 700 CE—around a century before the widely accepted date of 788–820—he cannot have lived much later than the beginning of the ninth century.\textsuperscript{16}

\textsuperscript{14} In his \textit{Sphota-siddhi}, Maṇḍanamiśra quotes from Dharmakīrti’s \textit{Pramāṇa-vārttika}. He also quotes fifteen times from Kumārila’s \textit{Śloka-vārttika}, and once from his \textit{Tantra-vārttika}. However, neither Maṇḍanamiśra nor Śaṅkara refer to one another, even though both held remarkably similar philosophical positions (Thrasher 1979:118–120). Maṇḍana almost certainly makes references to Śaṅkara’s BSB, and appears to have had the text before him when he wrote the \textit{Brahma-siddhi}, one of his later works (Kuppuswami Sastri 1937:xiv–xlvi; 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 \textit{Naiṣkāmya-siddhi} paraphrases or quotes from Maṇḍanamiśra’s \textit{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 was suggested (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.

\textsuperscript{15} Umbeka is not mentioned in the \textit{Taitta-samgraha} of Śantaraksita (680–740 or 725–785), but is mentioned by his disciple Kamalaśila (700–750 or 745–795) in his \textit{Pañjikā}. Umbeka, whose literary activity may have been between 760 and 790, comments on the Maṇḍanamiśra’s \textit{Bhāvanā-viveka} (Thrasher 1979:138–139).

\textsuperscript{16} Jinasena quotes Vidyānanda—another Jaina—in his \textit{Ācāryopāda}, his final work, which was written around 838. Vidyānanda, in his \textit{Aṣṭaśāli}, quotes from Sureśvara’s \textit{Brhadāraṇyaka-bhāṣya-vārttika} (Pathak 1892b, Art. XVI:224–229; Belvalkar 1929:214). At the end of Vācaspatimāra’s, the \textit{Nyāya-sucinībandha}, it is stated that it was written in 841 CE (\textit{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 \textit{ṣaṭaka} 898 (equivalent to 976 CE), but disagrees with the later date. In the \textit{Bhāmāti} (1.3.17), a commentary on the BSB, Vācaspati Miśra criticises the views of Padmapāda, referring several times to his \textit{Paññopādikā} (Belvalkar 1929:214; Kunjunni Raja 1960:145).
APPENDIX 11

Initiation of kings by rāja-gurus (600–1200)

Vikramāditya I of the Cālukya dynasty of Bādami had as many as three śaiva preceptors, the first, Śrī Sudarśanācārya, performing the śiva maṇḍala dīkṣā, 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 Pañḍita Deva, was rāja-guru of the Western Cālukya, (Jaya) Śimha Deva. Sarveśvaraśakti Deva—an ācārya of seventy-seven temples—was rāja-guru of another Cālukyan monarch, Someśvara Deva, in 1070. In 1129 Someśvara Deva Bhūlokamalla made a grant to the rāja-guru, Vamaśakti Pañḍita, the greatest of the Kālāmukha gurus, who also received a grant, in 1156, from the Bijjana Devarasa of the Kālācuriyas, 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 1191, that Kriyaśakti Deva was also the rāja-guru of the Hoysala ruler Narasimha Deva. The rāja-gurus of the Hoysalas seem to have come from Āsandī-nāḍ, where there were five mathās, 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).

Coḷa regents, from Rājarāja to Kulottunga (c.1000–1200), were initiated by a long line of Śaiva-Siddhantin ācāryas, many of whom came from north or central India (Laṭa, Gauḍa and Madhya regions). Their 'surnames' were all -śiva (and often -śiva-pañḍita); they were authors of a number of texts (Rajamanickam 1964:228–231; Nagaswamy 1998).

King Devendravarmanā of the eastern Ganga dynasty was initiated into Śaivism by Pataṅgaśivācārya, who received a village as daksīnā. The Kālāmukha, Vidyēśvara, was acknowledged as the preceptor of the eastern Cālukya, Amma II (Vijayāditya VI), who donated four villages to his sect. Kumāra Svāmī was the preceptor of another regent of the eastern Cālukyas, Yuddhamalla II, who built a monastery for the exclusive use of śaiva monks and preceptors.

The preceptor of the Cēḍī king, Yuvarājadeva, was Sadbhāva Śambhū, who received a large province as bhikṣā ('charitable donation'). King Gaṇapatiḍeva of the
Kācatīya dynasty was ordained by his preceptor, Viśveśvara Śambhū (Saletore 1935; Nandi 1973:101–102; Settar 1999). The eastern Cālukyas were also, from the beginning and throughout their rule, active patrons of Jainism. The early Kācatīyas, based in Warangal, supported Jainism at the beginning of their reign (Desai 1957:19–22).
The military campaigns of nāgā samnyāśīs under the command of Rajendra Giri Gosain (d.1753), and his celās, the brothers Anūp Giri Gosain (Himmat Bahādūr) (1730–1804) and Umrao Giri Gosain (b.1734),

The gosain-s, Rajendra Giri, Anūp Giri, Umrao Giri, and their nāgā samnyāśī 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, vazīr (‘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 Rājendra Giri. In league with the Afghans, the nāgā-s also fought the Marathas. 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, nāgā-s 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 Jawahīr 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 Marāthā, Ragunāth 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

1 The Mughals also supported Rāmānandī nāgā-s at Ayodhya. Satdar Jang granted seven bighās of land at Hanuman hill to Abhāy Rām Dās, the abbot of the Nirvānī akhādā. During the reign of Shuja’s successor, Asaf ud-Daulah (r.1776–1793) funds were raised to construct part of the fortress-like building to be found at this site. It seems that originally the Nāthas and then the Daśānāmīs were the former occupants of the hill. The Daśānāmīs also used to dominate Ayodhya, but were evicted from Ayodhya (except for the Siddhigiri mathā, and the hill, then occupied by the Jūnā. akhādā. Rāmānandī forces were led by Abhāy Rām Dās (van der Veer 1988:143–147). All Mughal emperors, from Akbar to Šāh 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. Šāh Ālam II was highly influenced by the charisma and yogic powers of Mastnāth (White 2001:8, 15).

2 Politically expedient ‘religious syncretism’ on the part of regents and power-brokers during this period was not uncommon (see Bayly 1985:177–191).

3 In one campaign the Afghans, under Ahmad Šāh Abdali, attacked the holy shrine of Gokul, near Mathura. Four thousand nāgā samnyāśīs and bairagīs defended the shrine, but two thousand of them were slain (Sarkar 1958:154).
Maratha, Gopal Rao, the two gosain-s were employed as high commanders who held the power of dastkhāt (‘signature’), entitling them to 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 Maratha Ali Bahādur, who eventually conquered Bundelkhand with the assistance of Anūp Giri’s forces, for which he was rewarded with 1,300,000 Rs. (Bhalla 1944:133).

The Treaty of Bassein, signed in 1802, ceded large parts of Bundelkhand from the Marathas to the British. In 1803 Anūp Giri and his forces at first united with the Marathas 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 Maratha chief, Shamsher Bahādur (son and successor of Ali Bahādur), other warlords and Bundela chieftans (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 Kaipi (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. Anūp Giri had a son, Narinder Giri, but he did not inherit his father’s estate (Bhalla 1944:135).

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4 In battle against the Marathas in 1787, śatavā nāgā gosain-s under Anūp Giri fought alongside another army of nāgā-s, including five thousand musketeers, under the vaiṣpava bairāgi commander, Bālanānanda, who was in service to the Maharājā of Jaipur, who had up to 10,000 nāgā-s in his army (Bhalla 1944:130–134; Sarkar 1958:226–252; Chandra 1977:21).

6 These were Mirza Najaf Khān (who seized Delhi in 1773); the Maratha, Madhāv Rao Scindia (from 1784); and Šāh Alam II. Anūp was in charge of the defense of the city during the two latter regimes.

7 In 1791 Anūp Giri placed local Rājpūts and others under the command of a Dutch colonel, John Mieselbach (Sarkar 1958:265).

8 According to Sarkar (1958:205), Anūp Giri’s son was Kumār Gangā 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).


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