

Bhattacharakas & The Development Of A Medieval Pilgrimage Site: Study Based On Idol Inscriptions From Ukhalad, District Parbani, Maharashtra

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ABSTRACT

Scholarship on Digambara Jainism and medieval pilgrimage centers has generally viewed Tirthas in terms of their restoration or development by the Bhattacharakas in the form of Matha institutions. However, the objective of this paper is to argue that sometimes pilgrimage centers were developed by Bhattacharakas, without Mathas, cutting across lineages through the intervention of Jain lay patrons where the consecration of Jina images was a central component. It thus, examines a prominent historiographical view-point advanced by Michael Carrithers of Bhattacharakas as '**Caste Gurus**' and as '**Routine Leaders**' in Medieval Deccan. In support of my argument, the paper studies the corpus of idol inscriptions from Ukhalad, district Parbani, Maharashtra contained in Jain Shilalekha Sangra of Prof Johrapurkar. These inscriptions range from the period late fifteenth to late seventeenth century. The paper attempts to study the Bhattacharaka lineages recorded in these inscriptions as well as the patrons sponsoring these image consecrations in order to suggest that there was far greater activity by the Bhattacharakas directly and indirectly through their followers in the creation of Ukhalad as a Jain pilgrimage center. The paper is divided into following sections:

- Introduction
- The meaning of pilgrimage across religious traditions;
- Medieval Jain meanings of pilgrimage (Tirthas) and the role of the Bhattacharakas, with a brief scholarly perception about these renouncers;
- Descriptions of the idol inscriptions from Ukhalad district, Parbani and the names of Bhattacharakas;
- Patrons or lay sponsors recorded in the context of idol installations;
- Concluding remarks.

Key words: Digambara Jainism, Bhattacharakas, Idol Consecrations, Ukhalad, Caste Guru.

Introduction

The site of Ukhalad is considered as an Atishaya-Kshetra by the Digambar Jains of Maharashtra, known by the name '**Navgiri**'. It comes under the district of Parbani, Maharashtra. The Purna river flows at a distance of one mile at this place. It is located about 180 km from Karanja. In the medieval times, it was located near the banks of the Purna river. However, in the modern period, the temple got destroyed at the site due to heavy flood, but the idols remained safe. These idols were brought there and then installed in ce. 1931. The Nizam government gave a plot of 10 acres for the construction of the temple.

Balbadhra Jain cites an interesting tale pertaining to the idol of Neminatha. It is said that a philosopher's stone was embedded in the toe of this idol, and the old priest used to worship the gods. He used support his livelihood with this philosopher's stone. Every day, he would turn an iron needle into gold by touching it with this stone,

and sell it to earn his living. When his death approached, he called his son and said **“Son! Lord Neminatha has a precious stone attached to the right toe of the statue every day, I used to convert iron into needle-like gold and feed you with it. You also fulfill your needs. Make gold out of it and support yourself and keep serving and worshipping god. You will never face any trouble. Remember, never be greedy.”**

After sometime, the old man died. Now his son started serving god like his father and started earning his living by making gold. After sometime, he became greedy. He started making large amounts of gold and started indulging in addictions. Suddenly, seeking his wealth and addictions, some people, complained about him to the Muslim officer of the district. The officer came to know that the reason for his wealth was the precious stone attached to the idol’s thumb. The district magistrate came here with some soldiers. As he approached the idol with the intention of taking out the gem, suddenly there was a terrible sound like an explosion and the gem came out of the idol’s and fell into the river Purna. All the soldiers and that officer became unconscious. When everyone came to their senses, the priest said to the ruler **“The philosopher’s stone has come out on its own and fallen into the Purna river. Now, you all go back.”**

The district magistrate had seen the gem going towards river through sky. He hoped that if he tried, he could get the gem. He tied iron anklets to the elephant’s leg and sent them into the river. When the elephant came out, one elephant had lost a few links of his chain. He tried hard to find the gem in the river, but could not find it. At last, he returned disappointed.¹

After the gem was taken out, the toe of the idol’s foot got broken and while it was being brought out of Ukhalad, the fingers of the hand of the idol got broken (**Figure-1**).

This story is of a modern origin because the term district magistrate is used in the story rather than a Medieval Indian term Shiqdar as it was used in the official correspondence of that time moreover it is reasonable to assume that the site was developed as a pilgrimage center of the Digambara Jain by the Bhattarakas from the 14th century. In fact, textual sources of the period mentioned the site as an important pilgrimage center. In this reference, a 17th century poet Jnansagar described this site in his pilgrimage text (**Tirthavandana**):²

**“The holy river named, Poorna has huge banks,
The village name is Ukhalad where benevolent lord Naminatha stays.
The philosopher stone in the hand’s toe is considered the essence,
The innumerable glory of the idol is described in three worlds.
The place will be known as pilgrimage in future ever,
Braham Jnansagar says, whosoever comes always attain lakhs of benefits.”**

The fact that this site was developed into a place of pilgrimage for the Digambar Jains in medieval period is also attested by the material remains which record the names of the Bhattarakas along with the Jain lay community. It seems that, the remains, have not been not been historically analyzed by Jain scholars. Therefore, this paper is a humble attempt to analyze the material remains. However, it is necessary to discuss the meaning of pilgrimage across diverse socio-religious tradition. The next section attempts to discuss this.

Meaning of pilgrimage across diverse socio-religious traditions

The sacred geography of India is dotted with centers of pilgrimage, across religions. Historically, the word pilgrimage or Tirtha entailed diverse meanings and purposes. From the early medieval period, texts on Tirthas (Mahatmyas) based on Puranic literary traditions began to be written which portrayed ancient cities and towns as sacred places of worship, along with the emergence of the temple as a significant socio-religious institution. In this context, Agehananda Bharati observes:

“Medieval and modern pilgrimage is certainly due to the Bhraman revival, and the realization of religion in the Hindu Middle Ages through its partial absorption into local, non-Bhramanic cults.” (Bharati 1963).³

In the Hindu pantheon as has been observed by Agehananda Bharati, Pilgrimage is practiced in India, keeping in mind the highly diversified motives of the pilgrims. In other words, every pilgrimage has a strictly defined purpose and scope; and the procedure is exactly prescribed, with rather little leeway for the individual’s ingenuity in matters relating to travel. The dates and times at which bathing has to be performed - the auspicious moment for the dip - are laid down in important manuals, but in practice they are fixed by the local priests and depend on various local conditions, for instance, the Mukhyasnam (the chief bathing fair) is held on the new-moon day of the month Magha (January-February) and at Hardwar on the upper Ganges at the beginning of the Hindu year (October). At both these places and at Nasik particularly important assemblies recur after six years, and after twelve years, when Jupiter enters the sign of Kumbha (Aquarius); these are the Kumbhamellas, at which Monks of all parts of India and of all orders take out a long procession, meeting the

¹ Balbadhra Jain, Bharat Ke Digambar Jain Tirth, volume-4, Rajasthan, Gujarat, and Maharashtra, Mumbai: Bharatvarshiya Digambar Jain Tirthkshetra Committee, 1978, pp. 279-281.

² For the information about this poet refer. Vidhyadhar Johrapurkar, Tirthavandan Sangraha, Solapur: Jain Samskriti Sanrakshak Sang, Solapur, 1965pp. 59-81.

³ Agehananda Bharati, Pilgrimage in the Indian tradition, history of religions, vol 3, no. 1, summer, 1963, p. 135.

lay Hindus on a large scale. In fact, these Kumbhamellas, are the one great monastic event, where the communication between the diverse monastic orders is established.

Bharati also points out that in sites of pilgrimage, a ritual specialist (mainly a Bhramana) helps the pilgrim in the performance of circumambulation by usually chanting a Mahatmya.⁴ These ritual specialists belong to caste with local variants. For instance, there are the Gangaputras (sons of the Ganges), the Chobe in Mathura, the Gayawal at Gaya and the Prayagwal at Allahabad. Their more respected counterparts are the Panda at Banaras and at other places. These, apart from showing the pilgrims around the various places of worship and instructing them what exactly to do at the various spots (i.e., what ablutions, what offerings and what sort of ritualistic movements are to be made on each individual site), enter the pilgrim's names into big ledgers, which are kept at the temples, being listed in which adds to the prestige of an individual, as well as to his descendants. The Chowbe and the Gangaputra have a somewhat dubious prestige and their occasionally ambiguous dealings with unwary pilgrims have been mentioned in ancient texts.⁵

As to Muslim pilgrimage in India, regional centers of pilgrimage has necessarily secondary prestige for a lay Muslim; he or she regards haj as a chief pilgrimage site. However, there are literally thousands of tombs and graves of Muslim saints belonging to the Sufi tradition, most of them Martyrs of the faith attracting large crowds of pilgrims.⁶ There is quite a bit of literature on Muslim centers of pilgrimage. The neighborhoods of former Muslim capital cities (Delhi, Lucknow, Agra, Lahore, Patna) is replete with such sites and they are visited by Muslims and certain low-caste Hindus. The most famous shrines visited by Muslims and low-caste Hindus are the tomb of Muinuddin Chishti at Ajmer, that of the Martyr Ghazi Miyan at Gorakhpur, Shah Madar of Makanpur. A most interesting sanctuary is that of Baba Kalandar Shah of Mysore, South India, which is visited by only high-caste Hindus, probably because it has a parallel mythological significance.⁷

Another concept that is common across religious systems in India but widespread since ancient times is the concept of pilgrimage associated with locative piety. In this form of religiousness, the place of pilgrimage is the primary focus of devotion and its traditions of rituals are usually much older than any of the particular myths and deities attached to it. In the wider Hindu tradition, these places, particularly associated with water are often called 'Tirthas', and pilgrimage to these Tirthas is one of the oldest and most prominent features of Indian religious life.⁸

Eck points out that in India, today the word Tirtha is often associated with crossing places which are places of pilgrimage and which bring the traditions of the gods and goddesses, heroes, heroines and sages to living embodiment in India's geography. Even the most famous Tirthas which attracts pilgrims across linguistic, sectarian and regional boundaries number in hundreds. In addition, there are the countless local and regional Tirthas visited regularly by pilgrims from their immediate areas. No place is too small to be counted a Tirtha by its local visitor. In a sense, each temple is a 'Tirtha', especially consecrated as a crossing place between heaven and earth.

From the forgoing discussion, it is apparent that in the Indian tradition, pilgrimage entails two meanings: one, diverse motives and fixed set of rituals and points and two, pilgrimage associated with locative piety, implying that every site be it natural habitations or rivers is considered as a pilgrimage place.

Medieval Jain meanings of pilgrimage and the role of the Bhattarakas

The previous section has discussed the meanings of pilgrimage in the context of Hindu and other socio-religious traditions. This section, will discuss the medieval means of pilgrimage and the role of the Bhattarakas, as in Jainism it was the in the early medieval and medieval period that the concept of Tirtha began to be emerged.

During the times of twenty-four Tirthankars, the concept of Tirtha was not fully developed. However, it was from the twelfth century, texts such as Nirvanakanda and Nirvanabhakti were written that sanctioned the legitimacy of the places associated with the lives of the Tirthankars as sacred.⁹

The development of sacred places of Jainism is in keeping with trends in Bhramanism. Some of the sites that were considered sacred during earlier period, developed as Tirthas or places of pilgrimage later on. A Jaina sacred place is known as '**Kshetra**', though the term Tirtha is also used, which carries more or less the same meaning as in Bhramanism. In early literature, the cities and places associated with the Tirthankaras were

⁴ *ibid.* pp. 136-138.

⁵ *ibid.* pp. 136-138.

⁶ *ibid.* pp. 141-142.

⁷ *ibid.* pp. 142.

⁸ Diana L. Eck, India's Tirthas: crossings in sacred geography, history of religions, vol. 20 no. 4 (may, 1981), pp. 323-344. The concept of locative piety has been used by one scholar in the context of early modern Hindu sectarian traditions (in this case the Swaminarayans). See, Chirayu Thakkar, Transposing Tirtha: Understanding religious reforms and locative piety in early modern Hinduism, International Journal of Dharma Studies, vol 5, no 14, (June 2017), pp. 1-20. I have not come across any work of scholar applying this concept to the Medieval Digambara Jainism.

⁹ Vidhyadhar Johrapurkar, Tirthvandan sangraha, Solapur: Jain Sanskriti Sanraksh Sangh, 1965, pp. 34-37.

considered holy, some of which evolved into Tirthas. Later on, Tirthas began to be classified into different types:

1. **Sidda-Kshetras** were the places, where the Tirthankaras or monks attained Nirvana.
2. **Atishaya-Kshetras** were the places, where the icon, the temple or the place displayed magical or extraordinary elements.
3. **Kalyanaka-Kshetras** were places associated with the Kalyanakas of the Tirthankaras, other than Nirvana, like conception, birth, renunciation and liberation.

Similarly, the commentators of the Sanskrit text, '**Nirvanabhakti**' (before fourteenth century ce) divided into two categories, viz. (a) Nirvanakshetras of the Tirthankaras and Nirvanakshetras of others. A Marathi text, '**Jambusvami Charitra**' (completed in ce. 1688) divides the centers of pilgrimage into three categories:

1. Tirthakaryabhumi
2. Munibhumi
3. Atishyabhumi

These divisions are prevalent only among Digambaras, as Shvetambaras do not make any such distinctions. (Shah, 2007).¹⁰

Interestingly enough, most of the Jaina Tirthas are associated with hills, while some were on coast or riverbanks. A number of large cities, associated with the lives of the Tirthankaras are considered holy, but the sanctity of the mountain-tops is considered higher. Today, most of the Jaina Tirthas like Samedshikhar or Parasnatha hill in Bihar, the most sacred of the Tirthas for both the sects and Shatrunjay and Girnar are mostly situated on Mountain-tops. The Jainas mostly selected very high mountains and thus, for instance, Girnar, in fact, is the highest mountain in Gujarat. This fascination of Jainas for mountains can possibly be because being an ascetic sect, Jainism preferred lonely, isolated places on mountains. Another, reason could be on self-torture in this sect. The high mountains were preferred because visit to them involved strenuous and tiring ascent, resulting in more merit. Again, the upward climb symbolizes the ascent to the highest spiritual state.

An important issue that needs to be addressed whether in medieval times, what do Jaina meanings of pilgrimage imply? Does that mean that there was a sense of locative piety prevalent among the Digambara Jains? The answer is not straight-forward. Yet, it can be argued that the compilation of pilgrimage texts in the medieval period as well as development of a distinct tradition of Bhattarakas with their subsidiary institutions (Matha and Temple) helped in fostering this idea. The Bhattaraka lineages did not develop overnight. Sedentarisation of monastic lineages began from the period ce. first to second millennium ce., what Nathuram Premi has labeled as '**Chaityavasi Tradition**' (Premi, 1956).¹¹ From the 13th century, Mathas and other regional centers as subsidiary institutions, thereby leading to the formation of the branches or sub-lineages, within the Digambar tradition. However, in Northern India, there was a sentiment amongst some sections of the Jain society by the eighteenth century against the institution of the Bhattarakas that ultimately led to the symbolic revival of fully initiated Digambar renunciators (Naked Munis).

The medieval Bhattaraka tradition has been viewed by diverse range of scholars. For instance, Vilas Sanghavi in his works depict these Bhattarakas as intermediaries as well as the protectors of Jaina culture and religion against '**Inauspicious Times**'.

He writes:

"A Bhattaraka was a well-established tradition among the Digambaras which was of sufficiently long duration and prestige. The Bhattaraka was a special type of a religious authority to meet the severe challenges created by the Muslim rulers of India. As the Muslim rulers looked down upon the practice of nudity observed by the Digambara Jain ascetics, it became extremely difficult for these sadhus or ascetics to move freely on foot in different regions according to the rules of conduct prescribed for them and to exercise their influence on the proper behaviour of the Sravakas or the lay followers of the religion. The members of Digambara Jaina community also faced disintegration due to uncertainty and insecurity prevailing at that time. In these peculiar and pressing conditions the system of Bhattarakas was slowly formed to save the religion and its followers from other destruction. A Bhattaraka was placed above the layman and below the ascetics. With a view to helping the Bhattaraka in the discharge of his duties in an orderly and in continuous manner, an organization known as the 'Matha' was also constituted."¹²

¹⁰ Viraj Shah, Medieval Jaina pilgrimage centers in Maharashtra, Deccan studies, vol. v, no. 1, 2007.

¹¹ Nathuram Premi distinguishes between the traditions of Munis (the forest-dwelling monks) as well as monks who reside in Mathas. See, Nathuram Premi, Vanvasi aur Chaityavasi, in Nathuram Premi, Jain Sahitya aur Itihas, Mumbai: Hindi Granth Karyalaya, 1956, pp. 478-495.

¹² Vilas A. Sanghavi, the Bhattaraka tradition, in T.g. Kalghatgi et al, GOMMATESVAARA COMMEMARATION VOLUME, Karnataka: Shravannabelagola Digambara Jaina Muzrai Institutions Mannaging committee, 1981, pp. 50-56.

Sangave points out that as far as the Deccan and Maharashtra is concerned, the main centres were Karanja, Nagpur, Latur, Nanded, Kolhapur, Nandani and in South India the main centres pertaining to the Bhattaraka seats were Malkhed, Sravannabelagola, Mudabidri, Karkal, Humacha, Swati, Jinakanchi.¹³

Similarly, Professor Padmanabh S. Jaini argues that the Jains have traditionally prided themselves on the austere life-styles of their mendicants. But with the acquisition of great riches by the community, the monks increasingly settled into a temple-centred existence, living under rather luxurious conditions and devoting themselves more to the external trappings of the religion than to the practices stressed by Mahavira. There even developed a special group of temple-administrator clerics who not only managed the temple and its associated holdings (schools, libraries, extensive areas of land but also assume control of the temple rituals. Thus, they gained great power over their lay disciples and excommunicated those who failed to perform the rituals (or performed contrary to their wishes as well as honouring those who did perform them. Among Digambaras, such Individuals came from the ranks of the Ksullakas and were known as the Bhattarakas (or i.e., the venerable ones), while their Svetambara counterparts are known as Yatis. According to Jaini, in both sects, the administrator-clerics functioned as the effective governing bodies of their communities (Jaini, 1978).¹⁴

However, Professor Michael Carrithers depicts these ascetics as caste gurus as well as routine leaders.¹⁵ He points out that routine cultural production seems to have lain with the Bhattarakas. In his view, in the Kolhapur region, there are two Bhattarakas-Laksmisen and Jinasen. The name devolves around who ever holds the incumbency of the seat. Each Bhattaraka disposes of a large temple-cum-dwelling-cum monastery, a math in Kolhapur, as well as others spread around the region. Each presides over one Jain caste, Laksmisen over Panchamas and Jinsen over Chaturthas.

According to Carrithers, when Bhattarakas still had something of their full function, at the end of last century, they held large landed estates. They had some right to adjudicate disputes over religious property, to grant such property, and to decide disputes over for their respective castes. Their legal power and land grants were certified by the local king, and they represented Jain interests to that power. The legitimacy of Jains as an established part of the polity was recognised through them. Such at any rate was the position of the Hindu caste gurus, and there is every reason to believe that the same was the case here. A notable feature of the caste gurus and the Bhattarakas was that they toured frequently among their constituency, dispensing advice and collecting donations. Therefore, Carrithers makes a somewhat problematic distinction between the Naked Munis as charismatic as well as the Bhattarakas as '**Routine Leaders**'. (Carrithers, 1991).¹⁶

In recent years, Dr. Tillo Detige has shown that there are continuities in the veneration of medieval and early modern Bhattarakas as well as modern Digambara mendicant lineages. As such, he depicts these Bhattarakas as venerable ascetics rather than conceiving these Bhattarakas as intermediaries between a layman and an ascetic.¹⁷

He writes:

“Out of three –and-a half dozen Acaryas and over three dozen Munis attested in a corpus of manuscript colophons and Prasastis (verses of praise prefacing literary compositions), Munis entirely disappear after ce 1633, while half of the acharyas occur after that time, and the latter rank disappears no sooner than the second half of the eighteenth century. It seems possible that the Acarya title saw a shift in its application in the course of the early modern period, from someone who was unquestionably to perhaps distinguished celibate among a circle of Pandits. The Bhattarakas, who earlier had occupied a highest rank in a renunciant hierarchy, including acharyas and Munis, came to stand at the head of circles of acharyas of this latter type, as well as Bhramakarīs and Pandits. However, the devotees of even these later-day Bhattarakas seemed to have considered them to be venerable renouncers, just as today’s Southern Indian Bhattarakas to ritually revered by their local communities.” (Detige, 2020).¹⁸

While these scholarly conceptions are quite useful in studying the Bhattaraka lineages, it has often been observed that scholars study the pilgrimages as well as installation of idols by the Bhattarakas as separate

A similar view in terms of Bhattarakas being the protectors of Jaina religion has been expressed by Kasturchand Kasliwal, in his several publications. For instance, see. Kasturchand Kasliwal, Rajasthan ke Jain Santa Vyaktitva evam Krititva, Jaipur: Sri Digambar Jain Atisaya Ksetra, Sri Mahaviraji, 1967, also see, Kasturchand Kasliwal, 'Muslim yuga ki Jaina acarya in Kapoor Chand Jain et al, acharya Prashinmurti Shantisagar Chani Smruti Granth, Muzaffarnagar: Mahavir tier agencies, 1997, pp. 451-462.

¹³ *ibid.* pp. 51-56.

¹⁴ Padmanabh S. Jaini, the Jaina path of purification, New Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1978, pp. 307-308.

¹⁵ Michael Carrithers, the foundations of community among southern Digambar Jains: an essay on rhetoric and experience, in Michael Carrithers and Caroline Humphrey eds. the assembly of listeners: Jains and society, Cambridge: Cambridge University press, 1991, pp. 261-287.

¹⁶ *ibid.* pp. 261-287.

¹⁷ Tillo Detige, Digambara renouncers in Western and Central India, ce 1100-1800, in Paul Dundas, John Cort and Kristi Wiley eds. Brills encyclopaedia of Jainism, Leiden: brill, 2020, pp. 182-215.

¹⁸ *ibid.* pp. 182-215.

historical events. Bhattarakas as developers of a 'Tirtha' through idol consecration has not been examined in the secondary literature pertaining to the Jains in medieval India in general and specifically of Deccan. Therefore, this paper studies a case of pilgrimage site, where the Bhattarakas while administering a Tirtha directly or indirectly, developed it in the medieval period with the active participation of the Jain lay community (in this case the village of Ukhalad, in Parbani district in the state of Maharashtra). The next section of the paper studies the names of the Bhattarakas recorded in the inscriptions of this site to study the diverse lineages of Bhattarakas that were either administering or consecrated the idols as gleaned from the inscriptional records.

Descriptions of the idol inscriptions from Ukhalad, district Parbani and the names of Bhattarakas

The site of Ukhalad has yielded a number of inscriptions on stone or other materials that throw useful light on the development as a pilgrimage centre by the Digambara population. These inscriptions record the date of idols by the Bhattarakas and their followers be it local or arriving from distant regions. The language of these inscriptions is Sanskrit in Nagari script.

These inscriptions were first discovered by archaeologist Professor D.C. Sarkar, who had published these in his annual report of Indian epigraphy, 1958-59. It was then compiled by Professor Vidhyadhar Johrapurkar, in his book, Jain Shilalekha Sangraha volume 5 published by Bhartiya Jnanapitha in 1971. This section is based on the perusal of these inscriptions published in both the sources. The descriptions of these inscriptions, along with the Bhattarakas and the layman is given in **Table-1**.¹⁹ However, this section is limited in analysing the names of the Bhattarakas in terms of their lineages represented in these inscriptions. In some inscriptions, where the date and lineage or sub-lineage is not given and only the name of the Bhattaraka is mentioned, the dates and lineages or sub-lineages have been filled on the basis of Johrapurkar's Bhattaraka Sampradaya.

Table-1 Inscriptions on Stone and Other Materials, Language of Inscription: Sanskrit, Nagari

S.No	Findspot (Maharashtra Bombay Parbhani Dist. (Ukhalad))	Year on inscription	Description of Inscription	Name of Bhattaraka	Name of Shakha/Branch	Name of Layman & Family
1.	No. 4. Marble figure of seated Dharmanatha.	Vikrama 1499 (CE 1442)	The inscription on the front side below the image reads: Sri-Dharmanathadeva, while that at the back side records the installation of the image and refers to Vidynandi belonging to the Mula-sangha.	Vidynandi	Surat, Balatkara-gana, Mula-sangha, Sarasvati-gachcha	
2.	No. 5. Marble figure of seated Santinatha.	Vikrama 1426 (CE 1469)	Records the installation of the image and mentions Sakalakirti, Bhuvanakirtidva and Dharmakirti, connected with the Mula-sangha. Also mentions Haradas.	Sakalakirti, Bhuvanakirti, Dharmakirti	Surat/Idar/Nagore, Balatkara-gana, Mula-sangha, Sarasvati-gachcha	Haradas
3.	No. 6. A small four-sided votive stupa life brass structure with image of Jaina Tirthankars.	Vikrama 1527 (CE 1470)	Records the installation of a Jina-bimba by a lady named Tajlade, wife of Teja of the Singhapura vamsa at the behest of acharya Vidynandidev belonging to the patta of Bhattraka Dvendraakirtideva of the Mula-sangha and Sarasvati-gachcha.	Vidynandi	Surat, Balatkara-gana, Mula-sangha, Sarasvati-gachcha	Tajlade, wife of Teja
4.	No. 67. Black stone figure of seated Tirthankara.	Vikrama 1545 (CE 1488)	Records the installation of the image by a person named Saravana (?) along with wife Sanaka and son (name not clear) at the behest of Bhattaraka Gunabhadra of the Mula-sangha.	Gunabhadra	Senagana, Mula-sangha	person named Saravana (?) along with wife Sanaka and son
5.	Nos. 8-48. Various Jaina Titthankara figures.	Vikrama 1548 (CE 1491)	Record with slight textual variations, the installation of the images by some persons.	Jinchandra	Delhi-Jaipur, Balatkara-gana, Mula-sangha, Sarasvati-gachcha	Some persons (Kings)
6.	No. 54. Marble figure of seated Parsvanatha.	Vikrama 1569 (CE 1542)	Records the installation of the image by Gamaji at the behest of Bhattaraka Devndrakirti who belonged to the patta of Bhattaraka Dharmabhusana belonging to the Mula-sangha, In characters of about the 16th century.	Devndrakirti	Karanja, Balatkara-gana, Mula-sangha, Sarasvati-gachcha	Gamaji
7.	No. 49. Black stone seated figure of a Tirthankara.	Possible Vikrama 1652-1656 (CE 1595-1599)	Records the installation of the image of Parasvanatha by Lakhmade, wife of Lakhama at the behest of Vadibhushan.	Vadibhushan	Idar, Balatkara-gana, Mula-sangha, Sarasvati-gachcha	Lakhmade wife of Lakhama
8.	No. 50. Black stone seated figure of a Tirthankara.	Vikrama 1669 (CE 1612)	Records the installation of the image by Jashkirti of the Kashta-sangha.	Jashkirti	Kashta-sangha Mathura-gachcha	

¹⁹ I have tried to arrange these inscriptions chronologically. In this table, where the names of the Bhattaraka is not given in the inscriptions, has been filled on the information provided by Johrapurkar. For the list of these inscriptions, see. D.c. Sarkar, annual report of Indian epigraphy, 1958-59, New Delhi: Archeological Survey of India, 1959 pp. 51-52. Also refer, Jain Shilalekha Sangraha volume 5, New Delhi: Bhartiya Jnanapitha, 1975. Pp. 82-104.

9.	No. 59. Black stone seated figure of Naminatha.	Saka 1538 (CE 1616)	Records the installation of the image at the behest of Vishalkirti. Mentions Sarasvati-gachcha Balatkara-gana.	Vishalkirti	Karnaja Balatkara-gana, Mula-sangha, Sarasvati-gachcha	
10.	No. 60. Black stone stela with the image of Parvanatha.	Saka 1541 (CE 1619)	Records the installation of the image at the behest of Vishalkirti. Refers to the Mula-sangha, Sarasvati gachcha, Balatkara-gana and Kundakundachary-anvaya.	Vishalkirti	Karnaja, Balatkara-gana, Mula-sangha, Sarasvati-gachcha	
11.	No. 61. Black stone stela with the image of Parvanatha.	Saka 1541 (CE 1619)	Records the installation of the image by Nagasreshthin of Konkana at the behest of Bhattaraka Vishalkirti of the anvaya of Kumudaprabha belonging to the patta of Devendrakirti of the anvaya of Kumdakumdacharys and belonging to Balatkara-gana, Sarasvati-gachcha and Mala-sangha.	Vishalkirti	Karnaja, Balatkara-gana, Mula-sangha, Sarasvati-gachcha	Nagasreshthin of Konkana
12.	No. 62. Brass standing figure of a Tirthankara.	Saka 1545 (CE 1623)	Records the installation of the image by Jivai, wife of Mahitaji.	Vishalkirti	Karnaja, Balatkara-gana, Mula-sangha, Sarasvati-gachcha	Jivai, wife of Mahitaji
13.	No. 64. Marble figure of seated Neminatha.	Saka 1576 (CE 1654)	Records the installation of the image by Tukairishthin and another person at the behest of Bhattaraka Ajitkirti belonging to the patta of the bhattaraka Vishalakirti of the anvaya Dharmabhushana who himself belonged to the patta of Dharmachandra of the Mula-sangha.	Ajitkirti	Latur, Balatkara-gana, Mula-sangha, Sarasvati-gachcha	Tukairishthin and another person
14.	No. 58. Marble figure of seated Neminatha.	Vikrama 1708 (CE 1651)	Records the installation of the image by a person at the behest of Ajitakirti, disciple of Bhattaraka Devendrakirti belonging to the patta of Bhattaraka Dharmabhushana. Also refers to Bhattaraka Dharmachandra of the Mula-sangha, Sarasvati-gachcha and Balatkara-gana.	Ajitakirti	Latur, Balatkara-gana, Mula-sangha, Sarasvati-gachcha	A person
15.	No. 57. Marble figure of seated Tirthankara.	Saka 1506 (CE 1684)	Records the installation of the image by a (name lost) at the behest of Bhattaraka kirti, the disciple of Davendrakirti belonging to the patta of Dharmabhushana of the Mula-sangha.	Vishalkirti	Karnaja, Balatkara-gana, Mula-sangha, Sarasvati-gachcha	Other Person (name lost)
16.	No. 55. Black stone figure of seated Tirthankara.	Vikrama 1744 (CE 1687)	Mentions Muo i.e. Mula-sangha and Vidyabhushan-patta.	Vidyabhushan	Latur, Balatkara-gana, Mula-sangha, Sarasvati-gachcha	

From **Table-1**, it can be observed that these inscriptions record the names of the Bhattarakas belonging to the Balatkara Gana (Latur and Karanja) on a large scale. For instance, inscr no. 55 records Vidyabhusana of Latur as installing a Jina image in ce. 1687. Similarly, two inscriptions of 1654 ce and 1651 ce records the installation of idol and mentions the name of Bhattaraka Ajitakirti of the same branch (inscr nos. 58 and 64 respectively).²⁰ Similarly, the inscription of ce. 1542 records the name of Bhattaraka Devendrakirti belonging to the Balatkara Gana, Karanja Shakha.²¹ Two inscriptions from this lineage also records the name of Vishalakirti belonging to the same lineage. These inscriptions are dated in ce. 1619 and 1623 respectively (inscr. Nos. 6 and 62). Inscription no. 57 is a marble figure of a Tirthankara. It records the installation of an image by again Vishalkirti of the Balatkara Gana, Karanja shakha (based on Johrapurkar's estimation in his Bhattaraka Sampradaya, 1958, lekha no. 99, p 71). Therefore, in totality, inscriptions belonging to the Latur and Karanja Shakhas are in large numbers. (serial nos. 6, 10, 12, 13, 14, 15 and 16 of table-1) collectively. This suggest that this Tirtha or pilgrimage site was administered by the Bhattarakas of two sub-lineages of the Balatkara Gana, viz. Karanja branch and Latur branch.

Does that imply that only the Bhattarakas belonging to these two branches of the same lineage conducted idol consecrations and hence contributed to the development of this pilgrimage site? This is not the case. Epigraphical records attest the idol installations by the Bhattarakas of other branches and lineages, (in this case, the Kasthasangha and Sena gana) though they are minimal in the data compiled by Sarkar. For instance, inscriptions 4 and 5 records the installation of the idols of Tirthankar Dharmanatha and Santinatha by Bhattaraka Vidyanandi, belonging to the Surat branch of the Balatkara Gana in ce. 1442 and ce. 1469. Inscription number five also records the names of Bhattarakas Sakalakirti and Bhuvanakirti of the Idar branch as well as Dharmakirti of Nagaur branch. The inscription suggests that these three Bhattarakas were present at the time of the installation of the idol. Bhattaraka Vidyanandi of Surat is also mentioned in inscription number 6 which is a votive inscription engraved with the image of Jaina Tirthankars.

Bhattaraka Jinachandra of the Delhi-Jaipur branch is mentioned in a set of inscriptions dated ce. 1491 (nos. 8 to 48). Bhattaraka Vadibhusana of Idar branch is mentioned in an inscription, possibly dated ce. 1595 to 1599).

²⁰ *ibid.* inscription no. 58 and 64 are the idols of Neminatha, for which this Tirth was famous.

²¹ It is quite possible that Bhattaraka Vishalakirti may have been a Bhattaraka for a longer period of time i.e., from early sixteenth century to the late seventeenth century. He might have been the same person who shifted his seat from Karanja to Latur.

Similarly, inscription number 67 is a black stone image of a Tirthankara in a sitting posture. This inscription is dated ce. 1488. It records the installation of an idol by Bhattaraka Gunabadhra of the Senagana lineage. One inscription also refers to the Bhattaraka Yashakirti of the Kashtha Sangha, Mathuragachcha.²² The inscription is dated ce. 1616. Thus, from serial nos. 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 7 and 8 records the names of the renouncers belonging to the branches of the same lineage (Balatkara gana) alongside mentioning the Bhattarakas of two different lineages- the Kashtha Sangha Mathuragachcha and the Sena-Gana.

From the foregoing discussion, it becomes evident that the Bhattarakas, cutting across lineages contributed significantly in the development of Ukhalad as a pilgrimage site. In doing so, these renouncers did not establish subsidiary institutions like Mathas to administer the pilgrimage site. It was through idol consecrations that they tried to build this site as an important pilgrimage centre for the Digambara Jains. However, it was not the Bhattarakas alone who were contributing to its development. The lay community was also active and served as patrons or sponsors for this idol consecration. The final section of the paper analyses the Names of lay sponsors or patrons recorded in the inscriptions.

Patrons or sponsors recorded in the context of idol installations

This final section discusses the names of lay patrons recorded in the idol inscriptions from Ukhalad. It attempts to examine a prominent view-point pertaining to the Bhattarakas expressed by Carrithers as '**Caste Gurus**', thereby studying the patterns of interaction among the Jain laity as well as the Bhattarakas and other social groups it has already been observed how Bhattarakas contributed to the development of Ukhalad as a site of pilgrimage, based on the inscriptions discussed so far. However, the inscriptions also record the names of individuals belonging to the members of the Jain community, as well as certain members of family.

For instance, the inscription recording the name of Bhattaraka Vidyandandi discussed above also records the names '**Tajlade, wife of Teja**' belonging to the Singapura caste. Similarly, '**Tukasresthi**' is mentioned in inscription no 54 discussed above in the context of Bhattarakas of Latur. '**Nagasresthin**' of Konkan is mentioned in an inscription of ce. 1619 belonging to the Balatkara gana, Karanja Shakha. These three inscriptions mentioned caste and place names along with individual lay members. These caste names are indicative of place names (in the case of Teja), or in the case of Tukoshresthin and Nagasresthin represents the professional occupations as cast (Jati).²³ The mention of the caste name of the lay individual along with the Bhattaraka in the epigraphic material clearly indicates that in medieval Deccan, the lay community associated each Bhattaraka with a particular caste group, thereby affirming Carrither's observations. Apart from individuals, members of specific families have also been recorded in an inscription discussed above in the context of Gunabhadra Bhattaraka of the Sena gana. It mentions a person named Saravana and his wife, Sanaka and their son. However, the name of the son is not legible.

The inscriptions pertaining to Bhattaraka Jinachandra of Delhi-Jaipur Shakha is of quite interest as it opens potential line of historical enquiry in the context of patrons in terms of image consecrations (nos. 8 to 48).²⁴ It records, the date (ce. 1491) and with slight textual variations mentions the names of some persons. Sarkar suggests that these are the names of kings. However, he does not provide their names of them. the issue in this respect is who installed these images on the behest of Jinachandra? Whether these idols were installed by one king? It seems that these images were installed during the time of Ahmad Nizam Shah first, since during this period this ruler declared his independence by defeating the Bahmani forces led by Jahangir Khan at the battle of Junnar (Radhey Shyam). From the date on the inscription, this fact is quite possible. However, it requires further research to arrive at a certain conclusion.

Concluding remarks

This paper has throned some light on the development of Ukhalad as a distinct pilgrimage centre and the role of their Bhattaraka, based on the study of idol inscriptions from Ukhalad, District Parbhani, Maharashtra, arguing that idol consecration in medieval times also facilitated the development of a pilgrimage site. In this

²² Bhattaraka Yashakirti is mentioned by Johrapurkar only in the context of Kashtha Sangha, Mathuragachcha(Johrapurkar Bhattaraka Sampradaya lekha 597, pp 243). It is the second Yashkirtti who finds mentioned in Ukhlad inscriptions.

²³ During the early medieval period, terms like Shresthi or Chetti was used for traders due to the prevalence of guild system. However, by the medieval and early modern period, as the guild system collapsed, it led to the proliferation of caste as 'Jati'. See. B.N.S. Yadava, general presidents address: "HISTORICAL INVESTIGATION INTO SOCIAL TERMINOLOGY IN LITERATURE: A PROBLEM OF THE STUDY OF SOCIAL CHANGE (MAINLY IN THE CONTEXT OF EARLY MEDIEVAL NORTHERN INDIA).", proceedings of the Indian History Congress, vol. 53, 1992, pp. 1-35

²⁴ This observation is based on Sarkar's indexing of inscriptions in his report, where the column of the dynastic period is labled as be., see, Sarkar, annual report, pp. 51-52. For a general survey of the Nizamshahi kingdom, see. The chapter written entitled The Nizamshahis and the Imadshahis by Professor Radhey Shyam of University of Allahabad, in P.M. Joshi and H.K. Sherwani, eds. a history of medieval Deccan, 1295- 1724, Hyderabad: Andra Pradesh government press, 1973, pp. 223-289

respect, the Bhattarakas, cutting across lineages played an important role. They did not build Mathas or any subsidiary institutions at this site. Rather, through idol consecrations, these renouncers sought to project themselves as developers of Ukhalad as a medieval Jaina pilgrimage site. Moreover, the Jain lay community played a complementary role by acting as patrons or sponsors for these image installations. However, the epigraphical evidence reveals that the members of the lay community viewed these renouncers as their 'caste gurus', thereby critiquing Detige's observation of these Bhattarakas as 'Venerable Ascetics'. Therefore, The Jain lay community and the medieval Bhattarakas can be viewed as developers of pilgrimage centres, besides viewing them as protectors of 'Tirthas'.

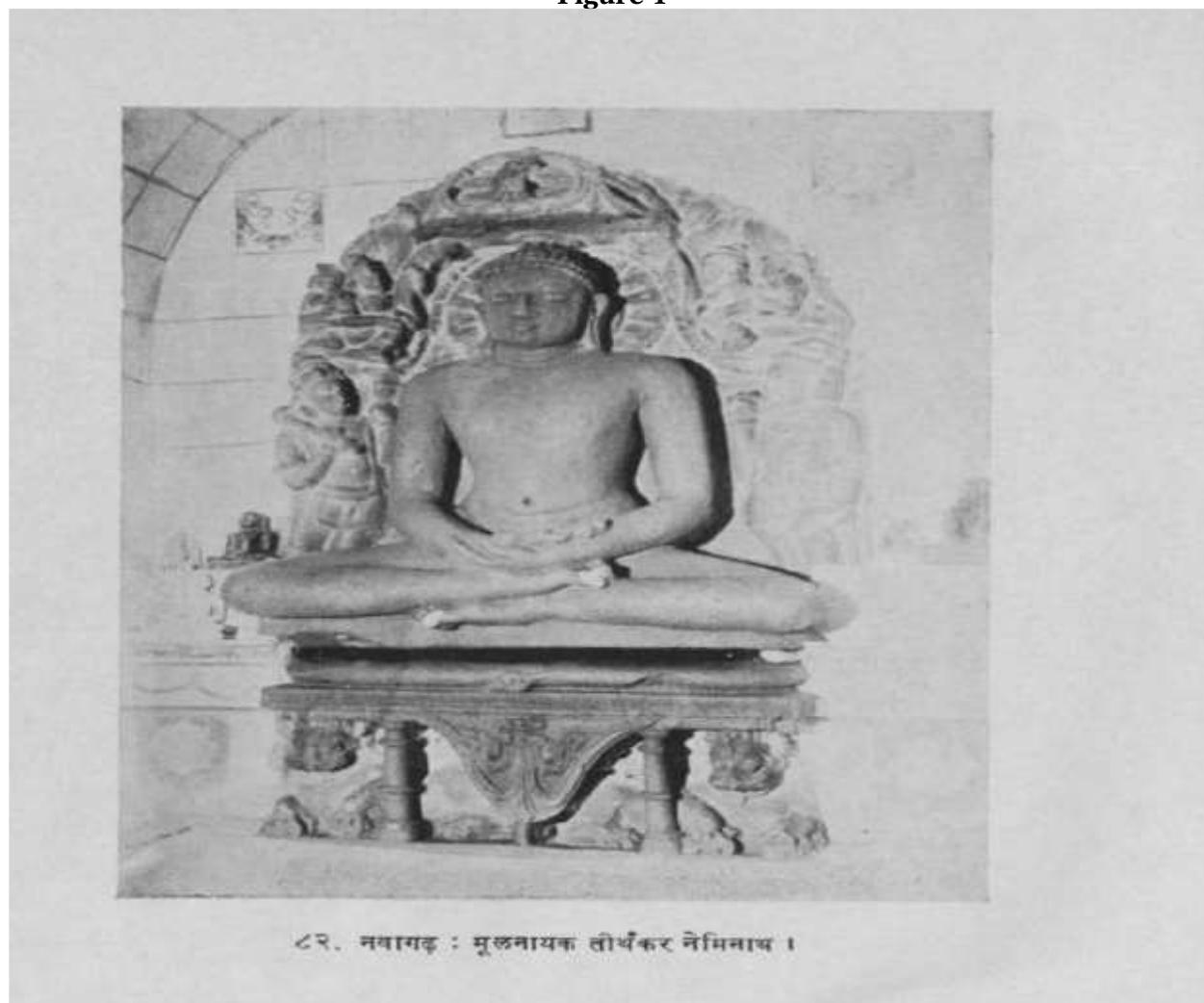
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Conflict of Interest

There is no conflict of interest.

Figure-1



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