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Nonviolence in the Web of Life

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Green Jainism?
Notes and Queries toward a Possible
Jain Environmental Ethic

JOHN E. CORT

The environment is in crisis. This is not, however, a “natural” crisis. It has been caused by the actions of one species: humanity. The net result of centuries of human impact—and, in particular, of the past several centuries of rapid population and economic growth—has been a global ecosystem that is increasingly damaged and increasingly inhospitable to many forms of life. With few exceptions, humanity the world over has viewed itself as separate from and superior to nature. In one sense, therefore, the answer to this humanly caused environmental crisis is simple: we must establish (or reestablish) healthy connections between humanity and nature and recognize that our very survival as a species depends, in the words of the American farmer, environmentalist, and author Wendell Berry, on “getting along with nature.”¹

How are we to establish and reestablish these connections? How are we to unlearn patterns established by the global industrial economy and learn (and relearn) patterns that support an ethic conducive to the flourishing of both humanity and nature? If a defining characteristic of humanity as a species is culture, then both the causes of and answers to our destructive behavior will be found in culture. As Berry observes, “we have only two sources of instruction: nature herself and our cultural tradition.”² Paying close attention to nature will teach us much that is essential. This knowledge must be complemented by a

(re)discovery of cultural traditions that allow us as humans to live in continuity with rather than in opposition to nature. Since religion is one of the core constituents of culture, the answers will involve a (re)discovery of our religious traditions for values and practices that support an ecologically positive way of living and an interrogation of our religious traditions to see where they promote values and practices that are harmful to the environment. For Berry, as an American of European descent, these cultural and religious traditions are what he terms “the Greek and Biblical lineages of our culture.”³ These two lineages are not, however, the only sources of vital cultural knowledge, and they may well be inappropriate for most people. For Jains, whether living in India or among the communities that have recently migrated to all parts of the globe, learning from nature how to live in continuity with culture will be complemented by learning from their own cultural traditions, more broadly South Asian and more specifically Jain. These traditions are no longer alone in shaping Jain life; but, for many Jains, they are crucial in the task of developing responses to the environmental crisis.

A goal of the conference from which this volume derives, as expressed in the invitation letter, was to “explore how traditional Jaina ethics, cosmology, and metaphysics might contribute to the emerging field of environmental philosophy.”⁴ In other words, the conference organizers located themselves within the field of environmental philosophy and were interested to hear what traditional Jain ideas, beliefs, and practices could contribute to their field. My approach in this essay—and it is precisely that, an *essay*, i.e., more speculative and suggestive than analytic or descriptive—is to reverse the direction of the information flow. While this essay will bring information from the Jain religious worldview and Jain lived experience to the scholarly world of environmental philosophy, this is an incidental rather than primary goal. Instead, I am addressing this to my many Jain friends and colleagues in India, Great Britain, and North America, who are concerned to respond to the environmental crisis and who over the years have asked me as a scholar of Jainism what I think might be distinctive about a Jain response to environmental issues. Accordingly, I have two intended goals. The first is to indicate to these engaged Jain⁵ friends some of the questions, assumptions, and practices that they might want to think about and act upon as they develop a Jain environmental ethic. The second is to point tentatively to some ways

in which Jains might begin to respond to these questions, by pointing to Jain practices and values that might well underlie a Jain environmental ethic or be adapted for such an ethic. There is much here that will not be new to colleagues in environmental studies but will, I assume, be useful to Jains who read this volume.

In January 2000 I was invited to participate in a conference in Jaipur to celebrate the one hundredth anniversary of the Digambara scholar and social reformer Pandit Cainsukhdas Nyāyārth. The day I attended was devoted to the conception of the environment in Sanskrit and Prakrit literature (Sanskrit evam Prakṛt Sahitya mē Paryāvaran kī Avadhārnā). More than a dozen papers were delivered in Hindi by Digambara scholars from all over North India.⁶ Some of the papers fit into the field of environmental history, as they explored how nature and the environment have been portrayed in classical Jain literature. The majority of the papers were more apologetic in nature, as they surveyed various aspects of Jain doctrine to advance the position that Jainism is an inherently environmental religious tradition. What was striking to me was the disjunction between these papers, and the larger vernacular discourse on Jainism and the environment of which they are part,⁷ and the extensive English-language scholarship on environmentalism published in India. One does not find any references to the vernacular and English scholarships in each other, and the two appear to exist in parallel, unrelated intellectual universes.⁸ This essay intends to indicate some of the issues that need to be considered to bring these two discourses into dialogue with each other.

Ecology: A New Global Episteme

Let me start by stating an assumption that underlies this essay. To put it boldly, as of the early 2000s there is no Jain environmental ethic per se. Statements that Jainism is an inherently environmental religious tradition or that Jainism has always “enthroned the philosophy of ecological harmony” are largely untrue as statements about history, and I would argue that such mis-statements will hinder more than help in the development of a Jain environmental ethic.⁹

The reason I say that there is no Jain environmental ethic is that environmentalism is a relatively new episteme worldwide. It has arisen out of a set of physical, technological, and increasingly moral and

intellectual challenges of the past several centuries, but has attained its position as a distinct field of inquiry—an episteme—only within the past several decades. In the words of Harold Coward, “It is only recently that the various religions have had to question their sources with regard to the interaction of humans with the environment—in response to the explosion in numbers of people and their consumption of the earth’s resources at a rate that threatens to exhaust its life-sustaining capacity.”¹⁰ Environmentalism raises a new set of questions and issues, hitherto not addressed explicitly by Jains either in practice or in thought. This is not to say that Jains have not thought about and acted toward the environment. But the concept of “environment/ecology/nature” is a new episteme (the very fluidity of terms is indicative of its newness), raising questions and issues that Jains have not addressed in this particular formulation. To put it simply, without the episteme of environmentalism, it is not possible to develop a conscious response in thought, speech, and deed to the questions raised by that episteme. Hence, to speak of “Jain environmentalism” before the recent past is meaningless. This is only one of several new epistemes to which the world’s religious traditions have had to respond in recent centuries; others include the scientific method, Copernican astronomy, nationalism, industrial capitalism, globalization, feminism, social justice, human rights, nuclear weapons, and cultural and religious pluralism, to name a few.¹¹

Any Jain environmental ethic at present is at best nascent and largely unconscious and implicit. Engaged Jains are just beginning the task of articulating such an ethic. To a significant extent these articulations are to be found in practices and habits rather than in systematized statements, for this is the way any lived ethic develops. But the external pressures of the environmental crisis, as well as the efforts of engaged intellectuals and theologians in other religious communities to develop their own explicit environmental ethics, have resulted in the beginning of efforts by Jains to explore their own tradition within the new epistemological framework of environmentalism.

Steps toward Developing a Jain Environmental Ethic

There are three major aspects of this process of developing a Jain environmental ethic. These are not sequential steps but, rather, three dif-

ferent kinds of exploration. While of necessity they will occur simultaneously, I discuss them separately for the sake of clarity.

The first task is historical, for any ethic is based in significant part on the historical particularities of a community. This is a largely descriptive process of the investigation and documentation of Jain understandings and practices that indicate how Jains have understood nature and the place of humanity within nature. This investigation will involve seeing how Jains have both explicitly and implicitly defined “nature,” for the definitions of this term are themselves culturally located. In other words, “nature” itself is a cultural category, and so is defined differently in different cultural worldviews. Part of this process, obviously, is the philological one of exploring the meanings and contexts of the variety of Indic words used to refer to the range of referents of the English word “nature.” In English, “nature” has two partially contrasting meanings—as the totality of the physical universe, and as that which is apart from humanity, civilization, and culture—which indicate how humanity is at once a part of and apart from nature.¹² The study of Jain attitudes toward the environment will involve a careful study of the semantic fields within Jain thought and practice of a number of overlapping terms, such as *prāṛṭhi*, *lokākāśa*, *dravya*, *ajīva*, *svabhāva*, and *pariyāvarana*.

Several of the papers in this volume are engaged in this process of historical investigation. In part, this will involve an investigation of Jain ontology and metaphysics, looking at Jain conceptions of matter, soul, and the like. But I would argue that this alone would be inadequate. To understand how Jains have understood nature, and how those understandings have shaped Jain lived experience, there are better sources than philosophical doctrines. In particular, it is here that the skills of cultural interpretation and literary and artistic analysis can be brought to bear to investigate what Jain narratives, myths, histories, paintings, sculptures, and practices can tell us about Jain assumptions about the nature of nature.¹³

This investigation into an environmental history of Jainism needs to be grounded in the specifics of Jain cultures and societies. Rather than look at material only at the abstract and reified level of “Jains” and “Jainism,” it should also recognize the developments in recent Jain studies that have focused on the specific expressions of the four sectarian traditions, different regional traditions, and the ways these have changed over time.¹⁴ Understandings of and reactions to the en-

vironment are always *local*. Scholarship on the environmental history of Jainism therefore should focus on cultures and practices as localized, and localized Jainism is always sectarian.¹⁵

For those who are concerned with the environment, this historical exploration is often an unhappy process, as the historical record of the Jains is, on the whole, not a positive one. The Jains are not alone in this, as I doubt that any religious tradition has a salubrious record on matters of environmental and interspecies justice. But it is an important task, for without understanding the practices and attitudes that have shaped past actions, it is much more difficult to develop creative responses in the present.¹⁶ The importance of recognizing and rectifying past wrongs is at the very heart of Jain praxis, for the speaking of the truth (*satya*) has a prominent place among the vows (*mahāvratas*) taken by Jain mendicants.¹⁷ Among the amplifications of this vow is that it applies equally to the past, present, and future. I interpret this as a call for Jains to be forthrightly honest about blemishes in their own history. This is also recognized in the ritual of *pratikramana* as practiced by both mendicants and laity, in which the individual acknowledges past transgressions and seeks to rectify the negative karmic results of those transgressions; speaking falsely (*asatya*) ranks right after harm (*himsā*) in the standard list of the eighteen most serious transgressions.¹⁸

The second task is also to a significant extent historical. This is the programmatic recovery of those narratives and practices that can serve as bases for a Jain environmental ethic. Some of these will be narratives and practices that come from mainstream traditions, known and practiced by many Jains, but now understood within a new framework. Others will be alternative lineages and voices, people and events from Jain history that have not necessarily been part of the mainstream traditions, but which can provide a historical grounding for a Jain environmentalism.¹⁹ This recovery scholarship, however, needs to remain intellectually honest. It must always remember that the goal is to uncover what Jains *can do*, *might do*, or *should do* in the future, based on these historical models; this is quite different from the language of many contemporary Jain enthusiasts who mistakenly convert these models into assertions that they represent what Jains *have done*. Recovery scholarship will play an important role in developing Jain environmental practices, for narratives are more likely to inspire people to action than are abstract philosophical principles. Myths and

other narratives provide us with stories that both allow us to make sense of our world and to see how we can change our world. Gary Nabhan has perceptively discussed the transformative power of narratives:

To restore any place, we must also begin to re-story it, to make it a lesson of our legends, festivals, and seasonal rites. Story is the way we encode deep-seated values within our culture. Ritual is the way we enact them. . . . By replenishing the land with our stories, we let the wild voices around us guide the restoration work we do. The stories will outlast us.²⁰

The third task is one of action and reflection in the present. This is the work of conversation and interaction between engaged Jains and non-Jain environmental activists and theorists, in which the principles, practices, and worldview assumptions of Jainism are placed in a condition of dynamic and potentially fruitful interchange with the principles, practices, and worldview assumptions of environmentalists. In some ways this is precisely the goal behind the series of conferences out of which this volume emerges. Perhaps more importantly, it is also what happens when Jains are actively involved in environmental issues and campaigns in their neighborhoods, workplaces, schools, and broader communities. This task involves a creative interaction between Jain ways of being and currents of contemporary environmental thought. This should be a mutually cross-fertilizing process. It is not a matter of mapping environmental principles onto Jainism, nor one of mapping Jain principles onto environmental practice, but of exploring aspects of Jain thought and practice that will form the bases for a distinctively Jain environmental ethic.

In the rest of this essay, I indicate some of the issues and practices that may well come into focus from Jain interaction with environmentalism. To frame this discussion I introduce some of the major issues that have emerged in environmental thought and practice, both North and South, in recent decades. I express these issues in the form of questions that the new episteme of environmentalism addresses to Jains. There are no obvious answers to these questions, but I think they merit careful consideration by Jains, for it is largely in their answers, as expressed in thought, speech, and action, that Jains will develop their own distinctive environmental ethic.

Liberation from the World, Wellbeing in the World

Before raising these queries, I should mention one other key assumption that informs my discussion, an assumption of where I think that Jains can fruitfully look within their own traditions for responses to the episteme of environmentalism. Jainism is frequently presented both by Jain intellectuals and scholars of Jainism as a distinctive path to liberation (*mokṣa-mārga*), an intertwined set of doctrines, practices, and worldview assumptions focusing on the ultimate liberation of the human soul from bondage.²¹ The *mokṣa-mārga* ideology is not very conducive to the development of an environmental ethic. At its heart is the ~~goal of permanent separation~~ of the soul from all matter. In such a dualist ideology, positive environmental results are largely incidental.²² This body-spirit dualism is found embedded in a wide variety of doctrines, beliefs, and practices within the Jain tradition, from the many ways in which Jains “filter” the material world in pursuit of a purer spirituality, to ascetic dietary practices that in their extreme cases can be interpreted as expressing a fear of the biological world, to the Digambara mystical emphasis on the need for an existential realization of the ultimate difference (*bhedā-jñāna*) between soul and matter.²³

But the *mokṣa-mārga* ideology is not the whole of Jainism, for Jainism also is a religious culture that provides people with a definition of a good life in this lifetime, what I have elsewhere termed the value of “wellbeing.” The realm of wellbeing involves a much less negative (albeit still not unreservedly positive) attitude toward the nonhuman world, toward the physical world, and toward our own physical embodiedness.²⁴

Looking at the actions and beliefs expressive of wellbeing will be a much more fruitful avenue for developing a Jain environmental ethic than looking at the actions, beliefs, and doctrines expressive of the *mokṣa-mārga*.²⁵ It is important to remember that the *mokṣa-mārga* ideology itself presents Jainism as a graduated path. Looking only to the *mokṣa-mārga* ideology results in focusing too exclusively on the higher, more rarified rungs of the path. These rungs are almost impossible for a human to attain, and so establish a set of unrealistic goals for environmentally concerned Jains. This approach also downplays the sociobiological contexts in which Jains live and in which any Jain environmental praxis will be located.

One other aspect of the *mokṣa-mārga* ideology itself leads to the conclusion that we must not privilege it as the totality of Jainism when searching for the bases of an environmental ethic. The Jain community as created by the Tirthankaras consists of four *tirthas* (social subdivisions), not just two. There are the *tirthas* of the *sādhu* and the *sādhvī*, the male and female mendicants whose practice is based on world renunciation and the focused pursuit of *mokṣa*. But, equally important within the Jain community are the *tirthas* of the *śrāvaka* and *śrāvikā*, the laymen and laywomen, whose practice is *not* based solely on renunciation. Jainism cannot be reduced to just world renunciation in all its many forms. Jainism also involves responsible, moral action, including action concerning and within the environment.

European-American ethical systems tend to be phrased in terms of universals and so are expected to be followed equally by all people at all times. Jain ethics (and South Asian ethical systems more generally), on the other hand, are highly context-sensitive.²⁶ Full-fledged mendicants, who have taken the great vows, are expected to observe Jain ethical principles universally. In the technical language of Jain praxis, the vows are *sarvavirati*, or universally applicable. But, for the laity, who make up the vast majority of Jains, such strenuous observance is considered impractical if not impossible, and so lay observance is *deśavirati*, or in accordance with one’s socio-moral location. Any deed, thought, or word is judged according to three factors: the location (*deśa*), the time (*kāla*), and the actors (*pātra*). This provides an essential flexibility to lay ethics and calls for the creative response to ethical dilemmas rather than an unthinking application of ethical a priori. Such an approach, in my opinion, is essential for the solution of environmental problems, which always involves the balancing of the multiple, conflicting needs and aspirations of many beings, both human and nonhuman.

Queries for Environmentally Engaged Jains

Let me now turn to what I perceive to be some of the important questions that the new episteme of environmentalism poses for Jains. As I said above, neither the questions themselves nor the answers that have developed within Western religious and secular traditions will be new to most of my colleagues within environmental studies. But I suspect

that they have only been indirectly apprehended by most of the Jains engaged in developing an environmental Jainism. Raising these questions to a level of conscious awareness may result in these engaged Jains being more self-reflexive as they create a Jain environmental ethic and may also allow them to avoid the danger of coming to answers and conclusions at a premature stage of understanding.²⁷ Some of these are questions that are foundational to all environmental thought and practice. Others are questions raised by specific movements and fields within environmental thought and practice, such as deep ecology, environmental justice, and ecofeminism. These different sub-epistememes within environmental thought (and there are, of course, more than just those I will address here) each address a different set of queries to Jainism, for each starts from its own set of presuppositions, questions, and concerns.²⁸

Bodies: Human, Nonhuman, Divine

The most basic question that arises from the interaction between environmental thought and any religious tradition concerns that tradition's definitions and presumptions in response to an interlocking set of cosmological and ontological questions. How does the tradition define a human being? How is a human defined, both as an individual and as a member of larger human collectivities? In what ways is a human the same as and different from all that is characterized as nonhuman? How does it understand the human body? How does it understand and define the nonhuman?

Such definitions frequently revolve around distinctions between human and nonhuman or between culture and nature. But the very phrase "human nature" indicates that such distinctions are rarely, if ever, watertight. Rather, when we look at the evidence of both systematic reflection and lived experience, we usually find an interrelated and sometimes mutually inconsistent net of understandings and pre-understandings, expressed in thought, word, and action. Further, we find that in some instances the key distinctions are between human and nonhuman domains, while in other instances they are between body and soul (or mind) or between matter and spirit.

Jain responses to these questions are found most clearly in discussions of the fundamental ontological categories (*dravya* or *astikāyā*), variously counted as five (soul, motion, rest, atoms, and space) or six

(adding time).²⁹ These can be reduced to a fundamental dualism between sentient soul (*jīva*) and all that is insentient, including matter (*ajīva*).

This dualism, which is rooted in the *mokṣa-mārga* ideology, is most unhelpful for developing a Jain environmental ethic. The soteriological goal according to this ideology is for each soul to achieve liberation from all that is not soul, thus establishing a clear devaluation of nature. But, as I indicated above, the upper reaches of the *mokṣa-mārga* ideology are not where Jains should look to develop an environmental ethic. A more useful approach here is to look at Jain biology, which forms the basis of much Jain practice.

The Jain worldview posits the near ubiquity of souls in the universe. Each of these souls in its ideal form is identical in its qualities of bliss, energy, and omniscience, but due to each soul's unique karmic history, these souls are embodied in various forms. Jain biology distinguishes these forms in terms of different kinds of body (*kāyā*), ranging from those with five senses through those with just the single sense of touch.³⁰ Here, I think it is significant that Jain biology distinguishes these embodied states in terms of *kāyā*, or body: the concern is not just for the soul that is embodied, but also for the body itself. This focus on the many possible embodied states of the soul can help mitigate the dualism entailed in the soul-nonsoul distinction. Further, the Jain understanding of the possible range of bodies also extends beyond that found in some other worldviews, for bodies include not only animals and plants, but also such forms as air, water, and earth.

The strand of environmental thought known as deep ecology³¹ here asks about Jainism's ethical valuation of this diversity of life-forms. What is the operative context that frames a Jain environmental ethic? Is it framed primarily around human concerns, or does it give some value, or even equal value, to the nonhuman? Is diversity valued because it provides additional resources for human existence and development, or is diversity understood to have intrinsic value?³² These questions are amplified by that branch of environmental ethics which has attempted to develop an ecocentric, nonanthropocentric, environmental ethic.³³ Ecocentric ethical thought prompts us to ask of the Jains, what are the rights of the various nonhuman bodies? Such a question, however, is embedded in a number of religio-cultural presuppositions, for the very language of rights is based upon conceptions of justice with their triune roots in Abrahamic covenantal theo-

ogy, Greco-Roman legal ethics, and the Enlightenment understanding of the person as an autonomous and rational individual. Certainly, the question of the rights (if any) of nonhuman bodies is one that Jain environmentalists will want to investigate. Jains do not usually frame the matter in terms of the rights of the nonhuman. Instead, they speak of the moral responsibility of humans toward all bodies, a responsibility most clearly enunciated in the cardinal Jain moral principle of *ahimsā*, or nonharm.

Several authors in this volume discuss the role of *ahimsā* in Jain environmental ethics, so I will restrict myself to just a few comments here. In the understanding of *ahimsā* found in the vows (*mahāvratas*) of the mendicants, its observance is said to be thrice threefold. The practice of *ahimsā* involves mind, body, and speech, and so is a matter of intention as much as action. Second, it involves what we ourselves think, do, and say, but also what we have others think, do, and say, and the public approval (*anumodana*) or censure (*nindā*) of the thoughts, actions, and words of others. Introducing *anumodana* and *nindā* into the understanding of *ahimsā* means that Jains are expected to be interventionist in their ethics. To stand by idly while someone else acts in a way that is harmful to the environment involves the bystander as much as the actor in the moral harm of the deed. Third, a Jain is expected to observe *ahimsā* in the past, present, and future. This means that one has a moral responsibility for prior harmful actions, both one's own and those of others. It also means that one has a moral responsibility to the future. Allowing environmental degradation today is not only violence in the present, it is also violence in the future. While *ahimsā* has not traditionally been expressed in terms of rights, this understanding of one's moral responsibility for *ahimsā* in the future might bear fruitful comparison with discussions by ecocentric ethicists on the rights of future beings to be born into a healthy environment.

When one juxtaposes *ahimsā* with the Jain understanding of the *kāyas*, one sees that *ahimsā* is not merely a matter of not harming one's fellow human beings. Jains have almost universally understood *ahimsā* to entail being vegetarian, and the unique ways in which *ahimsā* has informed Jain diet are well known.³⁴ The full application of *ahimsā*, however, involves applying it not just to the gross, obvious forms of life, such as humans and five-sensed animals, but also to the very essential prerequisites of life—to the air, water, earth, and plants—

for, according to Jain biology, all of these serve as the abodes of countless souls.

This understanding of *ahimsā* as applying to the fullest range of bodies is found in the rite of *pratikramana*, performed twice daily by Śvetāmbara mendicants and, ideally, at least once a year by laity. The rite begins with the individual recognizing and seeking to absolve himself or herself from the karmic consequences of any form of harm caused to a wide array of life-forms, in bodies with from one to five senses, including seeds, plants, dew, insects, mold, and spiders. As a further part of this rite, the individual recites the following Prakritized vernacular liturgy (here given in its Tapā Gaccha form), in which he or she enumerates all the possible bodily forms, with the assumption that one has wittingly or unwittingly harmed them:

700,000 earth bodies,
700,000 water bodies,
700,000 fire bodies,
700,000 air bodies,
1,000,000 separate plant bodies,
1,400,000 aggregated plant bodies,³⁵
200,000 two-sensed beings,
200,000 three-sensed beings,
200,000 four-sensed beings,
400,000 divine five-sensed beings,
400,000 infernal five-sensed beings,
400,000 plant-and-animal five-sensed beings,³⁶
1,400,000 humans:
in this way there are 8,400,000 forms of existence.
Whatever harm I have done,
caused to be done,
or approved of,
by mind,
speech,
or body,
against all of them:
may that harm be without consequence.³⁷

Most of the *pratikramana* rite is recited in Prakrit or Sanskrit. But this particular part of the liturgy is recited in the vernacular, indicating it is intended to be clearly understood by the practitioner. I would suggest

that this rite of confession could be creatively adopted by Jains as an environmental ritual.³⁸

To complicate further the question of how a religious tradition understands the relationships between human and nonhuman, between soul and body, we must add a third factor, that of theology: how are both the human and the nonhuman, the soul and the body, understood in relation to the superhuman or divine? This is another issue that warrants much greater attention than I will give it here. But let me again make a few passing remarks. Jainism is distinctive (although by no means unique) among the world's religious traditions in its vigorous denial of any definition of God that posits God as creator of the material and/or spiritual universe. Both soul and matter, according to the Jain worldview, have existed from beginningless time and will exist into the endless future. Jains worship as God all souls that have liberated themselves from karmic bondage.³⁹ While there is a crucial difference between the liberated and unliberated souls, in that the former have transcended the realm of the *kāyās*, there is no difference in terms of the ultimate ontology of liberated and unliberated souls. I am simplifying a very complex issue here. But this is a matter which bears further reflection, for central to any religious tradition's environmental ethic is its understanding of God (or other sacred ultimate) and of the relationships among God, humanity, and nonhuman nature.⁴⁰ The Jain understanding of the ubiquity and uniformity of soul among all three estates (human, natural, divine) will result in a different environmental ethic from traditions such as the three Abrahamic ones, which are based on the crucial distinction between God and humanity.⁴¹

Jain Women and Ecology

The branch of environmentalism known as ecofeminism further expands upon the scope of questions concerning the understandings of the relationships and interactions among the divine, human, and non-human natural realms.⁴² Ecofeminist thought and practice starts from the recognition that the lived experiences of men and women are quite different. Further, ecofeminism starts from the recognition that gender differences themselves are as culturally constructed as the differences between nature and culture, and so calls our attention to the powerful role of such constructs as "Mother Nature" and "Earth God-

dess" (Bhudevī) and the distinction between "nature" (*prākṛti*) as feminine and "intellect" (*puruṣa*) as masculine in shaping our experience of reality.⁴³ Third, ecofeminism asks us to consider the connections between the human patriarchal oppression of women. Are there connections between "nature hating" and "woman hating"⁴⁴ in Jain doctrine and practice? Since ecofeminism is as much concerned with action in response to perceived injustices as it is with analysis of the causes of those injustices, it also asks us to consider if the response to one form of oppression might not be related to responses to other forms of oppression. If, as ecofeminism posits, the androcentric oppression of women by men and the anthropocentric oppression of nature by humans are expressions of the same (or related) hierarchical expressions of oppressive power, then might the redress of one form of oppression be linked to the redress of the other?

Scholarship has only recently begun to explore the ways in which the Jain tradition has both shaped gendered experience and been shaped by the different gendered experiences of men and women.⁴⁵ In many respects, Jain values are no different here from those of the broader values encompassing South Asian cultures. While the exact sociological abilities of women have been debated for many centuries,⁴⁶ many Jain texts of all sectarian traditions are highly gynophobic. Jain monastic ideology has almost always ranked all monks above all nuns, and gender hierarchy has been pervasive throughout Jain society. At the same time, Jain monastic traditions have been notable in South Asia for the large number of nuns, who in many times and places have outnumbered the monks severalfold. Women have played central roles in the preservation and reproduction of Jain religious culture, and they have had their own religious spaces within the tradition.⁴⁷ How these and other factors interact with Jain attitudes toward the environment is an open and investigable question; both scholarly research and engaged Jain reflection may well reveal distinctively Jain expressions at the intersections of ecology and gender and environmentalism and feminism.

Jains and Environmental Justice

The questions posed of any Jain environmental ethic by ecofeminism bring the issue of power squarely into the picture. Similar questions

are also raised by two different but related streams of environmentalism, known generally as environmental justice and social ecology (based in the industrialized North) and Southern environmentalism (based in the developing South).⁴⁸ In this field ecological advocates stress that any strong environmental ethic must be built equally on diversity, sustainability, and equity.⁴⁹ In developing what he terms an "environmentalism of the poor," the Indian environmentalist Ramachandra Guha emphasizes that in many parts of the world, especially in the South but also in large pockets of the North, "for the sections of society most critically affected by environmental degradation—poor and landless peasants, women, and tribals—it is a question of sheer survival, not enhancing the quality of life. . . . [A]s a consequence, the environmental solutions they articulate strongly involve questions of equity as well as economic and political redistribution."⁵⁰

Environmental justice therefore posits that issues of environmental and interspecies justice cannot be separated from issues of social and intraspecies justice. Just as nonhuman species have rights to live, so do all humans have the right to a safe, secure, and sustainable livelihood. Environmental justice recognizes that there is a material basis to the environmental crisis, that it is in part a matter of control over and distribution of resources, as well as control over the negative environmental effects of industrial production. As an example, Robert D. Bullard has shown how toxic waste dumps in the United States are disproportionately located among communities of racial and ethnic minorities, as well as others who are economically and politically disadvantaged.⁵¹ Part of the answer to the environmental crisis, therefore, according to environmental justice, lies in addressing issues of inequity and injustice in the control and distribution of resources.⁵²

Environmental justice therefore asks of the Jain tradition, what is the place of social equity within human interaction? Environmental justice activists and thinkers have argued that actions to protect the environment at the expense of people who depend upon that environment for their livelihood lead to social injustice and, in the long run, undermine those actions.

Here, the example of the attempts to reforest the sacred Mrit-pīṅjaka Jain mountain of Satruṅjaya are illustrative. Medieval accounts describe it as forested, but the contemporary experience is of a denuded mountain. In recent years there has been an effort to reforest the mountain, aided by significant contributions from overseas Jains.

Anyone who has had the experience of walking up both a forested and a deforested mountain would think that this effort is unquestionably laudable.

But, what is the cause of the mountain's deforestation? It is not the result of any natural catastrophe or climactic change. Rather, the trees and bushes have gradually disappeared due to local lower-caste herders grazing their cattle and goats. In response to the pressures of this pastoral economy, the governmental authorities and the upper-caste Jains engaged in the reforestation project have erected fences of thorn bushes and adopted other methods to deprive the herders of their grazing lands, rights which have existed for centuries. Here we see an effort to improve the environment, but at the expense of those who are poorest and most dependent upon the resources, and who have not been involved in either the decision-making or implementation processes. The laudable ecological effort to reforest the mountain has dispossessed the poorer herders of an important means of livelihood.⁵³

Environmental justice thus insists that the rights of nature must be balanced by the rights of humans, especially those who are the poorest. It raises the question of human consumption patterns and resource sustainability. While overpopulation itself is an environmental problem in many parts of the world, the unequal consumption of resources is a greater problem. In this the Jains find themselves in the position of being for the most part residents of the South, but successfully aspiring to the consumption patterns of the elites in the North. Can Jains balance their social location, as members of the Southern elite, many of whom are also striving to enter the upper echelons of the North, with the environmental need to redress patterns of consumption? Can Jains find ways to make their involvement with the world not one in which they monopolize resources for themselves and externalize the social and environmental costs onto the poor, both Jain and non-Jain? Can they find ways to strive to mobilize Jain values in support of a more just distribution of resources?

Without addressing issues of economic justice, there can be no lasting and significant contribution to the environment's well-being.⁵⁴ During the twentieth century most Jains have wholeheartedly embraced the values of global industrial and postindustrial capitalism, and have thereby contributed significantly to environmental and social degradation. At the same time, one does find among both Indian and diaspora Jains alternative voices calling for attention to the needs

of the poor and dispossessed. Can Jain activists amplify these latter voices and mobilize Jains on behalf of economic and environmental justice?

In this context environmental justice also asks, in what ways does the Jain tradition provide a response to the issue of overconsumption? On the one hand, anyone observing the wealth of the Jain community would assume that there is not a ready answer. But here I think that the Jain tradition does have values deeply embedded in both practice and thought that can be brought to the foreground. On many occasions when I have addressed groups of young Jains in North America, they themselves have commented on the paradox that the Jains on the whole are an aggressively accumulating community, while the value of nonpossession (*aparigraha*) is at the center of the stated ideals of both mendicant and lay life. Clearly, this is a paradox worthy of deeper consideration by Jain environmentalists.

Looking at some of the ideals expressed in the lay vows indicates ways in which the Jain tradition understands the problems of overconsumption. The vow of *asteya* is usually understood to mean, simply, not stealing, but in textual discussions it is more broadly understood to entail not taking anything that has not been freely given, whether by a person or by another living creature. This could easily be read to mean that many of the ways in which one accumulates resources within the industrial capitalist system, whether from nature or from other humans, are morally problematic. Similarly, two of the vows recommended for laity are also amenable to an environmental reading.⁵⁵ The vow of *bhogopabhoga-parimāna*, or enjoining the consumption of a number of forbidden items, is generally applied only to diet but could easily be applied to overconsumption more generally. The vow of *anarthadanda*, or enjoining a number of harmful occupations and activities, is also usually understood to refer to a narrow range of occupations that clearly violate *ahimsā*. But this also could easily be extended to involve reflection on the environmental and justice consequences of one's occupation and consumer patterns. Such reflection is already beginning among younger diaspora Jains. In May 1997 Young Jains, a British organization, held a conference entitled "Jainism in Business and Professional Life" in Watford, England. Atul K. Shah, one of the organizers of the conference, wrote:

Our happiness is directly connected to the happiness of others. If we are rich and others are poor, our happiness will only be temporary.

Sooner or later, the poor will knock at our door, and some may even knock it down. Just because they live far away in slums and we cannot see them does not mean that we will be able to ignore them for long. Jainism argues that we can never be rich when others are poor. True richness comes from sharing and giving, from raising ourselves and others at the same time. . . . How can we call ourselves successful, when the society to which we belong kills and plunders so indiscriminately? How can we call ourselves Jains when the firms we invest in are greedy, violent and destructive?⁵⁶

Finally, some proponents of environmental justice have argued that the problem of environmental abuse, or human violence toward the nonhuman, cannot be separated from the problem of war and from all other forms of human violence against other humans. Again, this is an issue that would take us far afield, and so I will mention in passing that just as Jain attitudes and practices toward the environment are changing in the context of the new episteme of environmentalism, so Jain attitudes and practices of *ahimsā*, which have traditionally been expressed largely in terms of diet, are also facing queries from other traditions of nonviolence, such as those of religious and secular pacifism and nonviolent action, that root nonviolent action in understandings of social justice. Jains have rarely understood *ahimsā* as involving them in participation in movements to minimize violence in society at large or in efforts to resist war and militarization, but environmentalists ask if such a narrow compass for nonviolence should not be expanded.⁵⁷

Ecology as Local and Regional

This leads me to a final question related to those raised concerning the connections between environmental and social justice. From among the many issues raised by the polycentric field known as deep ecology, let me turn to those raised by bioregionalism.⁵⁸ Bioregionalism asks what the proper relation of a human population is to its bioregion. Emerging out of this question, it further asks whether or not centralized social structures are inevitably oppressive of both humans and the environment.

Bioregionalism advocates decentralized, self-determined modes of social organization and culture that are predicated upon biological in-

tegrities as measured by what are termed bioregions. A bioregion is determined by three factors: 1) the biotic shift, or change in plant and animal species, is less than 15 to 25 percent; 2) it lies within an integral watershed and other landforms; and 3) it exhibits clear cultural continuities. Within any bioregion, there may be any of four different inhabitory zones, each of which entails distinctive modes of livelihood and interaction with the environment: cities, suburbs, rural areas, and wilderness. Bioregionalism, as with environmental justice, focuses on human consumption patterns; but, whereas environmental justice advocates are divided in their attitudes toward the possibility of unending economic growth, bioregionalists tend to assume its impossibility and so the need to develop sustainable, stable economic systems not predicated on growth. Bioregionalism is perhaps best exemplified by the oft-reprinted questionnaire entitled "Where You At?" which emphasizes basic cultural and environmental knowledge of one's bioregion.⁵⁹

In many ways bioregionalism emerges from a distinctly North American (and Australian) cultural context of a highly urbanized society coupled with a large expanse of underpopulated and depopulated land. Thus, some of the questions raised by bioregionalism are inappropriate for people living in India. But others of the questions are still pertinent to India, and I would argue that many of them are especially pertinent for a community such as the Jains that has also been highly urbanized for many centuries.

Bioregionalism asks of the Jains, to what extent are environmental problems caused or exacerbated by Jain understandings of and attitudes toward their bioregions? Have Jains contributed to healthy environmental development within the cities and towns where they tend to live? The history of the Jain communities of northern and western India is a history of frequent migrations. Has this pattern contributed to a lack of environmental sensitivity to where they live? What about the environmental consequences of the semi-peripatetic patterns both enjoyed upon Jain mendicants and often times necessary for Jain traders, or what about the North American patterns of residential mobility being adopted by many immigrant Jains?

Here, the requirement that all mendicants cease their peregrinations for the four months of the rainy season could be reinterpreted as a call for them to develop greater connections with specific bioregions. Similarly, two of the twelve vows recommended for laity—

dig and *deśavakāśika*—involve the individual vowing not to go beyond a certain geographical limit, and so they could be reinterpreted in a bioregional light.

Some of the Jain mindfulness techniques could be interpreted as calling for greater attention to bioregion. *Samāyika*, the principle Jain technique of meditation, is understood in the case of mendicants to involve perpetual awareness of all of one's actions, both voluntary and involuntary, especially with an eye toward reducing occasions of causing harm to other bodies. It is also practiced by many laity for short periods on a regular basis. Clearly, this could be developed into a form of environmental mindfulness.

In a similar fashion, the five *samitis*, or rules of conduct, that amplify the mendicant great vows⁶⁰ could be fruitfully applied to environmental awareness. Care in walking (*ṭṛyā-samiti*) could call for one to pay attention to the environmental consequences of all one's modes of transport. Care in accepting things (*eṣanā-samiti*) could be expanded to entail considering the environmental history of objects that come into one's life, from modes of extraction and production to modes of transportation, marketing, and selling. Care in picking up and putting down things (*ādāna-nikṣepaṇa-samiti*) clearly calls on one to pay attention to one's surroundings. Finally, care in the performance of excretory functions (*utsarga-samiti*) calls on one to investigate what happens both to waste items that one disposes of personally and waste that is a by-product of extractive and manufacturing processes.

Concluding Observations

In this essay I have attempted to indicate what I perceive to be some of the questions that the new and developing episteme of environmental thought and practice poses for Jains. I have also indicated some of the ways in which Jains might creatively investigate and reinterpret their own traditional modes of thought, speech, and action as they strive to develop distinctively and authentically Jain responses to the global environmental crisis.

The Jain emphasis on adherence to the truth in past, present, and future will mean that Jains need to look unblinkingly at the many ways they have wittingly and unwittingly contributed to environmental degradation. Such an adherence to truth can also be a most power-

ful tool for social change; this can be seen in both the Gandhian emphasis on *satyāgraha*, or nonviolent action in pursuit of the truth, and the Quaker assertion that struggling for justice oftentimes requires one to "speak truth to power."

The Jain soteriology, with its devaluation of the material world in the pursuit of a pure spirituality, is in many ways not conducive to the development of an environmental ethic. But the Jains also have a rich history of daily practices and attitudes that foster a much more positive engagement with the material world. Such habitual activities in relationship to the environment oftentimes underlie and inform an environmental ethic, more so than abstract moral rules and injunctions.⁶¹

Jains understand the wide variety of life, from single-sensed life-forms through five-sensed humans through perfected and liberated God-like souls, to form an interdependent continuity of existence. There is a moral hierarchy of life-forms, depending on the number of senses and the ability to reason. At the same time all souls, whether they inhabit single-sensed or five-sensed bodies, are in their essential natures ontologically identical, and so there is a denial that this hierarchy has any ultimate value. This combination of a context-sensitive ethic of differentiated bodies and abilities, with a universal ethic of the potential of each soul, leads to a distinctively Jain understanding of the relation between the "human" and "nonhuman" realms.⁶²

Jain morality is also grounded in the understanding of *karma* as tying all life-forms together in an intercausal web. Jains are therefore expected to pay attention to the ways they both positively and negatively affect all other life-forms in thoughts, words, and actions, and also through the three modalities of action, commission, and approval or disapproval.

All of this will lead to a distinctive Jain environmental ethic. Such an ethic, however, will have to come to terms with the social location of the Jains, many of whom are among the socioeconomic elite of India (and increasingly in Britain and North America as well). It will also have to address their geographical location as a community that has traditionally emphasized a willingness to move, either in pursuit of economic opportunities or to prevent monastic attachment to any single place. Some of these economic, social, and mendicant traditions may need to be reevaluated in light of the growing recognition

that solutions to ecological problems frequently require a long-term commitment to a particular place and community.

Some readers might argue that this set of notes and queries is idiosyncratic, more reflective of those questions which this particular author finds challenging than an objective assessment of the full range of environmental thought. I would contend, on the contrary, that each of the questions raises an important issue for environmentally engaged Jains to consider carefully. Some will be more productive of Jain answers than others. Some call for answers in terms of Jain practice, others in terms of reflection on the assumptions and implications of the Jain worldview. All will aid in the development of a self-conscious and therefore potentially effective Jain environmental ethic.

Notes

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1. Wendell Berry, *Home Economics* (San Francisco: North Point Press), 6–20.

2. *Ibid.*, 20.

3. *Ibid.*

4. In line with most recent scholarship, in this essay I use the spelling "Jain" rather than "Jaina," as it reflects the spelling and pronunciation favored by most Jains themselves.

5. I have not encountered the expression "engaged Jainism" yet among Jain friends. I import the concept from "engaged Buddhism," on which see *The Path of Compassion: Writings on Socially Engaged Buddhism*, ed. Fred Eppsteiner, 2d ed. (Berkeley: Parallax Press, 1988); Kenneth Kraft, "Prospects of a Socially Engaged Buddhism," in *Inner Peace, World Peace: Essays on Buddhism and Nonviolence*, ed. Kenneth Kraft (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1992), 11–30; *Engaged Buddhism: Buddhist Liberation Movements in Asia*, ed. Christopher S. Queen and Sallie B. King (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1996); and *Engaged Buddhism in the West*, ed. Christopher S. Queen (Boston: Wisdom Publications, 2000). See also the quarterly journal *Turning Wheel*, published by the Buddhist Peace Fellowship, as well as its home page, www.bpf.org.

6. The proceedings of the conference will be published in the journal of the Department of Philosophy of the University of Rajasthan.

7. There is an extensive vernacular Jain discourse on environmentalism, most of which in an uncritical and apologetic tone argues that Jainism is and long has been an environmental tradition. This discourse is very similar to the English discourse Anne Valley discusses in her chapter in this book; it is not clear to me, however, whether these discourses have arisen independently or not. The vernacular discussion of Jainism as an environmental religion is found in the popular literature of all four Jain traditions. For example, a special issue of the Digambara quarterly *Prakṛt Vidyā* (volume 3, numbers 1–3, April–December 1991), published from Udaipur, on environmental harmony and vegetarianism (*pariyāvaran-samīlanam evam sākāhāṇ*) contains thirteen articles, such as Subhā Parivā, "What Is Environmental Culture?" ("Kya hai Pariyāvaran Sanskriti?"); Prem Sunan Jain, "Environment: The Religious Basis of Protection" ("Pariyāvaran: Samrakṣaṇ kā Dhārmik Adhār"); Rājmal Loṭhā, "Environmental Pollution: Who is Responsible?" ("Pariyāvaran-Praduṣaṇ: Kaun Jimmevār?"); Surendra Botharā, "Ācāraṅga: The Oldest Environmental Text" ("Ācāraṅga: Pariyāvaran kā Prācīnīyam Granth"); and Lakṣmīcand Saroj, "The Life of Environmentalism Is Vegetarianism" ("Pariyāvaran kā Prāṇ Sākāhāṇ"). The May 1992 issue of the Digambara monthly *Tṛṭhāṅkar* (vol. 22, no. 1), published from Indore, contained

several articles on environmental issues, most notably Surendra Botharā, "The Environment and Jain Responsibility" ("Pariyāvaran aur Jain Dāyīvatā"). The Śhāhākāśī monthly *Jinvaṇī*, published from Jaipur, has regularly carried articles on the environment during the past decade, such as Prem Sunan Jain, "The Role of Jainism in National Culture and Environmental Protection" ("Rāṣṭriya Sanskriti evam Pariyāvaran-Samrakṣaṇ me Jain Dharm ki Bhhnikā"), vol. 44, no. 2 (February 1987): 58–60; Gulābśimh Darā, "Protection of the Environment Is Protection of Life" ("Pariyāvaran ki Rakṣā: Jivan ki Rakṣā"), vol. 55, no. 11 (November 1994): 32–34; and Sūrājmal Jain, "Environmental Protection in Jain Philosophy" ("Jain Darśan me Pariyāvaran Samrakṣaṇ"), vol. 55, nos. 5–7 (May–July, 1998): 45–48, 19–22, 21–30. See also Bhagcandra Jain, *Jainism and the Environment (Jain Dharm aur Pariyāvaran)* (Delhi: New Bharatiya Book Company, 2001).

8. This replicates a pattern that has existed for too long in most aspects of Jain studies; see Padmanabh S. Jaini, "The Jains and the Western Scholar," *Sambodhi* 5, nos. 2–3 (July–October 1976): 121–31, reprinted in his *Collected Papers on Jain Studies* (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 2000), 23–36.

9. The phrase is that of L. M. Singhvi, *The Jain Declaration of Nature* (reprint, Cincinnati: Federation of Jain Associations in North America, 1990), 5 (reprinted as the appendix to this volume). Similar statements can be found in the writings of Michael Tobias (*Life Force: The World of Jainism* [Berkeley: Asian Humanities Press, 1991]; *A Vision of Nature: Traces of the Original World* [Kent, Ohio: Kent State University Press, 1995]), as well as in many Jain publications aimed at English-speaking Jains in India, Europe, and North America.

10. Harold Coward, "New Theology on Population, Consumption, and Ecology," *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* 65 (1997): 261. In addition to Coward's article, my thinking here has been shaped by the comments of Ashok Akhujkar in a different yet analogous context, that of a workshop on Vedānta and conflict resolution held by the Dharam Hinduja Indic Research Center at Columbia University in October 1994.

11. I am here stating a proposition concerning the relationships among language, culture, and thought that is not universally accepted. The debates concerning these relationships in terms of "human rights" and "justice" in the contexts of Buddhism and Confucianism illustrate the basic positions of whether or not a concept can exist in a culture if there is no exact word or word cluster for it. See, in the case of Buddhism, Damien V. Keown, "Are There Human Rights in Buddhism?" and Craig K. Ihara, "Why There Are No Rights in Buddhism: A Reply to Damien Keown," both in *Buddhism and Human Rights*, ed. Damien V. Keown, Charles S. Prebish, and Wayne R. Husted (Richmond, Va.: Curzon Press, 1998), 15–41 and 43–51; and, in the case of Confucianism, Henry Rosemont, Jr., "Why Take Rights Seriously? A Confucian Critique," and Roger T. Ames, "Rites as Rights: The Confucian Alternative," both in *Human Rights and the World's Religions*, ed. Leroy S. Rouner (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1988), 167–82 and 199–216; Henry Rosemont, Jr., "Rights-Bearing Individuals and Role-Bearing Persons," in *Rules, Rituals, and Responsibilities: Essays Dedicated to Herbert Fingarette*, ed. Mary I. Bockover (La Salle, Ill.: Open Court, 1991), 71–101; and Sumner B. Twiss, "A Constructive Framework for Discussing Confucianism and Human Rights," in *Confucianism and Human*

Rights, ed. Wm. Theodore de Bary and Tu Wei-Ming (New York: Columbia University Press, 1998), 27–53.

12. Gary Snyder, *The Practice of the Wild* (San Francisco: North Point Press, 1990), 8–9.

13. For some illustrative examples of the fast-expanding literature of environmental history, see, among many others, Lawrence Buell, *The Environmental Imagination: Thoreau, Nature Writing, and the Formation of American Culture* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1995); William Cronon, *Changes in the Land: Indians, Colonists, and the Ecology of New England* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1983), *Nature's Metropolis: Chicago and the Great West* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1991), and *Uncommon Ground: Toward Reinventing Nature*, ed. William Cronon (New York: W. W. Norton, 1995); J. R. McNeill, *Something New under the Sun: An Environmental History of the Twentieth-Century World* (New York: W. W. Norton, 2000); Carolyn Merchant, *The Death of Nature: Women, Ecology, and the Scientific Revolution* (San Francisco: Harper and Row, 1980), and *Ecological Revolutions: Nature, Gender, and Science in New England* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1989); Roderick Nash, *Wilderness and the American Mind*, 3d ed. (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1982); Barbara Novak, *Nature and Culture: American Landscape and Painting 1825–1875* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1980); Max Oelschlaeger, *The Idea of Wilderness: From Prehistory to the Age of Ecology* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1991); and Simon Schama, *Landscape and Memory* (New York: Vintage, 1996). The work of William R. LaFleur ("Saijō and the Buddhist Value of Nature," *History of Religions* 13 [1973]: 227–48) and Miranda Shaw ("Nature in Dōgen's Philosophy and Poetry," *Journal of the International Association of Buddhist Studies* 8 [1985]: 111–32) on Japan also provide models for such scholarship.

Environmental history is not as well-established a field in South Asia. For an overview of the literature, see the excellent introductions to *Nature, Culture, Imperialism: Essays on the Environmental History of South Asia*, ed. David Arnold and Ramachandra Guha (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995) and *Nature and the Orient: The Environmental History of South and Southeast Asia*, ed. Richard H. Grove, Vinita Damodaran, and Sarpal Sangwan (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1998). Both of these works, as well as Madhav Gadgil and Ramachandra Guha, *This Frissured Land: An Ecological History of India* (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1992), focus much more on material and political-economic analyses than cultural analyses. Foundations for a cultural history of nature and the environment in South Asia can be found in works such as Ananda K. Coomaraswamy, *The Transformation of Nature in Art* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1934); Alan Entwistle, "The Cult of Krishna-Gopal as a Version of Pastoral," in *Devotion Divine: Bhakti Traditions from the Regions of India. Studies in Honour of Charlotte Vaudeville*, ed. Diana L. Eck and Françoise Mallison (Groningen: Egbert Forsten; and Paris: École Française d'Extrême-Orient, 1991), 73–90; Peter Gaefke, "The Concept of Nature in the Literature of Bengal, Hindi, and Urdu around 1900," *Studien zur Indologie und Iranistik* 10 (1985): 79–101; A. K. Ramanujan, *Poems of Love and War* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1985); David Sopher, "Place and Landscape in Indian Tradition," *Landscape* 29 (1986): 2–9; and Francis Zimmermann, *The Jungle and the Aroma of*

Meads: An Ecological Theme in Hindu Medicine, trans. Janet Lloyd (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1987).

14. See John E. Cort, "Recent Fieldwork Studies of the Contemporary Jains," *Religious Studies Review* 23 (1997): 103–11, and Paul Dundas, "Recent Research on Jainism," *Religious Studies Review* 23 (1997): 113–19, for bibliographic introductions into this scholarship.

15. "Jains" and "Jainism" as unmarked, nonsectarian categories have emerged as social realities only in recent decades in North America and Europe, as the Jain community has actively striven to eschew sectarian differences. In India, however, whenever one uses the words "Jain" and "Jainism," there always is (or should be) a hidden sectarian qualifier.

16. See the similar comments by Lance E. Nelson, "Reading the *Bhagavadgītā* from an Ecological Perspective," in *Hinduism and Ecology: The Intersection of Earth, Sky, and Water*, ed. Christopher Key Chapple and Mary Evelyn Tucker (Cambridge, Mass.: Center for the Study of World Religions, Harvard Divinity School, 2000), 135, 157–58 n. 31.

17. On the vows, see Paul Dundas, *The Jains* (London: Routledge, 1992), 135–38. 18. On *pratikramana*, see John E. Cort, *Jains in the World: Religious Values and Ideology in India* (New York and Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2001), 123–24; and James Laidlaw, *Riches and Renunciation: Religion, Economy and Society among the Jains* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1995), 190–215. On the eighteen *pāpashānas*, or most serious transgressions, see Laidlaw, *Riches and Renunciation*, 211–12; and R. Williams, *Jaina Yoga* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1963), 206–7.

19. The clearest example of such programmatic recovery of lost or neglected voices has been the extensive work of feminist scholarship over recent decades. For examples of such efforts within environmental history, see Lynn White, Jr.'s advocacy of Francis of Assisi ("The Historical Roots of Our Ecologic Crisis," *Science* 155 [1967]: 1203–7), and Ramachandra Guha's and Juan Martínez-Alier's advocacy of M. K. Gandhi, Nicholas Georgescu-Roegen, and Lewis Mumford as precursors of modern environmental thought (*Varieties of Environmentalism: Essays North and South* [London: Earthscan, 1997], 153–201).

20. Gary Paul Nabhan, *Cultures of Habitar: On Nature, Culture, and Story* (Washington, D.C.: Counterpoint, 1997), 319.

21. My discussion here summarizes what is argued at much greater length in my *Jains in the World*.

22. Jainism is by no means unique among the world's religious traditions in this ideological focus on a soteriology that in the end either devalues or negates altogether the material world of day-to-day existence. See the similar observations concerning Advaita and other orthodox Brāhminical metaphysics by Vasudha Narayanan, "One Tree Is Equal to Ten Sons: Some Hindu Responses to the Problems of Ecology, Population, and Consumerism," in *Visions of a New Earth: Religious Perspectives on Population, Consumption, and Ecology*, ed. Harold Coward and Daniel C. Maguire (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2000), 111–29; Lance E. Nelson, "The Dualism of Non-Dualism: Advaita Vedānta and the Irrelevance of Nature," in *Purifying the Earthly Body of God: Religion and Ecology in Hindu India*, ed. Lance E. Nelson (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1998), 61–88; Nelson, "Read-

ing the *Bhagavadgītā* from an Ecological Perspective"; and Arvind Sharma, "Attitudes to Nature in the Early Upanisads," in *Purifying the Earthly Body of God: Religion and Ecology in Hindu India*, ed. Lance E. Nelson (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1998), 51–60.

23. See, for examples, Marcus Banks, "Representing the Bodies of the Jains," in *Rethinking Visual Anthropology*, ed. Marcus Banks and Howard Morphy (New Haven: Yale University Press), 216–39; Padmanabh S. Jaini, "Fear of Food? Jain Attitudes on Eating," in *Jain Studies in Honour of Jozef Delau*, ed. Rudy Smet and Kenji Watanabe (Tokyo: Hon-no-Tomoshai), 339–53, reprinted in *Collected Papers on Jaina Studies* (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 2000), 281–96; and Laidlaw, *Riches and Renunciation*, 151–286.

24. For the sake of readers who are not familiar with Jainism, I here summarize these two realms of value (adapted from my *Jains in the World*, 6–7):

The *mokṣa-mārga* is the orthodox ideology of the path to liberation, as symbolized in the temple image of the liberated Jina, who in the past traveled the path to liberation and then taught it to the world, and the living figure of the world-renouncing ascetic mendicant. It consists of correct faith in the truth and efficacy of the Jain teachings, correct knowledge and understanding of those teachings, and correct conduct that leads one along the path to liberation. These are the three jewels that make up the Jain religion, to which are often added a fourth jewel of correct asceticism, which emphasizes the central place of ascetic practices in Jain soteriology. Traveling the *mokṣa-mārga* involves increased faith in and knowledge of the true nature of the universe. It also involves conduct designed simultaneously to reduce and ultimately halt the influx of karma and to scrub away the accumulated karma of this and previous lives. Karma is the "problem" according to the *mokṣa-mārga* ideology. According to the Jains karma is a subtle material substance. Every unenlightened thought, deed and word causes karma to stick to the soul like invisible glue. This karma both creates ignorance of the true nature of the universe and blocks the inherent perfection of the soul. The soul in its pure, unfettered state is characterized by the four infinitudes of knowledge (*jñāna*), perception or intuition (*darśana*), bliss (*sukha*), and power (*virya*). When finally freed of its enslaving karma, the enlightened and liberated soul floats to the top of the universe to exist forever as a self-sufficient monad absorbed in the four infinitudes. The *mokṣa-mārga* thus necessitates the increased isolation of the soul, and emphasizes separation of the individual from worldly ties and interactions.

The realm of wellbeing is not ideologically defined, and is therefore somewhat more difficult to delineate. . . . Whereas the *mokṣa-mārga* involves the increasing removal of oneself from all materiality in an effort to realize one's purely spiritual essence, wellbeing is very much a matter of one's material embodiment. It is marked by health, wealth, mental peace, emotional contentment, and satisfaction in one's worldly endeavors. . . . The "goal" of this realm, to the extent that it is at all goal-oriented, is a state of harmony with and satisfaction in the world, a state in which one's social, moral, and spiritual interactions and responsibilities are properly balanced.

25. See also the chapter by Paul Dundas in this volume.

26. On the context-sensitivity of South Asian ethics, see Charles Hallisey, "Ethical Particularism in Theravada Buddhism," *Journal of Buddhist Ethics* 3 (1996): 32–43; and A. K. Ramanujan, "Is There an Indian Way of Thinking? An Informal Essay," *Contributions to Indian Sociology*, n.s., 23 (1989): 41–58, reprinted in *The Collected Essays of A. K. Ramanujan*, ed. Vinay Dharwadker (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1999), 34–51.

27. Here I think of the many problems unnecessarily created by Jains who have tried to establish the "scientific bases" of Jain doctrine and worldview, but who have worked with an inadequate understanding of the presuppositions and operating principles of the episteme of the scientific method.

28. An excellent overview of these various streams within environmental thought and practice is Carolyn Merchant, *Radical Ecology: The Search for a Livable World* (New York: Routledge, 1992). The reader should be aware that in my discussion I have played down the many and oftentimes strident disagreements among different environmental thinkers. In my notes I have indicated literature to which the interested reader can go for more on the background and expression of the various questions raised by the various environmentalist voices. I have tried to provide foundational works in these subfields, as well as examples of the most recent scholarship, which will also provide the most recent bibliographies. This is by no means a comprehensive bibliography, but rather a starting point for further reading.

29. Dundas, *The Jains*, 80–83; and Jaini, *The Jaina Path of Purification*, 97–106, 111.

30. On the Jain biology of *kāyas*, see Jaini, *The Jaina Path of Purification*, 108–111.

31. See Bill Devall and George Sessions, *Deep Ecology: Living as if Nature Mattered* (Salt Lake City: Peregrine Smith Books, 1985); *The Deep Ecology Movement: An Introductory Anthology*, ed. Alan Drengson and Yuchi Inoue (Berkeley: North Atlantic Books, 1995); *Beneath the Surface: Critical Essays in the Philosophy of Deep Ecology*, ed. Eric Katz, Andrew Light, and David Rothenberg (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 2000); Merchant, *Radical Ecology*, 85–109; and *Deep Ecology for the Twenty-first Century*, ed. George Sessions (Boston: Shambhala, 1995).

32. The issue of whether diversity has intrinsic or relative value is, of course, not limited to the relationships between humans and nonhumans. Ashis Nandy has recently raised it as the central moral issue in India's social and cultural future as well: Ashis Nandy, "Reimagining India's Present," *Mamushi* 123 (March–April 2001): 17–21.

33. See Merchant, *Radical Ecology*, 61–82; Roderrick Nash, *The Rights of Nature: A History of Environmental Ethics* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1989); Christopher D. Stone, *Earth and Other Ethical: The Case for Moral Pluralism* (New York: Harper and Row, 1987).

34. Marie-Claude Mahias, *Delivrance et convivialité: Le système culinaire des Jaina* (Paris: Éditions de la Maison des Sciences de l'Homme, 1985).

35. Jain biology distinguishes between plant bodies that contain each a single soul (*pratyekā*) and those that contain aggregated souls (*sādhāraṇa*).

36. Within the Jain ontology of four possible realms of birth (*gati*), plants and animals (*trayaṅca*) are collectively considered as one realm; the other three are humans (*manuṣya*), heavenly beings (*deva*), and infernal beings (*nāraka*).

37. Translated from text in *Śrāddha-Praikramana Sūtra (Prabodha Tīkā)*, ed. Panniyas Bhadrakarvijaygani and Muni Kalyāṇprabhvijay (Bombay: Jain Sahitya Vikas Mandai, 1977), 2:120–21.
38. Here I am thinking of Arthur Waskow's (*Seasons of Our Joy* [Boston: Beacon Press, 1982]) creative reading of Jewish rituals from a perspective concerned with social justice, and of the adaptations of traditional precepts by engaged Buddhists, such as Robert Aitken (*The Mind of Clover: Essays in Zen Buddhist Ethics*) (San Francisco: North Point Press, 1984), 3–104, Bernie Glassman (*Bearing Witness: A Zen Master's Lessons in Making Peace*) [New York: Bell Tower, 1998], 214–17), and Thich Nhat Hanh (*Interbeing: Fourteen Guidelines for Engaged Buddhism*, ed. Fred Epstein, rev. ed. [Berkeley: Parallax Press, 1993]), to encompass also social justice, as models for a "green *pratikramana*."
39. See Cort, *Jains in the World*, chap. 3.
40. The classic statement of this within a Christian ecological context is Salife McFague, *Models of God: Theology for an Ecological, Nuclear Age* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1987). See also her *Body of God: An Ecological Theology* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1993).
41. This aspect of Jain cosmology might well bear fruitful comparison with other cosmologies, such as the Chinese "continuity of being" (Tu Weiming, "The Continuity of Being: Chinese Visions of Nature," in *Confucianism and Ecology: The Interrelation of Heaven, Earth, and Humans*, ed. Mary Evelyn Tucker and John Bertrone [Cambridge, Mass.: Center for the Study of World Religions, Harvard Divinity School, 1998], 105–21), the Christian "chain of being" (Arthur O. Lovejoy, *The Great Chain of Being: A Study of the History of an Idea* [Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1936]), and, in a different context, Wendell Berry's concept of the "great economy" (*Home Economics*, 54–75).
42. From among the vast array of ecofeminist writings, see Susan Griffin, *Woman and Nature: The Rearing Inside Her* (New York: Harper and Row, 1978); Merchant, *Radical Ecology*, 183–210; Karen J. Warren, *Ecofeminist Philosophy: A Western Perspective on What It Is and Why It Matters* (Lanham, Md.: Rowman and Littlefield, 2000); and the following volumes edited by Karen J. Warren: *Ecological Feminism* (London: Routledge, 1994), *Ecological Feminist Philosophies* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1996), and *Ecofeminism: Women, Culture, Nature* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1997). For Hindu expressions of ecofeminism, see Lina Gupta, "Ganga: Purity, Pollution, and Hinduism," in *Ecofeminism and the Sacred*, ed. Carol J. Adams (New York: Continuum), 99–116; Maria Mies and Vandana Shiva, *Ecofeminism* (New Delhi: Kali for Women, 1993); Rita Dasgupta Sherrin, "Sacred Immanence: Reflections of Ecofeminism in Hindu Tantra," in *Purifying the Earthly Body of God: Religion and Ecology in Hindu India*, ed. Lance E. Nelson (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1998), 89–131; and Vandana Shiva, *Staying Alive: Women, Ecology and Development* (London: Zed Books, 1989).
43. See Lina Gupta, "Kali, the Savior," in *After Patriarchy: Feminist Transformations of the World Religions*, ed. Paula M. Cooney, William R. Eakin, and Jay B. McDaniell (Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 1991), 15–38; Vijaya Nagarajan, "The Earth as Goddess Bhū Devi: Toward a Theory of 'Embedded Ecologies' in Folk Hinduism," in *Purifying the Earthly Body of God: Religion and Ecology in Hindu India*, ed. Lance

- E. Nelson (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1998), 269–95; and Sherrin, "Sacred Immanence."
44. The classic ecofeminist expression of these connections is Susan Griffin, *Poetry and Silence: Culture's Revenge against Nature* (New York: Harper and Row, 1981).
45. A start to this large project has been made in works such as Sherry Elizabeth Fohr, "Gender and Chastity: Female Jain Renouncers" (Ph.D. diss., University of Virginia, 2001); Savitri Holmstrom, "Towards a Politics of Renunciation: Jain Women and Asceticism in Rajasthan" (M.A. diss., University of Edinburgh, 1998); Padmanabh S. Jaini, *Gender and Salvation: Jaina Debates on the Spiritual Liberation of Women* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1991); M. Whitney Kelting, *Singing to the Jinas: Jain Laywomen, Mandal Singing, and the Negotiations of Jain Devotion* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2001); Josephine Reynolds, "Prestige, Honour and the Family: Laywomen's Religiosity amongst the Śvetāmbar Mūrtipūjāk Jains in Jaipur," *Bulletin d'Études Indiennes* 5 (1987): 313–59; Josephine Reynolds, "Women and the Reproduction of the Jain Community," in *The Assembly of Listeners: Jains in Society*, ed. Michael Carrithers and Caroline Humphrey (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 41–65; N. Shāntā, *La Voie Jaina: Histoire, spiritualité, vie des ascètes pèlerines de l'Inde* (Paris: O.E.I.L., 1985); Anne Vallery, *Guardians of the Transcendent: An Ethnography of a Jain Ascetic Community* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2002); and Leonard Zwilling and Michael J. Sweet, "Like a City Ablaze": The Third Sex and the Creation of Sexuality in Jain Religious Literature," *Journal of the History of Sexuality* 6 (1996): 359–84. The study of Jain understandings of both women's religiosity and gender construction in Jainism will be further enhanced by the dissertations-in-progress of TinarMarie Jones (McMaster University) and Madhurina Shah (University of Maryland).
46. Jaini, *Gender and Salvation*.
47. Kelting, *Singing to the Jinas*.
48. Again, the literature here is vast. See Murray Bookchin, *Remaking Society: Pathways to a Green Future* (Boston: South End Press, 1990); Robert D. Bullard, *Dumping in Dixie* (Boulder: Westview Press, 1994); *Unequal Protection: Environmental Justice and Communities of Color*, ed. Robert D. Bullard (San Francisco: Sierra Club Books, 1994); Luke W. Cole and Sheila R. Foster, *From the Ground Up: Environmental Racism and the Rise of the Environmental Justice Movement* (New York: New York University Press, 2001); Ramachandra Guha and Juan Martínez-Alier, *Varieties of Environmentalism: Essays North and South* (London: Earthscan, 1997); and *Global Ethics and Environment*, ed. Nicholas Low (London: Routledge, 1999). One should note that both social ecology and Southern environmentalism have roots in various forms of Marxist and materialist analyses, which pose other questions for any Jain environmental ethic.
49. Guha and Martínez-Alier, *Varieties of Environmentalism*, 91.
50. Ramachandra Guha, "Radical American Environmentalism and Wilderness Preservation: A Third World Critique," in Guha and Martínez-Alier, *Varieties of Environmentalism*, 101.
51. Bullard, *Dumping in Dixie*.
52. Madhav Gadgil and Ramachandra Guha, *Ecology and Equity: The Use and Abuse of Nature in Contemporary India* (London: Routledge, 1995).

53. Information on Shatrujaya comes from the short article "Greening of Palitana" in *Ahimsa* 7, no. 4 (June-December 1997): 7, and from conversations with Jain friends in Gujarat. See also the essay by the environmental activist John Seed ("Spirit of the Earth: A Battle-Wearry Rainforest Activist Journeys to India to Renew His Soul," *Yoga Journal* 138 [1998]: 69-71, 132-36) about similar problems in a program to reforest the sacred Hindu mountain of Annachala in South India, in which the Australian author betrays an attitude of arrogance in his portrayal of the indifference of the Indian pilgrims to his ecological agenda.

54. For thorough expressions of this position from a Christian perspective, see Herman E. Daly and John B. Cobb, Jr., *For the Common Good: Redirecting the Economy toward Community, the Environment, and a Sustainable Future* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1989), and Paul G. King and David O. Woodyard, *Liberating Nature: Theology and Economics in a New Order* (Cleveland: Pilgrim Press, 1999).

55. The twelve lay vows are almost never taken in a formal sense by laity, and themselves are part of the *mokṣa-mārga* ideological discourse. But they are expressive of values widely understood within the Jain community.

56. Anil K. Shah, "Imprisoned by Success," *Young Jains International Newsletter* 11, no. 3 (1997): 5-6.

57. See Sukhlal Sanghavi, *Pacifism and Jainism* (Banaras: Jain Cultural Research Society, 1950). Few Jains with whom I spoke in India in May 1998 saw the Jain understanding of *ahimsā* as calling for public opposition to either the tests of nuclear weapons at Pokharan or the broader militarization of Indian society, although the Jaipur Hindi press did carry reports of two Terāpanthi monks speaking out against the tests at a public meeting on May 24.

58. In addition to Merchant *Radical Ecology*: 217-22, see the following: *Home! A Bioregional Reader*, ed. Van Andrus, Christopher Plant, Judith Plant, and Eleanor Wright (Philadelphia: New Society Press, 1990); *Bioregional Assessments: Science at the Crossroads of Management and Policy*, ed. K. Norman Johnson et al. (Washington, D.C.: Island Press, 1998); and Kirkpatrick Sale, *Dwellers in the Land: The Bioregional Vision* (San Francisco: Sierra Club), 1985. See also Christian-based expressions of stewardship, such as those of Wendell Berry (*The Unsettling of America: Culture and Agriculture* [New York: Avon, 1977]) and Wes Jackson (*Becoming Native to This Place* [Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 1994]), which share much with bioregionalism.

59. See Merchant, *Radical Ecology*, 219.

60. Jaini, *The Jain Path of Purification*, 247-48.

61. My thoughts here have been informed by Maria Hibberts, "The Ethics of the Gift: A Study of Medieval South Asian Discourses on *Dana*" (Ph.D. diss., Harvard University, 1999). See also Pierre Bourdieu, *Outline of a Theory of Practice*, trans. Richard Nice (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1977).

62. I am here simplifying a rather complex topic, for Jains have not spoken with a single voice concerning the soteriological capabilities of all souls; on this, see Padmanabh S. Jaini, "Bhavyarva and Abhavyarva: A Jain Doctrine of 'Predestination,'" in *Mahāvira and His Teachings*, ed. A. N. Upadhye et al. (Bombay: Bhagavan Mahāvira 2500th Nirvāna Mahotsava Samiti, 1977), 95-111; reprinted in *Collected Papers on Jain Studies*, 95-109.