



Jakh, Jacks, or *Yakṣa*?

Multiple Identities and Histories of Jakh Gods in Kachchh

In Kachchh, Gujarāt, stand temples dedicated to the Jakh, seventy-one men and one woman, who is their sister Sāyarā. In the collective memory of Kachchh's residents, the popular lore associated with the figures describes Jakhs as foreign warriors and healers who brought peace to the land by slaying the evil ruler Punvaro. Recently, it has been argued that it is due to an etymological error that these equestrian deities are called Jakh, for they are in fact *yakṣas*, protective demi-gods who appear in ancient Buddhist, Jain, and Brahmanical art and literature. The revised reading has become the basis for others to claim these deities and the related sacred spaces inhabited by them as their own. There have been attempts to revise and rewrite the history of the Jakh by associating them with popular Hindu deities, like Śiva. This article composes a biography of the tradition, mapping its history, memory, and materiality, while exploring the possible reasons behind the revision.

KEYWORDS: Colonial—Hindu—Jakh—Paddhara Gaḍha—Samma—Sanghār—*yakṣa*

In the dry and deserted landscape of Kachchh in Gujarāt, atop hills stand temples dedicated to seventy-two equestrian deities collectively known as the Jakh.¹ They are depicted as seated on horseback, each holding a manuscript or a spear in one hand and reins of the horse in the other. Their images are painted white, and temples dedicated to them face west, marking the direction of their arrival in Kachchh. The popular legend associated with their coming to Kachchh begins with a shipwreck, which is believed to have transported these foreigners to Kachchh. Described as fair-skinned warriors, possessing knowledge of warfare and medicine, they soon began helping the native population of Kachchh, who then lived under the rule of the wicked king Punvaro. The Jakh are said to have slain the king and destroyed his capital city of Paddhara Gaḍha (see figure 1).² Consequently, the widow of the king avenged the murder of her husband by having the Jakhs killed, who were thereafter commemorated as martyrs.



Figure 1: Ruins of Paddhara Gaḍha, Nakhatrāṇā (Kachchh, Gujarāt). Photograph by author.

Traditionally venerated by the Sanghār community, presently the tradition of Jakh worship is in the process of being appropriated by the Hindus of Kachchh. They suggest that the seventy-two horse riders are incorrectly named Jakh and should instead be identified as *yakṣas*: demi-gods that appear in early Brahmanical, Buddhist, and Jaina literature and art. Currently, Sanghārs who are settled in Kachchh are the foremost patrons of the Jakh tradition. They are either Vaiṣṇava Hindus or Sunni Muslims. Historically, Sanghārs are believed to have been involved in piracy, and later, having taken to pastoralism, settled in parts of Sindh (Pakistan), and Kachchh and Kāthiyāvāḍa (Gujarāt, India).³ Sanghārs trace their ancestry to the Manka or the prayer beads-making community, and according to oral tradition recorded by the famous Gujarātī novelist Gunvantrai Popatbhai Acharya, the traditionally nomadic Sanghārs settled in Porabandara (Gujarāt, India) after coming to an agreement with the rulers of Kachchh.⁴

This article explores the history of the Jakh phenomenon and seeks to examine the reason for their present identification as *yakṣas*. In order to understand this fascinating history and the variety of experiences it has generated over the centuries, the article attempts to compose a biography of the tradition by studying it in its entirety, tracing its origins, diffusion, patterns of patronage, and multiple oral accounts of its appearance in Kachchh, as well as by mapping the sacred geography in which the Jakh reside. Furthermore, a critical assessment of available historiography on the tradition is employed.

Divided into three parts, the first part of the article explores the history of the Jakh. The section attempts to place the tradition in a historical context by exploring its association with historical figures within specific historical periods. As Jakhs are believed to have slain the Samma ruler Jām Punvaro, a brief political history of the Sammas and their association with Jakhs will be discussed. This section will also describe and define the sacred geography of the Jakhs based on available oral accounts and written records. The second part of the article will engage with various versions of the legend and will draw parallels between the oral accounts and documented versions of the legend. A large part of the section is also dedicated to discussing the available historiographical material on Jakhs. Starting with colonial documentation and interpretation of the tradition, the section moves on to examine the treatment of the narrative in post-colonial and contemporary scholarship. One of the primary agendas of engaging with historiography is to decipher the reason for the contemporary association of Jakh with *yakṣa*, which, as the discussion reveals, lies in the colonial documentation and understanding/misunderstanding of the tradition, and further acceptance of the colonial interpretation by post-colonial scholars and Indian government officials, who continued with the classification of Jakh as *yakṣa* in official state documents. Such detailed critical analysis of historiography also reveals that when an oral tradition is documented and recorded, each author or scholar who engages with the tradition understands and explores it from his or her perspective, and during this process they may supplement new, unrelated details to the existing legend, further complicating the narrative.

The third and final section of the article discusses the materiality of Jakhs, describing in detail the geographical location, history, architectural details, and

iconography of temples dedicated to Jakhs. The section deals with both the material and spiritual aspects of the tradition and also explores the recent attempts at Brahmanization of the tradition by associating the equestrian deities with popular Hindu gods and goddesses through construction of new narratives and myths.

THE SAVIORS OF KACHCHH: THE HISTORY OF THE SEVENTY-TWO RIDERS

Each version of the Jakh legend narrates a different sequence of events resulting in their landing at the Jakhau Port in Kachchh, Gujarāt. Located a hundred and twenty kilometers from Bhuj (see figure 2), the port is named after the Jakh who, according to the earlier versions of the legend, entered Kachchh through Jakhu to help their worshippers who had migrated there, known as Rukhīs.⁵ In other versions, the Jakh are said to have reached Kachchh as a consequence of a shipwreck. In both versions, once they reached Kachchh a battle ensued between the Jakh and Jām Punvaro, resulting in the defeat and death of Punvaro, destruction of his capital city, and ultimately, veneration of the Jakh by the local populations of Kachchh.

It is fascinating that the story of the Jakh takes place in Kachchh, named after the Kāṭhī rulers, who ruled the region in the thirteenth century. Kachchh is a peninsula, surrounded by the Arabian Sea in the west and the Gulf of Kachchh in the south. It is also bound by the Rann salt marsh in the north, east, and southeast. Throughout its history, Kachchh has served as a region of refuge for migrant populations looking for a safe sanctuary. Like many groups before them, the principal protagonists in the Jakh legend, the Sammas, Rukhīs, and Jakhs, entered Kachchh as outsiders and made the region their home. This is also true for the Sanghārs, the primary patrons of the tradition. The Sammas are believed to have entered Kachchh in the early tenth century CE and established themselves by defeating the Cāvaḍās and the Kāṭhīs.⁶ Several branches of Sammas ruled over various parts of Sindh, Kachchh, and Kāṭhiyāvāḍa, the most famous of whom were the Sammas



Figure 2: Map of Gujarāt, showing sites of prominent Jakh temples in Kachchh. Map by the author.

of Sindh, who ruled from 1350–1520 CE.⁷ Some branches of Sammas converted to Islam and others continued to be Hindus. All of them took the title Jām.

The branch of the Samma rulers who settled in Kachchh were Hindus, who later abandoned the title of Jām and asserted Rajpūt status by claiming descent from the Hindu deity Kṛṣṇa, after which they took the new title of Jāḍejā.⁸ The early history of the Samma rulers of Kachchh is shrouded in mythology and mystery, but a number of oral narratives exist describing tales of their migration, settlement, and conquests in Kachchh. According to one of the legends, Samma Rajpūt ruler Lākho Ghūraro had two wives—Baudhī and Candra Kunvarbā (who was also known as Gaud Ranī).⁹ Baudhī was the daughter of the Cāvaḍā ruler, who ruled from Paddhara Gaḍha, and Candra Kunvarbā was the daughter of Gohel, ruler of Kerā. After the death of Lākho Ghūraro, the eldest son of Gaud Ranī, Unnad, succeeded the throne, but soon after this the sons of Baudhī, Mod and Manai, murdered Unnad in jealousy. Gaud Ranī, being a powerful queen, was able to seize the throne for her grandson. Mod and Manai, fearing punishment for the murder of Unnad, fled to Kachchh and took refuge with their uncle at Paddhara Gaḍha, where the brothers murdered their uncle and seized the fort. The Cāvaḍā rulers of Paddhara Gaḍha at this time were feudatories of the Vāghelās, who ruled from Gunṭrī (modern Gunthalī in Gujarāt). Upon receiving the news of the murder of their vassal, the Vāghelā brothers became furious and sent a messenger to Mod and Manai, seeking an explanation for their act. Mod and Manai placated the Vāghelā rulers by offering greater taxes, which were accepted by the Vāghelās, but they also asked Manai to stay at Gunṭrī as a hostage. After some time, Mod was able to send secret forces from Paddhara Gaḍha to Gunṭrī. These forces killed the seven Vāghelā brothers and, as a result, Mod and Manai became rulers of large parts of Kachchh.

The Samma ruler Lākho Phūlanī is believed to be one of the successors of Mod and Manai and is considered one of the most powerful Samma rulers. He is credited with founding the city of Aṭkoṭ in Gujarāt and introducing *bājīrā* (pearl millet) to the region (*Gazetteer of the Bombay Presidency* 1884, 370–71). The Solaṅkī ruler Mūlarājā is said to have defeated and killed Phūlanī in a battle, after which his nephew, Jām Punvaro, declared himself the new Samma ruler and shifted the Samma capital from Aṭkoṭ to Paddhara Gaḍha in Kachchh. Unlike his uncle, Punvaro was an abominable ruler, cruel toward his subjects. One of the popular legends associated with his cruelty relates that he had ordered his soldiers to cut off the hands of the chief architect of his city, rendering him unable to design another like it.

Due to a complete absence of written historical sources, inscriptional and otherwise, attesting to the sequence of events leading to Phūlanī's coming to power and his battle with Mūlarājā, and the dates of Phūlanī's reign still being debatable—some suggesting he ruled in the tenth century, while others arguing for the thirteenth century—it is difficult to locate the Jakh legend and their relations with the Samma rulers within a specified historical period. However, inferences can be drawn on the basis of exploring the available information, including oral accounts and other secondary sources. A large number of historians agree that Phūlanī was a contemporary of Mūlarājā. The dates of Mūlarājā's reign are well established,

from 941/2 to 996/7 CE; thus, it would also be appropriate to date Phūlanī's reign in the latter half of the tenth century and, thenceforth, Punvaro's reign could be dated between the early and mid-eleventh century. Furthermore, one could safely consider the timeframe between the eleventh and twelfth centuries the period within which the Jakh might have actually landed at Jakhau. It was also the period during which the legend about the seventy-two horse riders was composed, became popular, and attracted patronage. Considering the late eleventh and early twelfth centuries as the period of the Jakh's entrance into Kachchh (or the origin of the Jakh legend), it would be interesting to analyze the available oral and written accounts on Jakhs, and whether attempts were made directly or indirectly in these accounts to place them within a historical timeframe.

JAKH OR YAKṢA? MANY HISTORIES OF THE SEVENTY-TWO RIDERS

As already stated, not many primary sources are available that can corroborate the history, geography, or the legend of the Jakh horsemen. They do not find mention in any medieval inscriptions or manuscripts from Kachchh or Gujarāt. Also, temples dedicated to them are not very old structures. They are bare, small square rooms, painted white, and are often located on hilltops, which further divests the opportunity of an architectural survey and dating of the tradition based on physical material associated with it. The existence, tradition, and history of the Jakh are entirely based on memory. Oral accounts of their landing in Kachchh, aiding the local populations, and slaying Jām Punvaro, are embedded in the memories of Kachchh's people. Bards composed and sang songs of their acts of valor and kindness, and performances narrating the tale of their journey and deeds are still staged during the annual fair held at the Nakhatrāṇa temple in Kachchh, Gujarāt.¹⁰ As the tradition is based on oral accounts, it should not be sidelined as mere folklore with no historical accuracies. Oral traditions are considered valid historical sources when analyzed carefully. Jan Vansina (1961), who called oral traditions "historical sources of a special nature," developed a model for historians to study oral accounts and to treat them as actual historical sources. Romila Thapar (2002, XXII) has also stressed how myths, legends, and folklore should not be discarded by historians, but should be treated as valuable data.

A major hindrance with using oral accounts as historical sources is that they leave room for multiple interpretations, additions, and deletions, making the narrative discombobulated and difficult to study. This is not only true for people who pass on the oral tradition from memory, but also for the scholars who engage with the narrative. Thus, while studying oral accounts it is useful to begin by collecting, comparing, and studying various versions of the same legend; it is also imperative to critically analyze the trajectory of the documentation. Undertaking a detailed inquiry of the available secondary sources helps in understanding the biases, preferences, and perspectives of others who choose to document the oral account. In the case of the Jakh legend, the earliest documentation of the oral narrative was undertaken in the early nineteenth century by the colonial "scholars," who were engaged in documenting and recording various aspects of India and its people. In

the 1820s, Alexander Burnes, an officer with the British East India Company, was posted in Kachchh as an assistant to the political agent stationed there. Burnes was particularly interested in recording the history and geography of the region, and while documenting the ruins of Puvranugadh (Paddhara Gaḍha) in Manjāl, he also made notes about the legend associated with the Jakh (Burnes 1879, 3–13). The legend recorded by Burnes stated that Jakhs entered Kachchh during the rule of Poom (Punvaro), a vicious ruler, who ordered the hands of his chief architect to be cut off, so that he would be unable to recreate a similar city. The Jakh had come to Kachchh to help their followers called “Rookhees” (Rukhīs), a group of religious men who came from Damascus and had settled in Kachchh. Burnes writes the following:

It so happened that about this time a sect of religious men, then known by the name of Rookhee [Rukhīs], and still by that of Sungar [Sanghār], came from a far distant country called Roomsam, Damascus, and settled themselves in the highest hill in Cutch, that they might worship their god Juck [Jakh] in a place removed from wickedness of mankind; and so well did they perform their task that the whole seven (for that was their number) were endued with supernatural powers as a reward for their upright conduct. (Burnes 1879, 3)

It was believed that Rukhīs possessed the power to bless women with male progeny. Rukhīs had blessed the wife of the chief musician of Punvaro with a son and this caught the eye of the queen of Punvaro, who also desired a son and approached them. They told her that she was unable to bear a son because of the sins committed by her husband, and if she wanted a son she would have to undertake a sacrifice to appease the gods. The queen decided to perform the sacrifice by keeping it a secret from her husband, and ordered construction of a secret passage that would provide a safe entrance for the Rukhīs into the palace. On the day of the commencement of the sacrifice, the Rukhīs forgot to bring their magical deer skin and were caught by Punvaro and punished:

Poom [Punvaro], full of rage, ordered prongs of iron should be fastened together like the *gookroo* plants and strewed in a *bulree* (the circular piece of ground where the bullocks trample the grain and separate it from the husks) before the palace, and having placed a pole in the center tied one Rookhee [Rukhī] to it and the rest to each other, and caused them to go round with bare feet on these iron pins. (Burnes 1879, 4–5)

Soon after this, one of the Rukhis, assisted by a local barber, got loose, went up the hill, and called for one of the Jakh brothers named Luckaira, and the seventy-two Jakhs came to Kachchh to rescue their followers. After landing in Kachchh, the Jakh requested Punvaro to release the Rukhīs, a request that Punvaro refused. After this, the elder Jakh brother called his brother, Luckaira, and instructed him to shoot Punvaro with arrows, but the magical amulet worn by Punvaro protected him from the arrows:

On this, Saereee [Sāyarā], the sister of Juck, took upon herself the form of a mosquito, and entering the palace of Poom [Punvaro], crept under his clothes,

and began to bite so that Poom [Punvaro] immediately stripped himself and took off his amulet and called for water to bathe himself. Juck seized the opportunity, and directed his youngest brother Kucker to fire upon the corner of the palace under which Poom [Punvaro] was wont to bathe, and the force of the arrow displaced the stone so that it fell and crushed Poom [Punvaro], and he died in 40 days; and the stone which caused his death and that on which he performed his daily ablutions is to this day shown, and even the mark of his foot on the stone. (Burnes 1879, 5–6)

Thereafter, the Jakhs cursed the city and it was deserted within two years. Burnes further stated in his report that the primary worshippers of Jakhs are Sanghārs who reside at Kuckerbit. Burnes never published his reports on Kachchh, but they were included much later in *The Architectural and Archaeological Remains in the Province of Kachh* (Khakhar 1879, 3–13). Dalpatram Pranjivan Khakhar, then the tutor at the royal court of Kachchh, compiled this report under the direction of James Burgess, who was at that time the head of the Archaeological Survey of India (hereafter ASI) in western India and later became the Director General of ASI in 1886. The report included five papers of Alexander Burnes on Kachchh. It is in this report that the Jakh are identified as *yaksas* for the first time. Nowhere in the original report did Burnes identify or classify Jakhs as *yaksas*, but it was Burgess and Dalpatram who in their report claim to “correctly” identify Jakh as *yakṣa*. The beginning of their report states, “The papers of Sir Alexander Burnes, in Appendix IV, form an interesting supplement to his published account of the province, and are reprinted verbatim, only the vernacular spellings of proper names are introduced in parentheses.”¹¹

Burgess, who was familiar with the archaeology and iconography of Buddhism, must have been familiar with the tradition of *yakṣa* worship in early Buddhism and may have suggested that Dalpatram should replace the “Juck” of Burnes’s report with Yaksha (*yaksas*). Burgess’s statement that “...only the vernacular spelling of proper names are introduced in parentheses” suggests that Burnes was unable to grasp the “correct vernacular” and incorrectly identified *yakṣa* as Juck. Another strong piece of evidence supporting the argument that Burnes never identified Jakh with *yakṣa* and that the identification was later made by Burgess is provided by the writings of Marianne Postans, wife of a British soldier, who was touring western India in the early nineteenth century and published *Cutch or Random Sketches of Western India* (Postans, 1839, 152–58). Here she states that according to the local tradition, the ruins that she encountered in Kachchh were the ruins of the city of Poorugud or Poom-ka-Gud, capital city of Poom (Punvaro) that was destroyed by Juck (Jakh). Her account is very similar to the one recorded by Burnes and nowhere in her account does she use the term *yakṣa*.

Interestingly, even before Burnes’s papers were published, Burgess had identified Jakh as *yakṣa*. In 1874–75 the story of Jakh appears in the *Report on the Antiquities of Kathiawar and Kachh: Archaeological Survey of Western India*, composed by Burgess ([1874–75] 1971). In the report he stated the following:

The Sanghars were one of the tribes that accompanied the Sammas from Sindh....Some are Muhammadans and others Hindus, but all worship the

Yakshas, which are supposed to be some foreign race that saved them from the oppression of Jam Punvara by killing him. (Burgess [1874–75] 1971, 194)

After the publication of this report, every account that discussed the legend followed the Burgess classification, identifying the equestrian deities as *yakṣas*. The *Gazetteer of the Bombay Presidency* published in 1880 also recorded the legend, and although primarily following Burgess's report, the *Gazetteer* did make some further additions, stating that the ruins of Manjal were once part of the capital city of Pnvar (Punvaro) called Punvaranogad, Padhargad, or Patan. It also stated that the Rukhīs came from Rum-Sham (Anatolia or Syria), and that their gods were called *yakṣas*. The *Gazetteer* also recorded another version of the legend, according to which the seventy-two horse riders came to help the Sanghār community, who were being oppressed by Punvaro. Later, a platform was established with seventy-two images of Jakh, and an annual fair was held at this place on the second Monday of *bhādrapada* (the sixth month of the Hindu calendar) (*Gazetteer of the Bombay Presidency* 1880, 234–36). Subsequent gazetteers repeated the narrative verbatim, which also includes the gazetteers that were published after the independence of India in 1947 (*Gujarat State Gazetteers* 1971, 598).

In post-colonial writings, the Jakh legend appeared in a variety of literature describing the history, art, folklore, culture, and architecture of Gujarāt and Kachchh. L. F. Rushbrook Williams recorded several versions of the legend associated with the Jakh in his volume titled *The Black Hills: Kutch in History and Legend: A Study in Indian Local Loyalties* (Williams 1958). According to one of the versions recorded by Williams, when Punvaro's queen visited the Rukhīs to receive their blessings, she expected special treatment because of her royal status but they refused to oblige her, which angered the queen, leading her to complain about them to her husband. Following this, the king ordered their arrest, and soon thereafter the Jakh came to Kachchh to help their followers.

Williams also recorded the version of legend that is associated with the royalty of Kachchh. According to this version, the Jāḍejā king named Rāo Desal, who ruled from 1819–60, is said to have questioned the supernatural powers of Jakh in his court (Williams 1958, 85–86). Hamīr, the royal bard attesting to their existence and powers, narrated his personal experience with the seventy-two horse riders. Hamīr told the royal court that during one of his travels, he came across a camp of strange men who provided him company and shelter for the night. When he woke up in the morning, the riders had disappeared, and he found on his horse a piece of paper with the names of seventy-two Jakhs inscribed on it. Rāo, still not convinced, belittled the royal bard, who, having lost his honor, decided to commit suicide. As he was about to end his life, the Jakh appeared before him, telling him that if Rāo followed their instructions, they would appear before him also. Hamīr went back to the court and narrated the entire incident. Rāo, finally convinced, decided to follow the instructions, and with incense in his hand, went to the market square with his ministers, where the Jakh appeared from the sky, riding horses. Rāo, now a believer, constructed a temple commemorating this event. The place where the temple was constructed is called Jakhjāra. Williams informs us that each

year the descendants of Rāo visit the temple on the anniversary of the horsemen's magical appearance. He also goes on to say,

The Jakhs have been tentatively identified with the Yakshas, the supernatural horsemen of Hindu and Buddhist writings, with Greeks, with Romans, with Sakas, and with White Huns. Yet in fact there exists in the 'memorized history' passed down through many generations of the Royal Bards of the Jadeja dynasty, a perfectly consistent and intelligible version of the Jakh affair, which, so far as the present writer knows, is here written down for the first time....The Royal Bard knows all their names, which have been handed down to him by his predecessors; but those names are so shaped by the Kachchhi dialect that there is little clue to their original provenance... (Williams 1958, 86–87)

It seems that Williams believed the legend associated with the Jakh was based on historical facts, and in his account he tries to explain the warfare technique that might have been used by Jakhs to destroy Paddhara Gaḍha: "They may have constructed and used some form of classical siege-engine—perhaps a ballista or mangonel, which could easily throw a rock or iron-tipped beam on Padhargadh from the elevation of Kakabit."¹² Williams's comparison of Jakhs with Greeks, Romans, Śakas, and Hūṇas all at the same time exposes his ignorance. His theories and assumptions are farfetched and have no historical validation. He puts forward several theories about the origins of the Jakh, suggesting that they might have been members of a group of Varangian guards recruited by the Byzantine rulers from Viking villages, or could have been Zoroastrian migrants from Iran (1958, 87–88). Williams also seems confused about the exact number of horse riders, using both seventy-two and seventy-three alternately in his text.

After Williams, the story of the seventy-two horse riders appeared in Stella Kramrisch's *Unknown India: Ritual Art in Tribe and Village* (1968). Kramrisch asserts that Jakhs entered Kachchh in the thirteenth century from Anatolia and Syria. She provides no source for her information or theory for assigning the thirteenth century as a historical period for their coming to Kachchh. It appears that her assertions might have been based on information recorded in the gazetteers mentioned above. She further writes the following:

Harking back to other, untold memories from Inner Asian horse-herding cultures, these apocalyptic horsemen transmute the fear generated by Muslim invasions into India into a liberating legend in which the evil power does not come from outside but is local, embodied in the tyrant Punvaro. His heinous crime and its punishment are in the great Indian tradition. Capital punishment awaits the person who incapacitates a practicing artist and prevents creativeness from functioning. (Kramrisch 1968, 55–56)

Kramrisch especially focuses on the part of the legend that relates to the severing of the hands of the architects by Punvaro, for she argues that the legend of the Jakh transformed the tradition in which horse riders were earlier associated with Muslim invaders. However, with the advent of the Jakh story, horse riders were now viewed in a positive light, bringing peace to the land by slaying the evil ruler. Kramrisch neither explains her argument about the transforming traditions

nor lists any source of information suggesting that there was a fear of horse riders as Muslim invaders among the people of Kachchh. It seems that Kramrisch picked up the narrative as part of her larger work on the appearances of horses in Indian tribal arts and legends.

Jyotindra Jain published a stone image of the Jakh in the catalogue of the Shreyas Folk Museum (Jain 1980, 52 and 170). In his account, he also suggested that the Rabārī community of Kachchh prayed to Jakhs and, according to the legend, they arrived as the saviors of the Sanghār community, who were oppressed by Jām Punvaro. Accordingly, an annual fair is held in their honor at the Nakhatrāṇa temple.¹³ Françoise Mallison was the first person to detail the iconography of the Jakh. She also questioned the identification of Jakh as *yakṣa* (Mallison 2003, 332–49). In the same year, a more Hinduized version of the legend appeared in the *People of India* series, published by the Anthropological Survey of India. According to this version of the legend, the queen of the people of Sanghār was married to the king of Jampurava (or was married to king Jām Punvaro—the author may have erred in copying the narrative). The king desired a son, and upon the advice of a sage by the name of Bikku, decided to perform a *yajña* or fire sacrifice (Mohiddin 2003, 1246). When the king found out about the sacrifice, he murdered all the sages who were present for the sacrifice by throwing them into the sacrificial fire. Sanghārs, who at this point were settled in Gandhavi near Porbandar, moved to Kachchh and requested Bikku to “save their prestige.” Bikku then prayed to the deity Śiva, who sent Jakhadēv in the form of mosquitoes to kill Punvaro. Jakhadēv bit the king, forcing him to remove his protective amulet—a *rudrākṣamālā* (garland of *elaecarpus* seeds)—allowing Jakhdēv to kill Punvaro. Thereafter, the Sanghār group constructed a temple dedicated to Jakhadēv at Nakhatrāṇa as a mark of their gratitude.

Randhir Khare published his travelogue titled *Kachchh: Triumph of the Spirit*, in which he describes the Jakh festival celebrated at the Sāyarā village in Kachchh (Khare 2004, 62–69). He also recorded another version of the legend, according to which the Jakh did not come to Kachchh to help Rukhīs, but rather came to Kachchh on their own, after which they started to help the people who were suffering under the reign of Punvaro. In the version he recorded, the sister Sāyarā first tries to seduce Punvaro in order to persuade him to take off his amulet, so that the Jakh could kill him, but is unable to do so as the queen never leaves the side of her husband. Sāyarā then turns herself into a wasp and bites Punvaro, forcing him to take off his amulet. Furthermore, after the Jakh kill Punvaro, his queen orders the soldiers to hunt down and kill all of the Jakh. Sāyarā is said to have waited for the soldiers in an open field, where she was hacked to pieces. Khare mentions seventy-three riders in his account.

Wendy Doniger’s essay on equestrian mythology in India studies instances of the appearance of horses in Indian mythology. Under a section titled “Muslim horses,” she discusses the legend of the Jakh (Doniger 2006, 335–50). Doniger discusses several versions of the legend at length, critically analyzing the work of her predecessors on the subject. She rightly points out that “[w]e must take account

of the people who constructed this myth, who perpetuated it, recorded it, translated it, selected it” (2006, 344).

She briefly discusses the colonial documentation of the legend and feels that the narrative gets standardized once the legend is recorded in the gazetteers. Nowhere in her argument does Doniger discuss the identification of Jakh as *yaksa*. In the same year as Doniger’s publication appeared, Edward Simpson published his *Muslim Society and the Western Indian Ocean: Seafarers of the Kachchh* (2006). Simpson—who also based his work on the theories of his predecessors, Postans, Williams, Kramrisch, and Doniger—points toward a link between the Pārsī community in India and the Jakh. He claims the number of Jakh to be seventy-two, which is the number of verses in the Yasna of Zoroastrians, from whom the Pārsīs in India claim descent. Pārsīs, who migrated from Iran to India, originally belonged to the Zoroastrian community. They are believed to have migrated between the eighth and the tenth centuries CE.¹⁴ *Qesse-ye Sanjan*, a sixteenth-century Persian poem, which describes the migration of the Pārsī community from Iran to India, has no details about horses or battles with local rulers. Pārsīs are believed to have travelled to the island of Diu off of the Gujarātī coast, settled there for nineteen years, then shifted to Sanjana in Gujarāt.¹⁵

Most recently, the legend of the Jakh appeared in Farhana Ibrahim’s *Settlers, Saints and Sovereigns: An Ethnography of State Formation in Western India* (2009, 2), and Samira Sheikh’s *Forging a Region: Sultans, Traders, and Pilgrims in Gujarāt 1200–1500* (2010, 38). Ibrahim locates Kachchh and its problems within the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), the ruling political party in Gujarāt, and its adoption of the slogan *gujarāt nī asmitā* (unity of Gujarāt). Studying Kachchh’s state formation from the earliest to the most recent times, including the history of the Indian-Pakistani wars (August 1965 and December 1971) and the Gujarāt riots (February–March 2002), she uses the Jakh story to view the historical aspect of the “outsider/insider” concept so prevalent in Kachchh, which, according to her, always remains an issue with the region and its people. It is within this theoretical framework that she locates the Jakh legend. While Ibrahim’s work focuses on contemporary politics and history of Gujarāt, Sheikh’s work is an excellent account of medieval Gujarāt. She also narrates the essential elements of the Jakh legend in her work while discussing the origins and reign of the Samma rulers but does not engage with providing a tentative historical period for the origin of the legend (Sheikh 2010, 38).

The literature review of the Jakh narrative provided above reveals that multiple, diverse, and often contradictory versions of the legend exist. Each author who documented or engaged with the legend perceived it differently, providing a new interpretation or adding a new dimension to the existing narrative. The research process itself thus results in a situation where we are confronted with numerous versions of the legend that contribute to the multiple identities of the Jakh. Burgess identified the equestrian deities as *yaksas*, while Kramrisch perceived them to be non-Islamic horse riders, who slain the evil ruler of Kachchh, bringing peace and prosperity to the region. Edward Simpson pointed out the single commonality that he could find between Jakh and the sacred traditions of the Pārsī

community in India, the number seventy-two. However, Simpson failed to demonstrate any tangible relationship between the two. The inconsistency that appears in the various aspects of the legend also occurs concerning the total number of Jakhs. No consensus has ever been reached over the final number of horse riders; some authors believe that there were seventy-two riders, while others seem to think that there were seventy-three. This may have occurred due to the disparity in calculating the final number of Jakhs, and whether Sāyarā, the only female Jakh, was considered a part of seventy-two horse riders; or, perhaps, the final number was tallied after adding her to the group of seventy-two, thus bringing the total number of Jakhs to seventy-three. I strongly feel that the total number of Jakhs was seventy-two because the literature circulated and distributed by the Jakh temples in Kachchh clearly lists the names of seventy-two horse riders, including Sāyarā.

Among the many theories and assertions that have been offered about the Jakh, it is the identification and classification by Burgess that has had the most effect on the history and nature of the tradition as practiced in Kachchh. Reports and other documents compiled by Burgess and other colonial and postcolonial records, which were based on the notes of Burgess and identified Jakh as *yakṣa*, are considered “authentic historical written records” and are currently being used by the Hindu community in Kachchh to stake their claim over the Jakh tradition. It is argued that the equestrian deities have been incorrectly called and identified as Jakhs, and that they are in fact *yakṣas*, ancient Hindu demi-gods that appear in early Brahmanical literature.

If analyzed carefully, the claim that Jakh should be identified as *yakṣa*, and that the term Jakh is an etymological error, holds no validation. No similarities occur between the *yakṣas* or *yakṣiṇīs* (female *yakṣas*) that appear in the early Buddhist, Jaina, and Brahmanical mythological and artistic traditions. *Yakṣas* were supernatural beings, associated with the natural elements, such as forests, rivers, and wind. They were both malevolent and benevolent in nature, and were not associated with horses.¹⁶ In the case of the Jakh, there is a strong stigma of being “foreign” attached to them. In every version of the legend, their being “white-skinned” is emphasized. They were supposed to have knowledge of medicine, and were excellent warriors, which are characteristics missing in stories associated with *yakṣas*. The legend of the Jakh cannot be dated earlier than the eleventh and twelfth centuries CE, whereas the cult of *yakṣas* was popular much earlier and can be dated roughly between the early centuries of the Common Era to the end of the Gupta Period (ca. 550 CE). Their importance as sacred beings substantially declined by the beginning of the early medieval period, around the sixth to seventh centuries CE, and they were absorbed as minor protective deities in the larger Hindu and Jaina religious pantheons.

A number of *yakṣa* and *yakṣiṇī* images appear on the Buddhist *stūpa* railings from Sañci and Bharhut, and no similarities can be pointed out between the iconography of these images and the Jakh under discussion here. The latter appear on horses, each holding either a spear or manuscript in hand, whereas *yakṣas* and *yakṣiṇīs* are largely depicted standing next to the element they are associated with, such as a tree, a water body, or a snake. Unlike the narrative of the Jakh, none of

the stories associated with *yakṣas* describe them as travelling in groups, nor are they associated with shipwrecks or acts of valor. Taking these aspects into account, it would be safe to conclude that the seventy-two Jakh of Kachchh and the *yakṣas* as they appear in early Brahmanical, Buddhist, and Jaina accounts are entirely two different entities, independent of each other, each with their own strong characters, associations, and iconography, and it would be unfair and incorrect to assume, based on the assertions of James Burgess, that Jakhs were some form of *yakṣa*. To summarize, a detailed historiographical analysis proves that the available scholarship on the Jakh is minuscule and confusing. Currently, some of the mixed data are being used by others for political purposes to stake claims on their sacred spaces, reconstruct their history, and alter their iconography.

SACRED GEOGRAPHY, MATERIALITY, AND SHRINES

In December 2010, I conducted field research in Kachchh and mapped the sacred geography of the Jakh as described in the core legend. Their journey in Kachchh is said to have started from the port at Jakhau, where they were believed to have landed either on their own or as a consequence of a shipwreck, forcing them to travel further east, reaching Paddhara Gaḍha, the capital city of the Samma ruler, Jām Punvaro. It is within this geographical area, beginning from Jakhau and ending at Paddhara Gaḍha, an area of approximately seventy kilometers, that the largest numbers of Jakh temples are located (see figure 2). The architecture of the Jakh temples and iconography of their images is extremely minimalist. Jakh temples are modern structures with the shrine being a small room, entirely painted white, within which images of seventy-two Jakhs rest on a raised platform, who are always depicted seated on horses, each holding either a spear or a manuscript in his right hand and the reins of the horse in the left. They are depicted wearing cloth turbans and are always seen with moustaches. The images of the Jakh are painted white. Solid black lines are used to highlight their eyes, eyebrows, and moustaches. The eyes and the hoofs of the horses are also highlighted in black.

On the basis of their size, popularity, and patronage, the Jakh temples in Kachchh could be divided into two broad categories. The first group of temples consists of smaller, modest shrines that are largely located in rural areas of Kachchh. These are largely community temples that act as protective shrines for the adjacent village. People of the village where the temple is located take care of the temple premises, and, in many cases, are also the only patrons of these temples. The Jakh temples do not house a permanent priest, nor do they have a caretaker. The temples are completely devoid of any prints, photographs, or images of popular Hindu gods and goddesses. The Jakh temples located at Khāruā village, Jakhū in Aabaḍāsā *tālukā* (district), and the Sayrī Mātā temple at the Moṛā Jakh village in Kachchh come under this category.

The Jakh temple at Khāruā comprises a small rectangular open room, painted white, with a raised platform on which are placed images of seventy-two horse riders (see figure 3). The Jakhū Jakh temple is located one hundred and twenty kilometers from Bhuj. It can only be reached by traveling along an unpaved road.

This temple, unlike other Jakh temples, is not located on a hill, but stands amid fields. It is a small room painted white, with a white flag flying atop. The shrine is comprised of a platform with images of seven Jakh riders placed on it (see figure 5). Seated on horses, they hold spears in their right hands and the reins running around their horses' necks in their left hands. Sāyarā, draped in a deep green *sārī* (a female garment) appears standing behind the men in a smaller niche. At Moṭā Jakh village, there stands atop a hill a temple entirely dedicated to Sāyarā, popularly known as the Sayarī Mātā temple. The temple has an image of Sāyarā and her other Jakh brothers. At this temple, Sāyarā is depicted with multiple arms, holding weapons, and seated on a horse. The iconography of Sāyarā at this temple is drawn from the popular images of Hindu goddesses, also depicted with multiple arms and holding weapons (see figure 4).



Figure 3: Jakh temple, Khāruā (Kachchh, Gujarāt). Photograph by author.



Figure 4: Image depicting Sayarī Mātā seated on a horse. Sayarī Mātā temple, Moṭā Jakh (Kachchh, Gujarāt). Photograph by author.



Figure 5: Interior, Jakh temple, Jakhau (Kachchh, Gurjarāt). Photograph by author.

The second category of Jakh temples are the larger, more popular temples. Also located on hilltops, facing west, these temples have permanent priests and attract a large number of patrons. Located in more urban areas of Kachchh, such as in and around Bhuj, these temples are eclectic in nature, and images of a variety of gods and goddesses from diverse religious traditions share the space with the images of the seventy-two equestrian deities. At these temples, efforts are being made to amalgamate the Jakh tradition into mainstream Hindu religion, as in the case of Nakhatrāṇā and Mādhāpar Jakh temples. The latter is located in the city of Bhuj and is currently under the management of Śrī Mādhāpar Jakhbauterā Saṅgh. The managing committee and the patrons of the temple employ both terms, *yakṣa* and Jakh, to describe the equestrian images. On the temple's website, which boasts about the history of the site, it stated that the seventy-two Jakhs were sent by the Brahmanical god Śiva to help *rṣis* (sages):

The rushi went on the hill named [L]akhodi hill & urged help from their family deity [S]hri [B]holenath [S]hiv-[S]hankar (Lord Shiva) by putting his fingers in his ears. Bholenath listened to his disciple's call and there emerged 72 yaksh devs as "joytilinga" from bholenath's jata at Jakhu. For the first time 72 yaksh devs emerged near Jakhu in Kutch[;] due to this it is called Jakhu port. Kutchi people called 72 yaksh devs as Jakhdev. This 72 yaksh dev "vir" went like warriors towards [P]addhargadh and destroyed the king.¹⁷ [sic]

In the case of Mādhāpar Jakh temple, there is a clear attempt to colonize the Jakh tradition and assimilate it into mainstream Hinduism by incorporating Jakh as minor Hindu deities and associating them with Śiva. The source for this narrative might be the version of the legend recorded in the *People of India Series* (2003), but here each aspect of the popular Jakh legend has been transformed to suit and perfectly fit into the Hindu narrative. Rukhis of the original legend are identified with *rṣi*—a Sanskrit term for sage—who are said to have pleaded for Śiva's help; as a result, Śiva sent the seventy-two riders to help the sages. Furthermore, in the narrative provided by the Jakhbauterā Saṅgh, the riders are said to have emerged from the *lingam* (aniconic representation of Śiva's phallus). The terms *deva* (a Sanskrit term used to describe minor gods) and *vīr* (brave) are also suffixed to the Jakh, to provide them with a more Hindu identity. Yoginder Sikand in his work on



Figure 6: Interior, Jakh temple, Mādhāpar (Kachchh, Gujarāt). Images of seventy-two Jakh with posters of the popular Hindu goddess Sherāvālī Mātā (goddess with a lion as *vāhana* or vehicle). Photograph by author.



Figure 7: Śiva temple, (Kachchh, Gujarāt). Photograph by author.

Gogā Pīr shrine in Rajasthan (Sikand 2001, 162–77) has successfully demonstrated how adding the Hindi word *vīr* as a suffix to Gogā has led to the alteration of the character and nature of the shrine from being a Muslim Sufi shrine to a Hindu temple. A similar attempt has been made in the case of the Jakh. The attempts at transformation and colonization of the tradition are also noted in its iconography (see figure 6). The temple, which sits on a hill, is reached by a flight of steps, and on the stairs appear sculptures and photographs of popular Hindu gods and goddesses, such as Gaṇeśa, Lakṣmī, and Sarasvatī. The main temple itself is a small rectangular room, painted white, and contains images of seventy-two horse riders along with images of other popular Hindu deities.

Similar attempts of associating Jakhs with the Hindu god Śiva have been made at the Nakhatrāṇa Jakh temple at Moṛā Jakh village in Kachchh. Located thirty-four kilometers from Bhuj, the Nakhatrāṇa temple is the most popular Jakh temple in the region. Each year the temple organizes a three-day religious fair in honor of the Jakh. Located on a hilltop, the temple attracts patronage from a large number of people belonging to diverse religious groups. A plaque located at the entrance by the temple steps calls it a *yakṣa* temple. Seated images of bearded sages dressed in orange robes appear on both sides of the main staircase leading to the main temple on top of the hill. The temple itself consists of two separate shrines; the first and larger shrine is dedicated to the Jakh, where images of them seated on horses are positioned on a high platform. A number of small equestrian votive images can be noticed around the room. These images appear in all sizes and materials: wood, stone, cloth, and clay, and are placed there by the people

whose wishes are fulfilled after praying at the temple. There also appear images and photographs of other popular Hindu gods and goddesses. Outside the Jakh shrine, sharing the space on the hill, also stands a small temple dedicated to Śiva (see figure 7). The temple is comprised of a sanctum sanctorum and a small courtyard, in front of which appears a seated image of Nandī (Śiva's bull mount) facing the *lingam* placed in the sanctum sanctorum. The presence of a Śiva temple next to the Jakh shrine indicates Hindu attempts to appropriate the tradition of the Jakh for their own purposes.

In contrast to the Mādhāpar and Nakhatrāṇā Jakh temples, the Sonī Bazaar Jakh temple located in the city of Bhuj has not received much attention. It seems more like an abandoned temple, deserted as a result of rapid urbanization, and slowly disappearing due to urban encroachments. Currently, the temple compound contains twenty-four square *śikhara*- (pyramid shapes) topped structures. It is possible that originally the temple had more of such structures, now lost. Each niche houses a symbolic representation of the equestrian images, a square plaque with three manuscript scrolls. In front of the structures stand two images of Jakh riders. Currently, the temple has no permanent priest, and the temple gate includes both the names Jakh and *yakṣa* inscribed in Gujarātī. No photographs, prints, or images of gods or goddesses from other religious traditions appear there.

Currently, other than the Mādhāpar Jakh temple, attempts at colonization through misappropriation of the Jakh tradition by the majority Hindu community in Kachchh are not observed elsewhere. The process of claiming the tradition by others, however, has clearly begun through the creation and circulation of an entirely new narrative, in which the Jakh are being assimilated into the larger and more powerful Śaivite sacred tradition as minor deities, who, according to the narrative, were created and sent to Kachchh by Śiva to provide aid to primordial sages in distress. This narrative of assimilation of the Jakh tradition is also in some ways similar to the treatment of the Jakh narrative in the writings of colonial and post-colonial authors, each of which interpreted the legend anew, imposing a different identity upon the Jakh in a way that suited their research and theories.

IN THE END, JAKH, YAKṢA, OR THE FAIR-SKINNED JACKS?

I want to close my investigation on the Jakh by exploring briefly the tradition in the writings of Douglas V. Duff, the author of *Spun yarn* (1957, 22–30). In a chapter titled “The Fair-Skinned Jacks,” Duff narrates the journey of Cedric of Melplash, who left the shores of England for Constantinople with six hundred other companions. The company lost their way on the sea, and instead reached the shores of India:

On the fifth day, tall, handsome, gentle brown-skinned people came to their camp and led them to the village beyond the headland a few miles east. The castaways knew no word of the Rajput tongue; the Rajputs understood nothing the strangers could tell them. They stared at their fair hair, the blue eyes and the white skin showing wherever the shipwrecked men's bodies had not been exposed to tropical suns. (Duff 1957, 22)

In the tale narrated by Duff, upon reaching India, Cedric and his men decided to settle in Kachchh. The men taught locals skills of carpentry, masonry, etc., and the Christian monks practiced medicine and surgery. The only woman in the group, Edith, helped local women with childbirth. The king, Jām Punvaro, is said to have become jealous of their talents and popularity and ordered some of them to be arrested. The rest then built a siege engine on Kakabit Hill, proceeding to attack Paddhara Gaḍha, and then killing Punvaro. Thereafter, similar to the other versions of the legend, the queen of Punvaro is said to have ordered their assassination, martyring them, so that they could become demi-gods, which is very common in the Hindu tradition:

There are many monuments to their memory on the island of Kutch. The seventy-two blonde castaway men and one woman of the tenth century appear on the walls of many temples. They are shown always mounted, but never carrying arms in the way that all Rajput heroes are depicted. Instead, they bear the scrolls with which they taught the articles needed by doctors, or the tools with which they worked and instructed their hosts. (Duff 1957, 24)

The Jakh are the “white-skinned Jacks” for Duff. His work cannot be treated as historical in nature; it is fiction, probably inspired by his personal experiences as a sailor. He had served for the British navy during the First World War, and was involved in two shipwrecks, miraculously surviving each. *Spun yarn* is not a historical work, but provides a clear example of how the legend of the Jakh based on oral tradition provided space for authors to give it any interpretation they wanted. In *Spun yarn*, they are the white-skinned, blonde-haired Jacks from England, who lost their way while at sea, finally reaching the shores of Gujarāt. Unlike Duff, Burgess did not compose fiction, but he still identified/misidentified the Jakh as *yakṣa*. Furthermore, the authors or compilers of the official documents of British India, like the *Gazetteer*, employed both the terms Jakh and Yaksha (*yakṣa*), but insisted that the horse riders were indeed *yakṣas*, relying on the Burgess report. Postcolonial scholars who engaged with the legend did not vehemently question the use of the term *yakṣa* to describe the equestrian figures, and what is more, the recording of a Hinduized version of the legend by a publication supported by the Anthropological Survey of India further provided legal mandate for Hindus in Kachchh to claim the Jakh as minor Hindu deities.

This essay attempts to compose a biography of the Jakh tradition in Kachchh from inception to its present position by closely analyzing the available primary and secondary sources and by locating the tradition in a geographical-historical context. Jakhs do not find mention in any oral or written accounts before the eleventh century CE, and thus the origins of the tradition can be traced to some time between the eleventh and the twelfth centuries CE. Originally patronized by the Sanghār community, in due course of time the tradition must have gained popularity and attracted patronage from different communities of Kachchh—Hindus, Jains, Rabārī, and even the royalty. Sanghārs seem to be the original patrons of the tradition, since they are most closely connected with the legend. In the earliest version of the legend, as recorded by Burnes and Postans, the Jakh had come to Kachchh to aid the Sanghār community. Sanghārs are historically believed to have

been involved in piracy. Interestingly, Jakhs are said to have reached Kachchh as a result of a shipwreck; hence, the seafaring relationship between the two cannot be ignored. It is possible that Jakhs were worshipped by Sanghārs in some form before they gave up piracy, and after they settled the narrative was elaborated and temples were constructed in their honor. Also, it must be pointed out that Hindu Sanghārs are increasingly accepting popular Hindu traditions. This fact might be another reason for the changing character of the Jakh temple with the presence of photographs and images of more popular Hindu deities, but this cannot justify the clear attempts at colonization and Brahmanization of the narrative and the sacred spaces associated with Jakhs by claiming that they are *yakṣas*, or even by suggesting that they are subservient figures supporting the supreme Śaivite deity worshipped by the Hindu community in Kachchh.

NOTES

1. I want to thank Prof. Jyotindra Jain for introducing me to the tradition of the Jakh in Kachchh and for all his support during my research. The historical material presented here has appeared previously in Saxena (2015).
2. Ruins of an eleventh-century Śaiva monastery at the village of Paddhara Gaḍha in the Nakhatrāṇa *tālukā* (district) of Kachchh are identified as the capital city of Jām Punvaro. There are no written records attesting to this identification. Paddhara Gaḍha is also referred to as Pāṭaṇ, but should not be confused with Aṇahilavāḍa Pāṭaṇ, the capital city founded by the Cāvaḍā ruler Vanrājā in 747 CE.
3. It is interesting to mention at this point that a district in neighboring Sindh (Pakistan) is also called Sanghār, named after the Sanghār stream. No community calling itself Sanghār resides there; the town is believed to have appeared on the map of Sindh during the Talpur's Rule (1840–43 CE). For details of the narrative see *District Census Report of Sanghar* (2000, 6).
4. It is possible that the story about the settlement of Sanghār in Kachchh was created after the partition of India and Pakistan to provide the Sanghār with more authentic “Indian” roots. See *People of India: Gujarat* (2003, 1244–46).
5. Bhuj is the district headquarters of Kachchh.
6. The Cāvaḍā became rulers of parts of Kachchh in the late seventh century CE. In the early tenth century the Sammas were feudatories of the Cāvaḍās and later overthrew them, taking possession of their territories. Kāṭhīs entered Kachchh in the eighth century and also lost their possessions to the Sammas. For further discussion on the political history of Kachchh, see Sheikh (2010, 30–43).
7. In the late fourteenth century, the Samma chief Unnar revolted against the Delhi Sultanate and established the Samma Sultanate in Sindh. See Baloch and Rafiqi (1999, 301–03).
8. In early medieval western and central India (600–1100 CE), a large number of groups who had become politically and economically powerful claimed Rajpūt status by claiming descent from Brahmanical gods or goddesses. See Chattopadhyaya (1994, 62–63).
9. Rushbrook Williams recorded several versions of oral traditions associated with the Samma rulers of Kachchh (1958, 83–84).
10. A fair in honor of Jakh is held in the *Bhādra* month (August/September) every year.
11. See Prefatory Note, Khakhar 1879, 3.
12. Williams discusses in great detail methods that might have been employed by the Jakh to destroy Paddhara Gaḍha (1958, 86).

13. The Rabārī community of Kachchh is a pastoralist community famous for their embroidery patterns called *Kāthī*. They are believed to have migrated from Rājasthāna in the fourteenth century; see Frater 2002, 156–59.
14. Pārsīs of India are believed to have migrated from Iran to India between eighth and tenth centuries after the Arab invasion of Iran; see Williams 2008, 15–18.
15. *Qesse-ye Sanjan* was composed by a Zoroastrian priest, Bahman Kay Kobad. The text provides a description of Pārsī communities' exodus from Iran to India; see Williams (2008, 15–34).
16. For details on *yakṣas* and their representation in early Indian art and literature, see Sutherland (1991, 1–5).
17. This information was published on the temple's website by the Śrī Mād̥hāpar Jakhbauterā Saṅgh and accessed on January 13, 2011, from http://www.Jakhdada.com/history_of_madhapar_Jakhdada_english.html. However, at the time of publication the website was inaccessible.

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