CHAPTER VII
RELIGIOUS TOLERATION

The age is marked by religious syncretism. The votaries of different faiths and sects lived in concord and harmony. From the fifth century A.D., the Puranas were echoing the age-old Hindu concept that all deities were the manifestations of the same divine principle. This view appears to have been universally accepted. Alberuni observes, "The Hindus believe with regard to God that he is one, eternal, without beginning and end, acting by free-will, almighty, all-wise, living, giving life, ruling, preserving; one who in his sovereignty is unique, beyond all likeness and unlikeness, and that he does not resemble anything nor does anything resemble him. The allegorical play Prabodhacandra-daya of Krsna Muyra refers to shrines of Visnu and glorifies Visnu-bhakti (faith in Visnu). Siva is glorified in the second verse of the prelogue and in verse nine we are told that absolute is variously designated as Brahma, Visnu or Siva. The idea of Hari-Hara, or personification of the two gods Visnu and Siva in one image, and Trimurti, Brahma, Visnu and Siva in a single iconographic motif, illustrates the spirit of the time. The barriers between the different religious sects were fast coming down.
The Karitalai stone inscription of the (K.) year 593, invokes the blessings of Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva. The Kalasuri ruler Lakshmanaraja II, who was attached to the worship of Shiva, granted a village to a temple of Vishnu at Karitalai. The composer of the Rajin stone inscription of Kalasuri Pratihara II of the (K.) year 896, Jasimanda, is described in the inscription as a devout worshipper of Mahdeva and Vishnu. The prime minister of Kalasuri Ratnadeva III, Gangadhara, built temples of Vishnu, Shiva, Durga, Ganesa and the Sun. The Kasa stone inscription of the Kalasuris of Sarayupara opens with adoration to Adira and the Baidha.

The Parmara ruler Vakpati II was an avowed Shiva, but his Indore grant opens with two invocations of Srikantha and Murari. We are told by Merutunga that the Parmara king Shela (X) summoned a convention of the representatives of different sects. He inquired from them as to what constituted the true path of salvation. Each spoke in the line of his persuasion. At last a compromise was effected by which all agreed to work together for the solution of the problem, going carefully into the merits of the different authorities. In six-month time they arrived at the conclusion that "by meditation one obtains salvation, regardless of the religion to which one adhered! The goddess Sarasvati is said to have appeared to the king in this connection, with the
following message: "Are you awake? You must listen to the religion of the Buddhists, but you must practice that of the Jaina; you must meditate on the Supreme Śiva!"

That the sectarian jealousy had withered away is borne out by another narrative of Herutunga. He states that on the occasion of the setting up of the flag on the temple of Rudrasmahākāla (Rudrasahālaya), the Guḍukya Jayasimha Siddharāja "had the flags of all the Jaina temples lowered, as in the country of Mālaya when the banner of Mahākāla is displayed, no flag is hoisted on any Jaina temple! However, Herutunga continues, during the end of the same year in which he issued this decree, Jayasimha Siddharāja happened to be in a town called Śrīnagara where he saw flags flying on the Jaina temples. He reminded the Brāhmaṇas of his edict prohibiting the hoisting of flags on the Jaina temples. The Brāhmaṇas quoted from their scriptures and convinced him that his ukase was contrary to religious practice. "Then the king's mind was full of regret and at the end of the year he gave orders to have the flags hoisted on the Jaina temples! He himself worshipped at the Jaina temple of Neminātha, as has been referred to elsewhere. Even his successor Umarapala, who adopted Jainism in the later part of his life, did not cease to maintain his hereditary attachment to the cult of Śiva. In the Bombay secretariat grant of his successor,
Ajayapala, Kumarpala is called 'Umapati-vara-labda-prasada.' His Chitorgarh stone inscription of V.S. 1207, which opens with verses in praise of Siva, was composed by one Ramakirti who was the chief of the Digambaras. The Guadukya king Ajayapa has been accused of bigotry by Merutunga who states that he demolished many a Jaina temple and tortured several highly placed Jaina officials. This is more of an exception than the representation of the spirit of the age.

The religious outlook was characterised by tolerance and eclecticism. Karka Buvamavarga of the Gujarat branch of the Rastrakutas was himself a staunch Siva, but he had given a field to a Jaina vihara at Raysari. The Gahamana ruler Ahmadeva of Hadulla, as referred to elsewhere, made a grant to a Jaina temple after worshipping the sun and Isana and making gifts to the Brhamanas and gurus. Likewise, his son, Kirtipala, worshipped the Brhamanical deities, the sun and Mahesvara, before making a grant to the temple of the Jina Mahavira. The Pala kings were professedly Buddhists and the Buddhist establishments received their direct patronage, none the less, the majority of the people within their dominions remained attached to the Brhamanical religion. There was no sectarian jealousy or exclusiveness. Dhamapala and Vigrahapala III are known in records to have maintained the orthodox social order of castes. Hariyamapala himself built and endowed a temple of Siva, attended the sacrificial ceremony
of his Brāhmaṇa ministers, and did not hesitate to put the sacrificial water on his head reverently. Citrematikā, the chief queen of Madanapāla, regarded it as meritorious to hear the recital of the Mahābhārata, and the king Madanapāla gave the gift of a village to a Brāhmaṇa to recite it.

Members of the same royal family are known to have been votaries of different religious cults. Dadda III, the Gurjara-Pratihāra ruler of Bhaygāvata, was a devotee of Śiva, whereas his ancestors from Dadda I onwards worshipped the sun, and Dadda III is also known to have made a grant in honour of the sun. In the family of the imperial Pratihāras of Kānyakubja, Vatsarāja and Mahendrapāla II were attached to the worship of Śiva; Nāgabhata II, Mihira Bhoja and Mahendrapāla I worshipped Bhagavatī; and Rāmaśadra and Mahipāla (I) were the devotees of the sun-god. Mihira Bhoja was also devoted to a special manifestation of Viṣṇu, the Varāha avatāra. Likewise, Mahipāla (I) seems to have had predilections for the worship of Bhagavatī. The Kalacuri Saṅkaragāna was a devout worshipper of Viṣṇu; his father Lakṣmanarāja II was a devotee of Śiva. The Chahāvāla king Govindacandra was himself a Śaiva, but two of his queens, Kumārdevi and Vasanta devi, professed Buddhism. Another king of the family, Jayacandra, though a Vaishnava in the beginning and a disciple of a Buddhist monk later on, not only continued to use the usual epithet of the family—'paraṇa-Māheśvara'—but also granted a village in
the presence of the god Krttivasa (Siva). The Gahadavala kings generally worshipped Siva, Vignu and Surya before bestowing a grant. The copperplate grants of the Sena kings, Vlavarupa and Ksavyasena, typify the spirit of the age. The royal seal attached to the plates bears the representation of Sadāsiva, the family deity, and is actually called Sadāsiva-mudra in the text of the inscriptions. The inscription opens with a salutation to Mārayana, followed by an invocation addressed to Surya, and finally the kings themselves are given the title of parama-saura (devout worshipper of the sun-god).

Temples of different faiths existed side by side. At Khajuraho, the centre of Siva-worship, we have the large and fine temple of Jinanatha which bears an inscription of V.S. 1011, and was built in the beginning of the reign of Candella Dhanga. Another Jaina temple at the site, called the Chhatal from the bells carved on its pillars, was partially rebuilt from older materials. The original temple is believed to have been erected in the tenth century A.D. There are several other Jaina temples on the face of Khajuraho. In the list of Cunningham, temple No. 26 is an ancient temple 'restored with plaster and old stones' and is called Setanatha, which seems to have been the original name, as the principal statue enshrined is a colossal standing figure of Ādīnātha, 14 feet in height, with the title of Setanatha. No. 27 in his list is a small ancient Jaina temple now dedicated to Ādīnātha.
There are many Jaina statues, both whole and broken, collected about these temples, with dated inscriptions. An inscription on a pedestal of a colossal seated statue records that the image was dedicated in (V.) Samvat 1215 during the reign of Nnamavarma.

No Candella king of Khajuraho is known to have directly furthered the cause of Buddhism, yet Forkamardideva of this dynasty, while registering a grant of land in 1179 A.D. to several Brahmanas, made the benign provision of excluding from it a piece of land lying therein, as that had previously been granted to a temple of the Buddha.

At Un the lintel of the door facing the mandapa of the Chandara Dera temple (No. I) consists of the figures of Ganeśa, Brahmā, Śiva, Viṣṇu and Sarasvatī. In the temple of Milakasauhityara, around the garbhagṛha, having a linga of Śiva, are found stūpas the images of the Hindu deities, Viṣṇu, Sūrya, the Varāha avatāra (of Viṣṇu), and Pārvatī, which are indicative of their association with the temple. There are Jaina temples in the group of the Un caves. A large Jaina temple, called Chandara Dera (No. 2), is one of the most beautiful monuments at the place. Another Jaina temple, very well-preserved, is known as Gosalesvāra. Inside the garbhagṛha of the temple stand three huge Digambara Jaina images, one of which measures twelve and a half feet in height. The images bear short inscriptions which give 1206 A.D. as the date
of their dedication. Several other large Jaina images have been found at Uh, one of which bears a date.

The spirit of the age is well reflected in Kāśin. The rulers like Lalitāditya-Mahāpīṇḍa, Jayāpīṇḍa, Sussala and Jayasimha, queens like Diddā, and individuals like Rāhula and Bhūṭṭa, raised Brāhmaṇical temples and constructed the Buddha viharas. Kalhana, who was a devout Śaiva, displays friendly attitude towards Buddhism throughout his whole narrative in the Rājaratanginī. A series of kings, from Aśoka down to his own time, received his unstinted praise for the viharas and the stūpas that they had constructed for the benefit of Buddhism. Similar foundations by private individuals are recorded with due care. He refers repeatedly to the Bodhisattvas or to the Buddha as giving comfort to all beings, and as the embodiments of perfect charity and nobility of feeling. They are to him beings of absolute goodness "who do not feel anger even against the sinner, but in patience render him kindness. While describing the sacrilegious confiscation of King Harṣa (1089-101 A.D.), he is as particular to name the Buddha-statues which were preserved, as the images of the Brāhmaṇical gods, Rāmasūrīn and Mārtanda. Besides, Kalhana shows on more than one occasion his thorough familiarity with Buddhist traditions and terminology. As Buddha was included into the Brāhmaṇical pantheon as one of the avatāras of Viṣṇu, the Nilamata-purīṇa, the canonical authority for Brāhmaṇical
cult in the Kāśmīra valley, prescribed the celebration of Buddha's birthday as a great festival. On the occasion the 36
status of the Buddha was to be worshipped according to the 37
rites of the Buddhist monks; the latter were to be honoured 38
with presents and the caityas were to be decorated.

In the Brāhmaṇical fold, respect for each 39
other's sect was a marked feature of the religious outlook 40
of the people of Kāśmīra. As referred to elsewhere, Lalitāditya 41
constructed temples of Viṣṇu and Śiva. The king Avanti-vāraṇa 42
built the shrine of Viṣṇu Avantiśvāmin at Avanti-pūra before 43
his accession to the throne. After obtaining the sovereign 44
power, he erected the temple of Śiva Avantiśvāra. At the 45
shrines of Tripuraśvāra (Śiva), Bhūteśa and Vījayaśa, he got 46
three pedestals made with silver conduits for bathing water 47
(anānadṛmi). There is no dearth of examples of husbands and 48
wives endowing for different sects. The king Śaṅkara-vāraṇa 49
built temples of Śiva, whereas his queen Sugandhā built a 50
temple of Viṣṇu.

There are references, of course, to the 51
desecration of the temples and the plundering of their wealth 52
by the king Harśa, and the Khasākas in the reign of Jayasiṃha. 53
The king Harśa took recourse to it because of his greed for 54
wealth. It was not due to his bigotry. The Khasākas behaved 55
like free-booters and marauders as a part of the avarice and 56
intrigue of Trillaka to oust Jayasiṃha. Fortunately such events
are few to soil the otherwise tolerant characteristic of the religious life of Kāśmira.

The theological disputes of the age exhibit certain amount of recrimination, but even there underneath the surface-clashes was an inner movement of synthesis. It is now almost universally recognised that the Advaita philosophy of Śaṅkarācārya was largely influenced by the Śūnyavāda (the theory of Void) of Nāgārjuna, the Buddhist seer and theologian. Many of the verses in the Milāsamśrayaśākīra of Nāgārjuna anticipated the position later assumed by Śaṅkarācārya. Śaṅkarācārya is also credited with the initiation of the pācaśayatana-pūjā - the worship of the five gods - Viṣṇu, Śiva, Śakti or Devī, Sūrya and Ganesā, the principal deity of the worshipper being placed in the middle and the other four in four corners of a square. The conflict between the Śaivas and the Jainas was nothing more than the theological disputes or religious controversies. The two faiths existed side by side, generally speaking, in an atmosphere of toleration and unity. There was no bitter rivalry between the Jainas and the Buddhists. The Jaina writers Bhūskara Kandi (c. 850 A.D.) and Kalyānacandra (c. 1000 A.D.) appear to have written commentaries on the Buddhist logician Dharmakirti's Saṃsāra-paribhāṣā and Pramāṇa-vārttikā respectively; while the Jaina Mālāvādin (c. 962 A.D.) wrote a commentary on Nyāya-bindu-ṭīkā of Dharmottara.

Tolerance has been the marked feature of all
religions of India. The greatest proof of the tolerant spirit of the Indians during the period under consideration is provided by an Arabic inscription of 24th Rabi I, 445 A.H. (15th July, 1053 A.D.), found in a mosque in Ahmedabad. The extent part of the inscription records that a mosque was erected on the mentioned day. This bears out the extent to which Indians could be tolerant to the persuasions of others.

1. AI, I, p. 27.
2. Supra, p. 33.
5. Supra, p. 166.
8. Ibid., p. 377.
9. IA, VI, p. 48.
11. Ibid., pp. 90-91.
13. ULMH, pp. 203, 209 ff.
14. IA, XVIII, p. 82, 1-4.
17. II, XX, p. 133.
19. III, IV, p. 293.
20. JASS, LXXIX, I, p. 68.
22. Ibid., I, p. 60, 1. 4; p. 63, 1. 52.
23. Supra, p. 146.
28. Supra, p. 61.
29. LA, 1908, p. 133.
30. APR, II, pp. 412 ff.
32. APRASIL, No, 1919, pp. 62-64.
33. RT, I, I, 134 ff.; III, 28; II, VIII, 2234, 2574.
34. Ibid., I, VII, 1096-98.
35. Ibid., I, 135 ff.; 172 ff.; II, VIII, 240, 2234.
36. NP, vv. 697-703.
37. Supra, pp. 33, 82.
38. RT, I, V, 45.
39. Ibid., V, 46.
40. Supra, pp. 33-34.
41. Supra, p. 83.
42. RT, I, VII, 1086-87, 1090.
43. Ibid., II, VIII, 2756.
44. "HI", pp. 194, 198.