

Ideologies of the Shri Meenakshi Goushala: Hindu and Jain Motivations for a Madurai Cow Home

Brett Evans

Abstract: This essay describes and analyzes the motivations underlying the creation and current organization of a recently constructed *goshala* (cow home) in the south Indian city of Madurai. Drawing on ethnographic fieldwork carried out in 2012, I highlight the divergent visions of the *goshala*'s purpose and future that were articulated by the institution's Hindu and Jain members. Interviews and informal conversations with participants indicate that many individuals conceptualize only one "authentic" tradition of animal homes. However, within Madurai's *goshala* and likely many others like it, these stakeholders referred to distinctly different traditions. I argue that Hindu and Jain understandings of *ahimsa* (nonviolence) and the cow vary significantly, and this strongly affects individual expectations of the mission of animal homes. Utilizing Hobsbawm and Ranger's framework (1983), I note that the many "invented traditions" of animal homes may be difficult to accommodate within one institution, especially one with a religiously diverse membership. I further suggest that transparent discussions which clearly indicate an animal home's goals and mission are necessary and that the outcomes of these discussions should be effectively communicated to the wider community supporting the institution.

Keywords Jainism; Hinduism; Animals; India

INTRODUCTION

Eventually, the road narrowed into a one-way track, barely wide enough for a sedan. Several minutes later, near the hundredth-odd granite factory we'd passed on the hour-long drive, we encountered a sign for Shri Meenakshi Goushala, which displayed a colorful drawing of a baby cow suckling her mother. We were about to arrive. There were only a few cars at the entrance—a fact which did not foretell accurately the size of the event to come. I was under the mistaken impression that, since this *goshala*¹ (cow home) was new and still small, the event would not attract much interest. After all, it was only celebrating its first anniversary and sheltered a meager twenty cows. How many would care enough to attend? I soon learned that the answer was quite a few: at its peak, I estimated that around eight hundred people were present.

The size of a football field, on this January day the *goshala* included several unfinished construction projects, some temporary tent structures for the event, internal fences for the cows, and dozens of palm trees dispersed amongst the short grass. The cows were cordoned off in the rear of the facility, each tied to stakes in the ground intended to keep them from interfering with the festivities. At the behest of their parents, several children were offering the cows dried grass. Others were helping to decorate the cows' horns with bright colors, and their necks with garlands of jasmine flowers. One man had a small box full of sweets which he was attempting, often without success, to offer to each cow. The cows seemed to mostly ignore their many suitors, apparently quite accustomed to all of the attention.

Shortly after making my way to visit the cows, I was shuffled off for more introductions.

Brett Evans Brett is a fourth-year undergraduate at Elon University. He has spent the past three years researching Jainism both in India and the North American diaspora. He has written three soon-to-be published essays, including this one, that involve Jainism, animals, and *ahimsa* (nonviolence).

This was a very social event—one replete with established hierarchies, some subtle and others more obvious. My being both a foreigner and a guest insured that I was not lacking in attention from those present. After many handshakes, I was introduced to a man who was clearly well-connected and respected in this community. After he went through the “common-knowledge” facts, of which every Hindu present wanted to inform me (e.g., Hindus worship cows; cow is mother; one cow contains all of the gods and goddesses; cows can’t be allowed to be slaughtered), he spent much of our time together explaining the material value of cow products. The first thing he said on the matter was “You know Japan and the tsunami, and how there is so much radiation?” Unsure of the connection between this recent tragic event and our present conversation, I responded “Yes?” He said, with a bit of excitement and complete seriousness, “Cow dung does not attract radiation.” It was soon evident that, according to this line of reasoning, cow dung positively affects radiation zones and any damage they cause. Cow urine, my new mentor said, has similar properties. In fact, he said that it is the “number one medicine for cancer patients,” and that if a patient drinks one cup of cow urine a day for 365 days, he or she will surely be cured.

Despite hearing plenty about the sanctity of the cow and the substances which are derived from her, no consensus emerged about the purpose of the cow shelter among those with whom I talked that day. Some told me that the shelter was built to protect old and sick cows, especially those unable to produce milk and therefore unwanted by previous owners. Some seemed less concerned about the condition of the cows than they were about their quantity. For these individuals, the more cows (regardless of any parameters such as type, need, health, etc.) living in the *goshala*, the greater the institution’s success. Still others were keen to explain to me the *goshala*’s role in supplying what they perceived as Madurai’s serious need for pure, unadulterated cow products. With so many motives, some of which stem from my interlocutors’ different religious backgrounds, how could they all receive equal priority? Do any motives conflict? Who decides the institution’s purpose? Clearly, I was missing something, and needed to ask more questions.

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Using the case study of the Shri Meenakshi Goushala, which was constructed in 2011 in Madurai, India, this paper describes and analyzes the motivations underlying a newly developed animal home and attempts to determine how these affect the implementation of such an institution. Because this *goshala* was still in its formative period when I conducted my fieldwork, many decisions had not yet been made. As such, this case study is of particular utility in understanding the development of and stakeholders in contemporary animal homes. The collaboration of both Hindus and Jains¹ on one shared project is also particularly instructive, because while each community has well-developed traditions of supporting animal homes, these traditions have somewhat different emphases and impetuses. Differences were evident not only between members of the two religions but within each community, as well. Importantly, these divergences were frequently ignored or denied by the participants in my study, strategies that seemed to impede the healthy functioning of the *goshala* that they lead and support. Drawing on a site visit, ten formal interviews, and a number of informal conversations, my research indicates that several traditionally Hindu motivations, which follow primarily from the sacred cow concept and Hindu *ahimsa*, provide the basis for the current operation of Madurai’s *goshala*. It also shows that those with a stake in this *goshala*, and possibly others like it, may hold distinctly different goals, which could be difficult to accommodate within one institution. To explain these differences and their origins, I conceptualize animal homes as “invented traditions,” drawing upon Hobsbawm and Ranger’s theory.

In the initial section of this paper, I explain the historical trajectory of Indian animal homes and describe their contemporary diversity and distribution. I then detail the specifics of this case study's location and community. This overview is followed by a discussion—which relies both on the scholarly literature and responses supplied by my participants—of Hindu and Jain motivations for animal homes. I conclude with an analysis of these somewhat divergent motivations and their ramifications in regard to the implementation of this and similar animal homes, arguing that different but related “invented traditions” have been the basis for decision-making by the stakeholders in Madurai's *goshala*, and that they thus might be the basis for decision-making at other similar institutions.

ANIMAL HOMES – STAKEHOLDERS AND HISTORICAL TRAJECTORIES

The exact origin of animal homes on the Indian subcontinent is unknown. However, it is widely accepted that these institutions have been in existence since at least the 3rd century BCE (Lodrick 1981, 57). During this time, the influential and powerful Indian emperor Ashoka, who famously converted to and spread Buddhism, constructed numerous pillar and rock edicts which advocated Buddhist tenets and included various prescriptions and proscriptions (Dhammika 1993). Of particular significance, the slaughter of animals was included among these prohibitions, and lengthy descriptions of medical treatment and wells for animals were also featured in these proclamations. These historical records have been interpreted as evidence for the existence of animal homes during this period (Lodrick 1981, 57).

Nevertheless, it is likely that the progenitors of contemporary *goshalas* and *panjrapoles* (animal homes) originated before this period, and it is doubtful that their creation occurred within a Buddhist context. As Lodrick notes, “The persistent Jain, and apparent lack of Buddhist, involvement with the institution in modern India, the central position of *ahimsa* in Jain philosophy, and [*ahimsa*'s] appearance in Jainism as early as the beginning of the eighth century B.C.” all point to the *panjrapole* having Jain origins (1981, 59). For the *goshala*'s origins, Lodrick points to the *Arthashastra*, a Hindu text dating to sometime between the 4th century BCE and 4th century CE that deals with matters of statecraft and law. This treatise discusses the bureaucratic position of the *Godyaksa* (Superintendent of Cows) and describes the maintenance of useless and abandoned cattle herds (ibid). Over time, these early animal homes evolved into divergent forms, each with unique purposes and goals. According to Lodrick, Indian animal homes can be loosely classified within one of six types: the *panjrapole*, *vania goshala*, temple *goshala*, court *goshala*, Gandhian *goshala*, and the *gosadan* (see Table A below for details) (ibid, 16-27). The existence of these six types evidences the varied motivations underlying animal homes and makes clear that what is commonly understood to be one tradition is in fact many.

In 1998, it was estimated that approximately 3000 animal homes existed in India: of these, the overwhelming majority are located in North India (Burgat 2004, 244). Nearly all *panjrapoles* are in Gujarat, the state in northwestern India with the highest population of Jains, who provide the necessary funds and impetus to establish and maintain them (Long 2009, 17). *Goshalas* are also found in higher density within Gujarat and its surrounding states, but these typically Hindu institutions' distribution encompasses a much wider Northern range than do Jain *panjrapoles* (Lodrick 1981, 33-39). Few animal homes exist in the South of India, with this case study's *goshala* serving as one exception. The practice of constructing animal homes has, historically, been absent from South Indian cultures, with the result that those that do exist are most frequently developed by communities of North Indian merchants who have migrated to the South (ibid, 145).

Table A

TYPE OF ANIMAL HOMES	GENERAL PURPOSE	PARTY INVOLVED
<i>Panjrapole</i>	Protects animals, primarily those without economic value	Jains (primarily), Hindus (secondarily)
<i>Vania Goshala</i>	Protects cows, primarily those without economic value	Hindus (primarily), Jains (secondarily)
Temple Goshala	Provides pure cow products—milk, ghee, dung, urine—as well as the cow herself, for use in temple rituals and activities	Hindus
<i>Court Goshala</i>	Historically, provided a private stock of cow products for royalty, evidenced wealth and piety	Hindus
Gandhian Goshala	Provides milk for ashrams and educates public about agricultural uses of cows	Hindus
<i>Gosadan</i>	Provides alternative to slaughter and space for unwanted cows away from where they could cause harm in the forms of crop damage or spread of disease, while concentrating them for more efficient use of dung and carcasses	Indian Government

CONTEXT AND BACKGROUND

The entirety of my fieldwork occurred in Madurai, a city located in Tamil Nadu, one of the southernmost states in India. A capital of many former empires and a consistent commercial center, Madurai is a present-day hub of activity with a population of just over 1 million (The Registrar General & Census Commissioner 2011). Famous for its expansive Meenakshi Temple complex, which has long attracted Hindu pilgrims and installed the city as one of India’s most important spiritual centers, Madurai has a history of religious, economic, and political importance dating back approximately 2000 years (Devakunjari 1979, 1). In addition to its thriving Hindu population, the city has historically been home to a significant minority of Tamil Jains. Many well-known Jain caves and hills exist in Madurai’s outskirts, where Jain ascetics would take shelter, especially during the monsoon season. However, many of these Tamil Jains were forced out of the region in the 8th century CE (Dundas 1992, 127-128). Most of the Jains who live in Madurai today have emigrated from northern states, particularly Gujarat and Rajasthan, for employment prospects and other opportunities.

Jains are not the only North Indians to create lives in Madurai, though. Over time, these individuals organized themselves into many small *samaj* (communities) based upon state of origin and sometimes religion. In 2009, sixteen *samaj* came together to form the Madurai North Indian Welfare Association (MANIWA). This organization was designed to promote North Indian cultural practices amongst those who had relocated to Madurai, collectively contribute to and organize service projects, and support each other in times of need. In 2012, there were an estimated 6500 members, of which over 1000 were Jains and the remainder were Hindu. As its first service project, MANIWA decided to create the Shri Meenakshi Goushala. If it is a success, they intend to undertake additional charitable endeavors, such as building hospitals, schools, and so forth.

The Shri Meenakshi Goushala, named after the local Hindu goddess who also lends her name to the famous nearby temple, is located on 3.2 acres of land outside of the city of Madurai in an agricultural and industrial area. Planning for the *goshala* began in 2009, shortly after the formation of MANIWA. However, it wasn’t until January 15, 2011 that it was officially opened. During the first year, monthly expenses tended to be around 100,000 rupees (approximately \$2,000), with all but 2,500 rupees (approximately \$50) —the proceeds from milk sales—coming from donations. At the end of its first year, the *goshala* housed 21 cows

(15 adults, 6 youth). The service project is run through a five-member (four Hindu men and one Jain man) subcommittee within MANIWA's organization. These five members stand for election every two years, but it is expected that the positions will be held for some time, as no one intends to oppose the current leaders.

My initial contact with MANIWA and the Shri Meenakshi Goushala project took place in early January 2012, when I attended the one-year anniversary of the cow home's creation. I subsequently arranged to interview a range of related individuals—both those who were directly involved as leaders, as well as those who were not formally involved but still associated with the institution. Participants were identified and selected using the process of chain-referral, whereby initial participants recommend later ones based upon criteria provided by me (Bernard 2011, 147). These criteria were primarily membership in MANIWA and knowledge of the *goshala* project, but it was also necessary to insist upon the inclusion of females, as many participants (both male and female) assumed that females would not be able to provide the information I needed due to their absence from project leadership. Among the ten participants I formally interviewed, six were male (evenly split between Hindus and Jains; two served on the *goshala* committee) and four were female (also evenly split between religious affiliation; none were on the *goshala* committee). These formal interviews were semi-structured, following an open-ended question guide, but allowing for conversation to proceed in a reasonably organic fashion.

HINDU MOTIVATIONS

What happens [is], these [cows] fulfill all your wishes if you properly treat [them]. That is the belief. If you worship the cow, if you take the cow, you will get so many things out of it. First, it will give milk. Out of milk, you will get a lot of milk products—cheese, butter, ghee, so many things. If you take the urine, the cow urine, it is used for a lot of medicines. It has got a lot of power. No other animal has got this power in their urine. Cau mutra. Cow urine. It has got highest medical value in Ayurvedic science.

– Hindu Participant (Interview, 2012, Madurai)

While I encountered diverse motivations both within and between Hindu and Jain populations, some motivations seemed to be inextricably tied to religious community and background. To understand Hindu motivations for building a *goshala* like the one in this case study, one must first understand the history and contemporary use of the Indian sacred cow concept. The zebu cow—the humped species which today is regarded as most auspicious in India—is thought to have first been domesticated around 8000 BCE, which indicates a long and close relationship between this animal and humans (Lodrick 2005, 63). By the Vedic period in India (c. 16th century BCE), the cow had achieved a status above that of other animals—an inference supported by the fact that cattle were mentioned in Vedic literature more than any other animal (Korom 2000, 186-187). However, this esteem did not mean that personal or state prohibitions on the harm and consumption of cows existed at this time (Brown 1957, 35).

It was not until later, at the end of the Upanishadic period, that the cow was established in high-caste circles as sacred and granted a formal, protected status within elite religious and legal texts. Despite its status in some texts, others, like the *Manusmṛti* (c. 7th century BCE – 4th century CE) and *Arthashastra*, still evidenced great ambivalence concerning the sacred cow and *ahimsa* and included both passages condemning and allowing the slaugh-

ter of cows (Lodrick 2005, 70). Only during the Puranic era (6th-16th centuries CE) did the cow, who was given prominent positions in the popular vernacular myths of the time, become more widely accepted as divine (ibid, 71). Moreover, Frank Korom and others argue that “it was not until Mahatma Gandhi utilized the cow...for his nonviolent struggle during the freedom movement that her position and status as a sacred symbol was firmly implanted in Indian soil” (Korom 2000, 188).

Today, though the cow is still not unilaterally considered sacred or protected by Hindus,³ many beliefs about cattle comprise the common religious fabric. In particular, the beliefs that many deities inhabit the cow and that the cow is a mother goddess are ingrained in much of Hindu thought (Korom 2000, 192) and were espoused by each of my Hindu participants. From these understandings, it is easy enough to comprehend the subsequent belief that substances derived from the divine cow are also holy. Cow milk, curd, ghee, urine, and dung—called *pancagavya* (five products of the cow)—are considered by Hindus, and sometimes members of other Indian religions, to be of the utmost purity and usefulness (Simoons 1974, 21). These substances are used in religious ritual in the forms of offerings to (sweets made with ghee) and bathing solutions for images (*murti*) of deities. Anyone hoping to benefit from these offerings must be sure of the pure and unadulterated nature of the substances—something which participants consistently suggested is increasingly difficult to do in modern times. In temple uses, this purity is even more essential. For this reason, *goshalas* have been used to produce authentic and trustworthy cow products. In particular, the temple *goshala* (see Table A above) has been almost solely devoted to this purpose (Lodrick 1981, 23).

The *pancagavya* are also utilized in personal life as a staple food source, to remove impurities from one’s body or living space, and to cure both minor and major ailments. In addition to this paper’s earlier discussion of cow dung and its assumed potential to neutralize the tragedy of exposure to radiation after the tsunami in Japan, participants reported that imbibing cow urine would cure skin problems, combat cancer, and insure general good health. Simoons, in his important article on the products of the cow, provides further examples of cow dung being used to clean kitchen utensils and wash away the perceived impurity of menstruating women (1974, 27). Considering the potency believed by Hindus and others to exist in cow products, it is obvious that supplying these substances to those who want and need them would be a key priority for many.

The material benefits mentioned in the previous paragraphs are crucial to understanding Hindu motivations to build *goshalas*, and yet the concept of *ahimsa* is at least equally as relevant. Hindu participants generally did not mention *ahimsa*—literally the negation (the prefix a- meaning not or non in Sanskrit) of *himsa*, which has been alternately translated as harming, injury, or violence—by name unless prompted by me (Jain and Kripal 2009, 203). However, the purpose behind building the *goshala*, as described by its Hindu leaders, related very much to *ahimsa*. Unlike Jain understandings of the concept, within Hinduism, *ahimsa* has traditionally been an ethic popular only among ascetics, not lay people, and it also has typically been restricted to humans and larger animals, particularly the cow (Shinn 2000, 219). That said, Hindu vegetarianism and the existence of many *goshalas* show the concept, which was reinvigorated by Gandhi (Burgat 2004, 229), to be alive and functioning among the tradition’s laity.

The *goshala*’s leaders were unanimous in stating that the institution’s only goal was to protect old and sick cows. In response to a question about future plans for milk cows, one Hindu leader vehemently denied that this was being considered. “We are not selling milk; we are only serving the cows. That is it.” He went as far as to suggest, incorrectly, that not a

single *goshala* in all of India had milking operations.⁴ Despite this disavowal, when asked what type of cow would live at the *goshala* many non-leader Hindu participants confidently described ones which were healthy and producing milk. In further contrast to the leaders' claims and intentions, no cows living in the *goshala* at the time of this study were classified as old or sick. This contradictory situation was explained by two of the leaders as the result of meritorious, but unsolicited, gifts from Hindus donors who wanted to increase the population of cows in the *goshala*.

JAIN MOTIVATIONS

They say: don't hurt anybody, especially not your mother. Cow is like your mother. She has given you milk. She has grown old. Now that she is old, you want to kill her? Is this fair? No. So, this *panjrapole* is a place where all these dry cows and bulls are kept, given food and water. Veterinary doctors are there. They take care of the animals, treat them also. Till their last breath, they will take care.

- Jain Participant (Interview, 2012, Madurai)

While Hindus mostly appeared to be driven by the sacred cow concept first and *ahimsa* second, the Jains with whom I spoke were consistent about their primary motivations being *ahimsa* and compassion for life. Upon being asked why, as a Jain, he or she supported the *goshala* in Madurai, each Jain participant in my fieldwork immediately discussed *ahimsa* and *jiv-daya* (compassion for life). To be sure, other motivations were often mentioned later, and I will discuss these below. However, the primacy of the two concepts above clearly indicates their higher level of importance.

Since Jainism's inception, *ahimsa* has been a, if not the, defining feature of the tradition. As early as the 8th or 9th centuries BCE, Parsvanatha—the second most recent *tirthankara*, believed by scholars to possibly be the earliest historical leader of the religion—included *ahimsa* as the first of his four moral requirements (Long 2009, 30). Jains believe *himsa* causes negative *karma* to physically accumulate on one's soul, resulting in continued and lower rebirths (Jaini 1998, 112). For members of a religion whose ostensible goal is to cease participation in the cycle of rebirth (*samsara*) through achieving liberation (*moksha*), *ahimsa* is an essential method of preventing the influx of worldly *karma* particles which are detrimental to success in this endeavor. Some scholars have argued that within traditionally ascetic-oriented Jainism, "*ahimsa* is concerned not with ethics as socially construed, but with purity as physically construed and, thus, with the cessation of all action (*karma*)" (Jain and Kripal 2009, 203). Yet it is unwise to consider any community, Jains included, as a static and internally uniform body. "Official doctrine," derived from textual and monastic sources, can differ in key ways from that espoused by the laity.⁵ Importantly, the lay Jains with whom I conducted interviews would often invoke *ahimsa* as the motivating factor behind social worldly actions, such as those which support and create animal homes.

When discussing *ahimsa's* relationship to the Madurai *goshala*, one Jain participant explained, "They tell you to try to even reduce violence at the microorganism level... So, especially when it is a cow, when it is supposed to have all five-senses—an organism of a higher evolution—[Jains] would try to protect it. Not only protect the life, but make life easier for it—the cow or any other animals—because the basic principle of Jainism is nonviolence." In her view, which was reflected by all of the other Jain participants, *ahimsa* extends itself to encompass more than just avoidance of harm caused by the individual, but also to prevention of harm caused by others. In addition to referencing *ahimsa*, this par-

participant noted Jainism's belief in a hierarchy of life which ascends from one-sensed (touch) to five-sensed beings (i.e., those who possess touch, taste, smell, sight, and hearing). While Jains attempt seriously to avoid harming insects (two- to four-sensed beings) and even bacteria (one-sensed), they are clear that harming a five-sensed life form is the worst offense. Referencing the *Bhagavati Sutra*, Kristi Wiley notes that this is because, while Jain thought holds that all life suffers equally, five-sensed life are able to know both "what they are suffering from and how much is their suffering" (2006, 251). The cow, as a five-sensed being, is therefore especially worthy of Jain support.

The Jain concept of *jiv-daya*—*jiv* meaning life and *daya* compassion—intersects with or at the very least runs parallel to *ahimsa*. *Jiv-daya* is both a value and a cause for Jains. It is the desire to alleviate the suffering of others, and it is also an established form of charity. In every Jain temple and at many pilgrimage sites, there are a variety of donation boxes, each designated for a specific purpose. One of these is always marked "*jiv-daya*." Describing what these funds were allocated for, participants informed me that animal cow homes were usually the recipients, but additional uses included providing seeds for birds, water tanks along roads for herd animals and stray dogs, and other similar initiatives. This popular ethical priority was described not in terms of religious proscriptions, but instead was said to stem from general Jain beliefs on about suffering, nonviolence, and the interconnectedness of all life. As for spiritual benefits of these actions, participants were generally hesitant to claim with authority the nature of *karma*. Most agreed that doing good actions results in good outcomes, such as positive *karma* (*punya* or merit). However, most were also clear that this was not the reason they continued with these social actions. One participant commented, "Whether it helps *karma* or not, it is very difficult to say. And, I mean, I would rather not do it for that. I would do it just because I would not like to be hurt, so I would not like to hurt anyone, too."

To my research participants, these two prominent features of Jainism—*ahimsa* and *jiv-daya*—were *the* reasons behind their support of animal homes. However, other purposes were present also. While looking after sick and old cows was their first priority, several individuals expressed their support for establishing milking operations to provide pure cow products for household use. Interestingly, despite most Jain participants stating lack of belief in the sacred cow concept, several thought manufacturing medicines derived from cow urine would be worthwhile. Perhaps belief in the efficacy of cow urine as medicine, which has been most frequently promulgated by Hindus, has taken hold of the Indian consciousness to such a degree that it is now partially independent of, and yet still related to, the sacred cow concept. This is important because the prevalence of the belief among Jains in the unique powers of cow products provides support for typically Hindu conceptions of animal homes that include commercial or "productive" elements.

WHOSE TRADITIONS AND HOW MANY TRADITIONS?

While traditions of building animal homes in India have existed for over 2000 years, the reasons behind such institutions have not remained unchanged but rather have been host to shifting motivations. Today, there are many different outcomes desired by supporters of these institutions. Some participants are protection-oriented, hoping to provide needed care for either animals in general or cows specifically. Others describe their motivations in relation to the economic and ritual benefits that might potentially be derived from the cow. These differences are most pronounced when comparing Hindu and Jain participants, but are also quite noticeable within each religious community. Since the general tradition of animal homes has varied and evolving understandings of its purpose, the question of which

motivations will take priority is important for those involved to consider.

In many ways, it is helpful to conceptualize contemporary animal homes as a collection of “invented traditions,” or “set[s] of practices, normally governed by overtly or tacitly accepted rules and of a ritual or symbolic nature, which seek to inculcate certain values and norms of behavior by repetition, which automatically implies continuity with the past” (Hobsbawm and Ranger 1992, 1). Each participant in this study had a definite and exclusive idea of what an animal home should be, and several were so committed to their model that they refused to admit the existence of any examples which deviated from it. Furthermore, these idealized models were believed to be replicating the historic and therefore “authentic” or “true” form of the animal home, although the varying responses of the participants suggest that this is an imagined reality. The ability to consider animal homes as changing and individual institutions was often absent.

This inflexibility may well lead to serious conflict between stakeholders in *goshalas* and *panjrapoles*, particularly those with diverse membership, such as those which include both Hindu and Jain communities. In fact, I suggest that the case study in this paper evidences the beginnings of such a conflict. As can be seen in the case of the Shri Meenakshi Goushala, the leadership’s assumption that their motivations are the same as the community which appointed them does not seem to always hold true. Their goal of only providing protection and service to “useless” cows is not reflected in the current iteration of the *goshala*, as after one year it housed only healthy and “useful” cows. In addition, their insistence that the *goshala* is not intended for production of cow products is at odds with many of the Jain participants’ conceptions of the purpose of the animal home. This shows an obvious disconnect between involved parties.

The many goals and desires expressed by the participants in this case study may or may not all be able to be accommodated in one institution. However, the failure to acknowledge that there are differences is concerning. Without discussion of priorities, followed by attempts to publicize the results of these discussions, confusion and contradicting actions could continue. In the case of this *goshala*, more than one tradition was “invented,” and this reality demonstrates the challenge of opposing motivations and intentions existing within what is commonly thought to be only one authentic and static tradition.

NOTES

1. *Goshala*, the most commonly accepted spelling, is used throughout this paper except when transliterating the name of the Shri Meenakshi Goushala.
2. Jainism is an Indian religion which traditionally has revolved around ascetic leaders and figures and focused on reducing karmic intake through renunciation and nonviolence. Over its history, both lay and monastic Jains have consistently maintained modified lacto-vegetarian diets and taken other serious steps to prevent harm to life. The religion has coexisted with Hinduism on the Indian subcontinent for well over 2500 years. To give a better sense of the majority-minority relationship which has always existed between the two religious communities it may be helpful to know their current respective population sizes. According to the 2001 Indian census of India’s then 1.028 billion citizens, 80.5 % of the population identified as Hindus while .4 % identified as Jain (The Registrar General & Census Commissioner, 2001).
3. Lodrick (2005, 73) notes that “beef-eating is common among low caste Hindus, [and] adherence to the sacred-cow philosophy is associated primarily with the upper castes (vegetarian practices are often adopted by the lower castes in an effort to raise their caste status).”
4. In its first year, at least, even the *goshala* in this case study was selling milk, albeit in relatively miniscule quantities.
5. See Norman’s 1991 article “The Role of the Layman According to Jain Canon.”

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