



JAINA TECHNOLOGIES OF THE BODY

INFORMATION SHEET FOR RESEARCH PARTICIPANTS

ABOUT THE RESEARCH

You are being invited to contribute to a research project on bodily practices in Jainism, lead by Dr Ruth Westoby at the Oxford Centre for Hindu Studies (2025-2027). This is an invitation to be interviewed in relation to your beliefs and bodily practices inspired by Jainism.

This research project aims to collect and analyse the experiences of Jains on religious bodily practices. Jainism, with its emphasis on non-violence (*ahimsā*) and purification of the self (*jīva*), offers distinct bodily practices oriented towards cultivation, control and liberation from the body. Important bodily practices include worship, singing, mantra, study, yoga, meditation and fasting. This project focus on such 'technologies of the body' that are based on ideas and beliefs about reproduction and non-reproduction, and bodily practices motivated by celibacy and menstruation management. The objective of this project is to conduct participant interviews with Jain practitioners or practitioners inspired by Jainism, whether renunciant or lay, male, female or third gender, and whether current or former practitioners. These discussions will be analysed alongside Jain texts instructing and theorising bodily practices. By combining textual analysis with participant interviews this project aims to bridge historical perspectives with current practices, offering a comprehensive view of Jain approaches to bodily control and liberation.

ABOUT THE RESEARCHER

Ruth Westoby is the Bhagawan Sumatinath postdoctoral researcher at the Oxford Centre for Hindu Studies (UK). She holds a PhD from SOAS University of London awarded June 2024 on 'The body in Early Haṭha Yoga'. Ruth is conducting a three year research project at OCHS on Jaina Technologies of the Body.

ABOUT THE OXFORD CENTRE FOR HINDU STUDIES

The Oxford Centre for Hindu Studies (OCHS) is an academic research and teaching institute committed to the study of Hindu cultures and traditions in all periods and parts of the world. The OCHS is not affiliated with any religious or political group and collaborates closely with the University of Oxford.

- www.ochs.org.uk

CONTACTS

If you have any questions after reading this information sheet, please contact the project leader:

- Ruth Westoby, PhD, Postdoctoral Researcher in Jaina Studies, Oxford Centre for Hindu Studies (UK)
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- Jessica Frazier, PhD, Project Mentor, Fellow of the Oxford Centre for Hindu Studies
jessica.frazier@theology.ox.ac.uk

If you would like to make an independent contact to discuss this project or have a complaint please contact the University of Oxford Research Governance, Ethics & Assurance (RGEA) team at rgea.complaints@admin.ox.ac.uk or on +44 (0)1865 616480.

This research project has been reviewed by, and received a favourable opinion from, a subcommittee of the University of Oxford's Central Research Ethics Committee (CUREC).

WHAT WILL I BE ASKED TO DO IF I TAKE PART?

If you agree to take part we will set up an interview at a convenient location, such as your home or the temple, and potentially a follow-up interview. Interviews may last half an hour to an hour and a half. Interview participation is completely voluntary. You will either be given a consent form to record your agreement to take part. You may withdraw your consent and any information you provide, without having to give a reason, at any stage until your data has been de-identified by December 2026. If you agree, interviews will be audio recorded so that they can be transcribed. In the interview we will discuss bodily practices related to your religious beliefs such as your choices around having a family, celibacy and menstruation. The discussion may cover topics such as religious belief, sexual health, menstrual health, spiritual well-being, and normative and non-normative lifestyle choices around sexuality and celibacy. You may refuse to answer any of the questions and stop the recording or the interview at any point. You have the right to withdraw consent from participation after interviews have been conducted. You can also ask the researcher to provide copies of the interview transcript. After the interview, you may be invited to participate in further research.

HOW WILL THE DATA I PROVIDE BE USED?

This research will contribute to academic publications, project reports, presentations, briefings and more. This research is an opportunity to have your voice heard and recorded within academic research publications. Your contribution will generally be de-identified so that you are not identifiable in any research outputs and you can indicate the level of anonymity that you agree to in the consent form. This project will create a record of often marginalised and vanishing Jain-inspired lifestyles that merit being preserved for historical posterity and because Jainism offers distinct perspectives and solutions to various global crises, be they ecological or wellbeing oriented. For those outside the Jain community this research points to lifestyle choices that offer alternatives to dominant global north modes of pronatalism, gender essentialism, and meat and dairy consumption.

YOUR RIGHT TO WITHDRAW

Participants may withdraw from the study at any stage and without giving reasons by informing the researcher verbally or in writing (such as email) up until the data has been de-identified in accordance with participant consent by January 2028.

DATA PROTECTION

The Oxford Centre for Hindu Studies is the data controller with respect to your personal data, and as such will determine how your personal data is used in the research. The University will process your personal data for the purpose of the research outlined above. Research is a task that is performed in the public interest. Further information about your rights with respect to your personal data is available from the University's Information Compliance website at <https://compliance.admin.ox.ac.uk/individual-rights>.

Interview data is processed in accordance with the UK General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR). Data is stored securely, on password protected and encrypted computers. Audio recordings of interviews will be destroyed once a written transcript has been made. The transcript can be anonymised and participant name removed, unless the participant gives explicit consent for their name to be stored with their data. This data will only be shared within the research team.

In general research data will be stored securely for three years after the completion of the research project (expected January 2028). At the end of the research project data will be de-identified and securely transferred to a research repository such as ORA-Data. Where the interviewee consents for their contact details to be held for future research projects this will be encrypted and password protected. Such data will be stored in an institutional repository and available on specific requests from future researchers. This will be preserved as long as it is deemed to hold value by the repository. Where participants give consent for their photograph to be taken, these will be stored with identifying data. They will be stored in an institutional repository and preserved as long as they are deemed to hold value by the repository.

THANK YOU

Thank you for taking the time to read this information sheet.