

Are 24 Jain Tirthankaras (Peccakatirthankaras) are same as 24 Budhhas (Paccekabuddha)?

By: Bipin R. Shah

Introduction:

Two great reformist and surviving religious movements of today that grew out of 6th century BC religious renaissance are Buddhism and Jainism. Their religious history discusses the life of the previous Buddha and Tirthankaras who lived before their founders Siddhartha Gautama (Buddha) or Vardhaman Jnatrputra (Mahavira). Later on they were called by their religious epithets of Buddha (possessing supreme knowledge) and Tirthankaras (Jina and Conquerors of all instincts).

The oral traditions of India states that there were 24 to 25 teachers who taught Shramanic religion including Buddha and Mahavira and some of earlier ones may belong to Antediluvian period and some belong to post diluvium period. The opinions of experts vary on this subject, especially in Buddhism. Since both these religious movement claim their previous teachers that are very identical in numbers, it has raised the curiosity among some scholars could they be the same people who were given different names by each religious texts after formulation of canonical texts. Paccekabuddha or (previous Buddha) can be the same person as Peccatirthankaras (Previous Tirthankaras)? Each of their religious canonical texts gives short biographical sketch of three or four teachers in each tradition but do not provide any details on rest of them. Otherwise, we know nothing of others, their life and accomplishment other than their packing order. We will try to examine if this question has a merit of its own or just a pure case of coincidence, however, we need to go into necessary details of India's pre-Vedic religions.

India's Pre-Vedic Religions:

The information on Pre-Vedic religion given to us during last two hundred years of archeology and translation of ancient texts are sketchy and interpretations are based on personal opinions or biases of the interpreters. The real data of historical values may lie with tribal and aborigines of India who have maintained their tradition for millennia. No one has made any systematic effort to study the tribal's religious tradition of aborigines of India who usually reside in an isolated forested area of India that are at a great distance from major urban centers. Recently, some archeologists and researchers have made some progress with discovery of cave paintings, megaliths and their local worshipping tradition that generally

involved sketch of naked ascetics and hitherto unknown deities not belonging to mainstream religion.



Ajivikas like ascetics of early ages appears to be drawn on stela or cave-Naked ascetics carrying drums

Elois Hart would have described them as: “The barefoot beggar who wanders through India sweeping the dust from his path lest unintentionally, he crush by his step some beetle or seed may very well be a cultivated and highly intelligent individual. A follower perhaps of the ancient religion of India whose members bestow in their teachings such logical and encouraging expositions of the spiritual purpose for all life that they, like millions before them, literally and deliberately abandon comforts of family and home, and undertake severest austerities in order to reach, while still human, the "world of the Gods." Once it would have seemed incredible that anyone voluntarily could give up his all -- wealth, status and normal pleasures -- for "nothing in return for vivid, joyous, transcendental living.”

“Bhikshtana” in Sanskrit and many contemporary Indian languages called “Bhiksha” means literally giving alms (food, water) to those “wandering ascetics” or “mendicants” who have given up everything and nothing because they sometimes have nothing of values to give except their wisdom that they acquired through meditation during absolute solitudes. This types of ascetics lived during the Indus valley civilization as depicted by Yogi Seals of Indus valley civilization. The word “Bhikshus” used in Pali cannon to describe a Buddhist monk originated from the Sanskrit word Bhikshtana. Jaina calls their counterpart Muni.

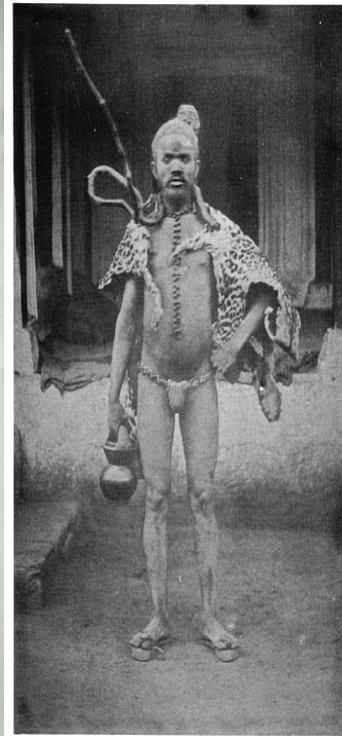
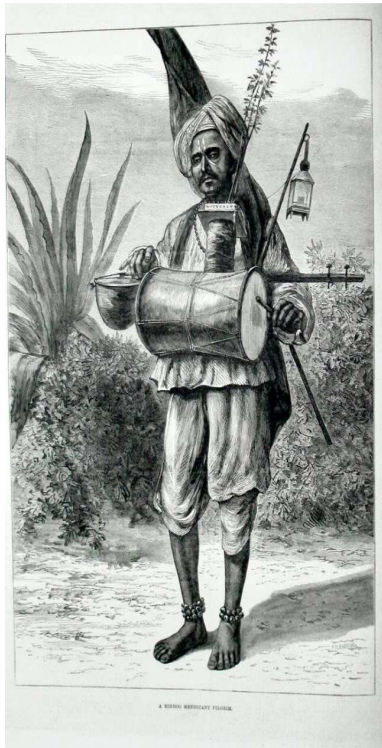


Yogi Seals of IV period-India

In several articles, I addressed the non-Vedic tradition of India that is largely ignored by some Indian historians. The author identified current Hindu god Shiva deity as the "Supreme mendicant" belonging to non-Vedic people who was the supreme ascetic. Some may disagree with that stipulation but it is consistent with Yogi Seal and known archeology of today. Hinduism is a blend tradition of those ancient faiths when blended with Vedic faith and other reformist faiths that arrived after. This particular non-Vedic tradition depicts " Bhikshtana" as a nude ascetics with various variation of two arms to four-armed man adorned with ornaments who holds a begging bowl, carries singing instruments for recitals, prayers or hymns and is often the leader who is followed by "ash-marked headed", demonic looking attendants.

Other reformist sects that evolved and flowed from this ancient tradition were many but most recognized are: Ajivikas, Jainism and Buddhism. Like Hinduism, their present status is also blended one and segmented into various sects and beliefs from the original one. All contained some "Vedic layers of blends" to survive in its current form. These changes sometimes evolved naturally .sometime voluntarily accepted or sometimes imposed by the ruling classes. In present Hinduism, "Bhikshtana" is considered a gentler form of Shiva's fierce aspect "Bhairavas" and not the gruesome forms of destructive Rudra form.

In Jainism and Buddhism, “Bhairava” takes the position of Yaksha that act as a guardian and protector of fellow ascetics Buddha and Tirthankaras that author regards as the integration of various ancient traditions under single umbrella of the present Hinduism. Yaksha and Yakshini traditions were very common with ancient tribal and aborigines of India.



Bhikshatana, Thiruvannamalai, south India Singer accompanying Group

“Lingo”

Bhikshtana is a popular icon in South India. While in North Indian tribal belts, they refer to “Lingo” (probably derived from Shiva’s Lingum). Ajivikas leader Makkali Gosala who was senior to both Mahavira and Buddha started out with his father as a singer accompanying the group and begging for alms. The various mythologies surrounding Bhikshtana are cited in various Hindu Puranic literatures. Kurma, Linga, Varaha, Shiva, Skanda, and Vamana Puranas give the detailed accounts with various accounts of their origin with their mythological origin. One story of particular attention is given in Linga Purana. **“The Linga Purana also mentions the visit of Bhikshtana-Shiva to Deodar Forest to entice the wives of sages, who had taken up austerities "detrimental to the perpetuation of a healthy social order". The scripture mentions Bhikshtana-Shiva's deformed but attractive nude black-red form, his seduction of the sages' wives, and the sages' resulting curse.**

Another story of interest from Purana is **“The theme of Shiva as a beggar is not unique to the Bhikshtana icon and his legends. Shiva is often described as wandering the universe as a homeless beggar-ascetic with his consort Parvati's raison d’être being to bring him back to his**

marital and home life. Shiva is also depicted as asking for alms from the goddess Annapurna, a form of Parvati as the goddess of food. The Satarudriya describes Shiva as gathering food through begging, evocative of his Bhikshatana form. In spite of this he is described as a sustainer of the universe and of life-sustaining food.” In other word he was the world’s first agriculturalist.



Four armed Shiva marrying two arms Parvati-kalyanasundara scene in Ellora Cave carving South India



Shiva as ascetic with begging bowl



Shiva with consort in meditation



Shivaite mendicants of today

Reincarnation Theory of Brahmanism and Reformist Religious movements of 6th century BC -India:

Vedic Brahmins may have brought to India the concept and belief of reincarnation that we have established through literary evidence. The Reincarnation is the religious or philosophical concept that the soul or spirit, after biological death, can begin another life in a new form of living beings in any form that exists in the universe. One must go through countless forms of lives that exist in this planet from single cell virus, bacterium, trees, and sea and land animals and finally achieve coveted birth right as the human beings. The life form as a human being is one of the most precious and hierarchical one established by God and allows the opportunity to be reborn again as human being escaping the cycle of rebirth in the lower forms. In ancient India, Brahmins set the rules and invented the “twice born” concept reserved for Arya as a birth right. Two upper castes of Arya automatically earn this status by birth. All others who did not fall into this category were regarded as not qualified to this exclusive right no matter how they lived or conducted themselves in real life through their deeds. This created discriminatory contradiction of the theory itself.

The reincarnation cycle keeps repeating itself in an infinite and timeless universe. Today's Hinduism believes that after the death, the soul hangs around until body is gone or decomposed that gave us the burial and cremation customs. The older customs to leave the body devour by carrion birds and animals at mountain peak were terminated with burial and cremation customs so human soul can migrate quickly to its new assignment. Other than Zoroaster's followers, everyone had abolished the ancient customs of sky burial of leaving the body for carrion birds. See more on that subject

https://www.academia.edu/3758692/Sky_Burial_Practice_of_Ancients-From_Anatolia_to_China_west_to_east_

After Life:

This reincarnation concept was not entirely new but was also being also practiced In Egypt, China and Mesopotamia with different variations labeled as “After Life” or other related terms. The extensive preparation of mummification and after death journey in ancient Egypt was one such variation. The Chinese version was somewhat similar when all servants close to the emperor were entombed alive with the dead emperor. There are other examples in Central Asian archeology when dead saka warrior was buried with his horse. Since the days of early Sumerian civilization, the very first urbanization took place. Some legal order was necessary but a few powerful one who were ruler, emperor, Raja, King declared themselves as “divine” or having a direct relationship with God. The chief priest supported that privileged status. The ancient Aryans had three layers of “Varnas” prior to their arrival to India that was

basically the same packing order; King and Priest are divine and ordained by God to be obeyed and worship and third class were commoners. When Arya found many non-Aryans habitants living in India, they had to create new and fourth Varna of Sudra. Ancient Persian, brothers of Vedic Aryans always had three Varnas and remains so until converted to Islam.

As far as Ancient India was concerned, Mahavira and Budha both were reformists and champions of “under privileged castes” or “lower Varna”. They both decried this “twice born Aryan exclusivity” theory of Brahmins and declared that reincarnation is not a birth right but right to be earned by good deeds (Karma). This path and freedom from the cycle of reincarnation is available to all humans who follow their brand of asceticism and religious philosophy. Anyone can escape the cycle of reincarnation by achieving the status of “Arhant”, Buddha or Tirthankara status. This new strand of religious thoughts opened up new possibilities for non-Aryans and other dissatisfied fringe members of the Aryans society of ancient India who were fed up with Brahmin hegemonies in every phase of their lives and were looking for an escape hatch. The resurrection belief in Christianity takes its cue from reincarnation theory of early civilization.

The families of Varthman and Siddhartha originated from the second class “Vrtya” Kshatriya clans and did not belong to Premier Aryan Kshatriya group of Kuru-Páncála-Vidisha. “Vrtya Kshatriyas” were mercenaries for hires for premier Aryan rulers as discussed in the Mahabharata text. A dispute between family members- “Pandava” and “Kauravas” sucks up entire ancient Indian Kshatriya society during Vedic period with disastrous consequences. The Aryan society was highly stratified by “caste” and “Varna” system. The people who were born in lower castes found no hope in achieving liberation. That means slave’s children were slaves because of their birth status. This was probably not unique to Aryan culture but was practiced in all ancient civilization throughout the history. Jewish captivity during Assyrian, Roman and Nazi rules is scary examples of our animal instincts.

Some Observations on Indus-Saraswati and Vedic Cultures of India:

When the “Bronze Age” Harappans culture is compared with nomadic culture of Vedic Aryans from inferences provided through the literary source of Rig-Veda and Puranas, It is clear that Aryans when they entered the subcontinent already belonged to “Iron Age” with Iron Age weapons, chariots and horses and they must have some form of Urbanization from the places they originated from. The recent archeology and DNA study confirms that (see below). The Aryans lived in mud or wood house dwellings. The Aryan dwellings were organized in small round or elliptical cluster defensive walls and were called “pura” or “Goutar”. When Aryans migrated elsewhere due to bitter cold (as per Vendidad-Avestan text), they appeared to be nomadic with their wagons and domesticated animals, as one cannot carry your houses or

settlement to new location. The predecessor Indus-Saraswati culture of India although from Bronze Age had advanced city-urban based civilization comparable to early Mesopotamian. Indus-saraswati people were thriving with agriculture and early industrial trades until unknown climatic changes forced them to abandon the area. These two cultures do not exhibit any linguistic connection. The Elamite culture was equally advanced near Susa, Iran and they also had the connection with Indus-saraswati civilization. The climatic circumstances sometime facilitated advance technology or suppressed them in ancient world.

The geography of Rig-Veda focuses the Vedic Aryans' settlements primarily in the areas of Swat valley (Punjab), Afghanistan, Siestan, kingdom of Bactria, Khorasan valley, North West Frontier, Kashmir, Himalayan valley, otherwise known as "Sapta Sindhu" or five river deltas. On the other hand, Indus-saraswati Civilization at its mature stage had vast urban areas stretching from Baluchistan to Gujarat, including Rajasthan, Sindh, Kuchha and Saurashtra.

Around 6th century BC, with the rise of Achemenian's power, the geography of Aryan shifted to Ganges Doab. Further migration from North was affected after Alexander's invasion and Yueh-chin invasion of Northern Central Asia. All the known Buddhist and Aryan archeology lies outside the frontier of present India. This understanding is vital as Shivaite and other Shramanic traditions of India like Ajivikas and Jainism claim their antiquity prior to the arrival of Vedic tradition of Brahmanism. There are hints of this proposed Aryan geography outside of India through archeological sites of Gonur Tepe and Bactria-Margiana complex in present Turkmenistan. The most Interesting aspect of Turkmenistan as a location is where mountain Merv is located. We find all kind of references in Vedic Sanskrit corpus of mythical mountain Meru beyond Himalaya.

Viktor Ivanovich Sarianidi was a Soviet archaeologist. He discovered and excavated both the remains of this Bronze Age culture in the Karakum Desert in 1976 AD. The culture came to be known as the Bactria-Margiana similar to Bronze Age Indo-Iranian Aryans. The Vedic Aryans may have appeared in nomadic status as refugees but BMAC culture and Gonur Tepe culture shows early Aryan urbanization. Although some experts have differed with Victor's suggestion but they do not have archeology to prove their claim other than theories and assumptions. But the debate on Aryans arrival will go on among scholars.



Gonur (Mauru) Tepe south Complex layout



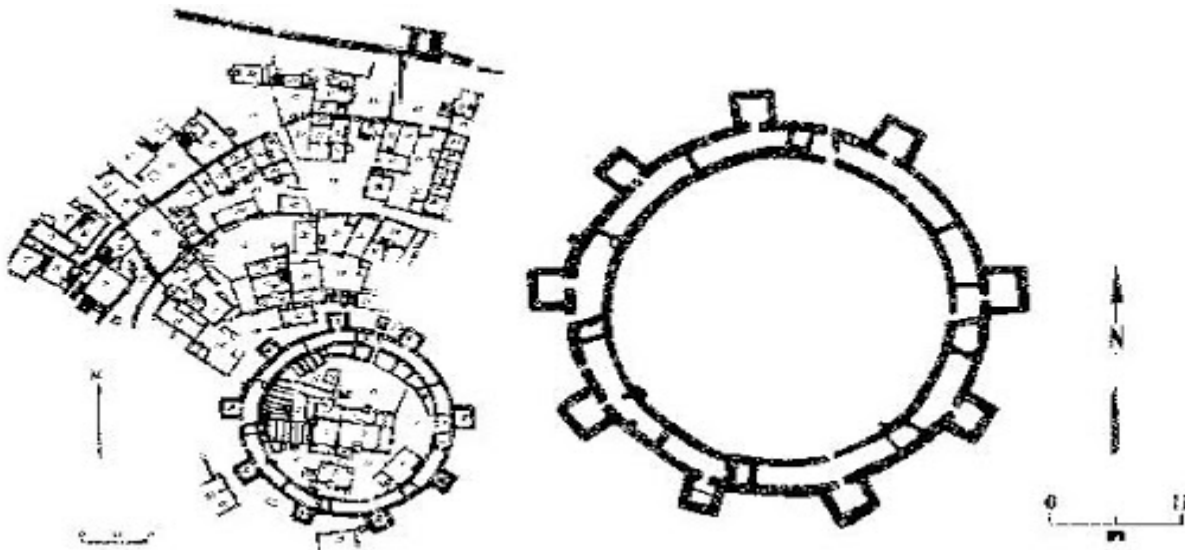
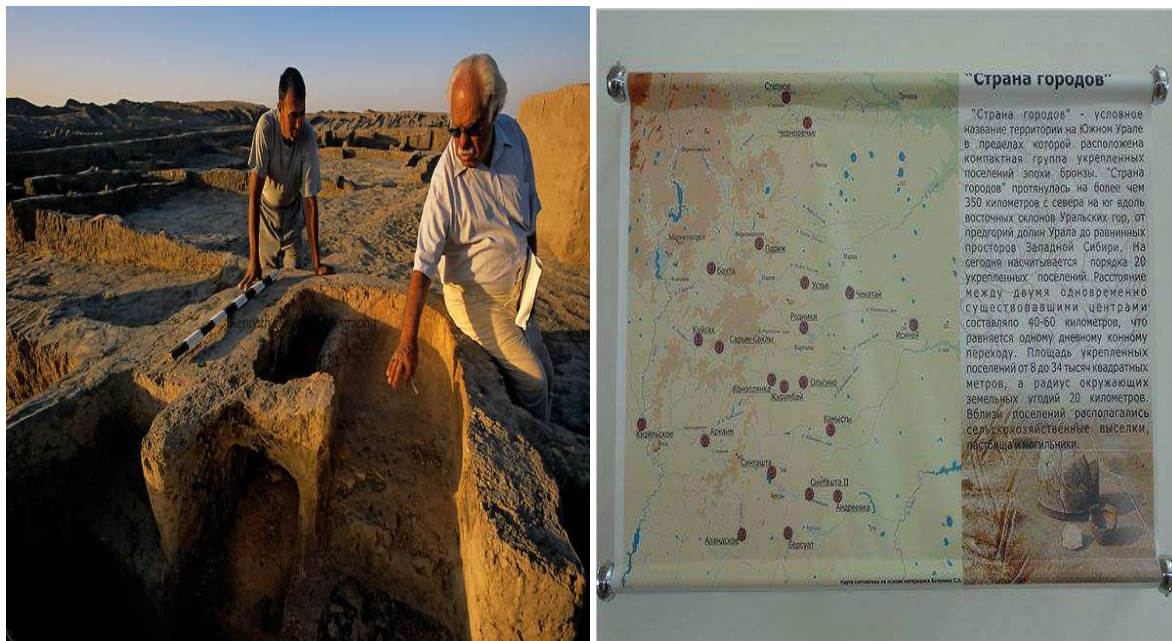
Mount Merv (Meru) and Excavated sites near Turkmenistan-Uzbekistan (Possible early home of Indo-Iranian)



Unknown artist recreation of Mauru-Bronze age



Map of BMAC complex –Soama-Hoama by victor Sarianidi



BMAC and Arkaim culture in southern Russia near Uzbekistan-by Sarianidi

Yet more recent studies reveal as shown in the link below and soon to be published book reveals that new evidence found place Proto-Indo-European homeland in Southern Russia. Gangadhar Tilak, a freedom fighter of India once predicted the same concept. Michael Balter reports: **"PIE was first spoken by pastoral herders who lived in the vast steppe lands north of the Black Sea beginning about 6000 years ago"**. This DNA based studies may have effectively killed Anatolia theory. We will have to see the details as the study implies that DNA foot prints were left by early Proto IE people who lived in steppe around Amy Darya and Caspian sea-Black sea area.

<http://news.sciencemag.org/archaeology/2015/02/mysterious-indo-european-homeland-may-have-been-steppes-ukraine-and-russia>

Some Indian historians have long speculated that Kaspian (Caspian) sea and Kashmir derives its origin from Rishi Kashyapa of Rig Veda. This perhaps completes the trail laid out by Victor Sarianidi and Indo-Iranians spread and their entry into south central Asia and then subcontinent.

Early Languages and their evolution in Ancient India:

Most experts believe that there was no formal writing system during Mahavira and Buddha's life time for the common people. If there was anything, it existed among elite class of Brahmins in hymns and recital forms only used for ritual or religious purpose or maintaining genealogy list for royals and sometimes the biographical sketches of important events.

Sanskrit evolved as grammatical language through efforts of Panini after One hundred and fifty years after the death of Mahavira. Panini lived north of Kabul, Afghanistan and reconstructed the Sanskrit grammar and established proper rules and classification in 400 BC. This should give us the clue that is consistent with known Buddhist archeology. This is where Buddha and Mahavira preached in swat and Gandhara valley. Panini's Sanskrit is called classical Sanskrit. Mahavira and Buddha's teachings were transferred to the disciples through oral tradition and no scriptures were written during their life time. Panini's Sanskrit was exclusive to educated Brahmins who exercised high degree of monopolist control of their knowledge. It was not until Mauryan period, the writing began to emerge. The Prakrit languages are combination of "rough Sanskrit" and local languages spoken by common people.

Later on, Prakrit languages developed their own literature. When the canons of essential Jaina and Buddhist texts were formulated by various councils held at various places several hundred years later to finalize and prepare the canonical texts long after the death of Mahavira and Buddha. There are still ongoing disputes among various sects as to how much of the original knowledge was retained or lost through oral tradition. Prakrit Pali was used to develop Buddhist "Pali Canon. Buddha himself spoke Pali, while Mahavira spoke Arth-Magadhi usually referred by ancient text as "Antesheri" (Sing-Song language). Both of these languages belong to Prakrit group of languages and reflection of the various native tongues mixed with unknown spoken version of Sanskrit but not classical Sanskrit. Each Prakrit group exchanged various loan words with each other throughout history. 1000 years ago, the people of Northern Gujarat and Rajasthan spoke the same language. Now Gujarati is influenced by Maharashtrians language. At the same time, Kuchhi language is influenced by Sindhi and Gujarati. The present Janapadas' arrangement is highly questionable and only archeology will help establish the geographic puzzle of ancient Janapadas.

Shramanic religions' origin in Indus valley:

Prof. Ram Prasad Chandra who participated in Indus Valley excavations opines in his article:

"Not only the seated deities found at Mohenjo-Daro are in Yogic posture and bear witness to the prevalence of Yoga in the Indus Valley tradition but also the standing deities on the seals show "Kayotsarga". Kayotsarga is described as abandonment of the body in a standing posture of meditation of Yoga. The Kayotsarga posture is peculiarly identified with Jaina tradition and practice of ascetics. It is a posture of standing; Adi Purana specifically references Kayotsarga posture taken up by Rishabhdeva, the first Tirthankara in connection with his penance." Alexander, Great historian reported that one Calanus of India choose death in Kayotsarga position.

In his Indus Civilization and Hindu Culture, the eminent scholar, P.R.Deshmukh observes:

"The first Jain Tirthankara belonged to Indus-Saraswati civilization. The Indus Valley deities were nude. The Jains maintains that early ascetics and Tirthankaras were nude".

Wilson's observation on Rishabhdeva from Bhagavati and Vishnu Puranas of Hindu scriptures is:

"Both texts enter much more into detail on the subject of Rishabha devotion, and particular circumstances not found in any other Puranas. The most interesting of these are the scene of Rishabha (first of the 24 Tirthankaras) wanderings, which are said to be Konkan, Venkata, Kutaka and Southern Karnataka, or the Western part of the India; and the adoption of the Jaina belief by the people of those countries. Harappans excavations have revealed various seals depicting the bulls and the Rishabhdev's insignia (Lachhana) is also a bull ".

In spite of this earlier opinions and observations by the above mentioned eminent scholars, the recent discovery of cuneiform tablets in Mesopotamia reveals much deeper bonds and connection between early Mesopotamia and Indus valley people. Mesopotamian God Reseph is functionally very similar to Jaina's Rishabhdeva mentioned earlier and the Indian traditions have us believed that Rishabhdeva is the same as Shiva, both ascetics but functionally defined differently but both are called "Adinath" or first lord.

Heinrick Zimmer, the great Indologists opines that "The Jaina's idea that their religion goes back to remote antiquity and remote antiquity being pre-Vedic or Harrapan or Dravidian period certainly has strong merits."

Noel Retting, an Indologists, writes:

"Only in Jainism, of all the living religions, do we see a fusion of the primitive with the profound understanding of universe. It has preserved elements from the first stage of man's religious consciousness, and animism. It

affirms the separateness of spirit from matter, even though our modern philosophers and religionists regard neither form of dualism as untenable. Despite this opinion of these men, Jainism is fundamentally scientific. and, it may very well be, contrary to the opinions of many anthropologists and students of comparative religion, the oldest living faith."

Professor L. P. Tessitory is of the opinion that:

"Jainism is of a very high order. Its important teachings are based upon science. The more the scientific knowledge advances the more the Jain teachings will be proven". In fact, the Jain system of thought is so wonderfully consistent with modern realism and science that one may easily be tempted to question its antiquity, about which, however, there is now no doubt. As Dr. Walthur Schubring observes, "He who has a thorough knowledge of the structure of the world cannot but admire the inward logic and harmony of Jain ideas. Hand in hand with the refined cosmographical ideas goes a high standard of astronomy and mathematics."

Dr. Herman Jacobi who translated Jaina canonical texts also believed that:

"Jainism goes back to a very early period of Indian people embodies primitive and currents elements of religious and metaphysical speculation. They (the Jains) seem to have worked out their system from the most primitive and animistic notions of religion and advanced to more modern concepts about matter. There must be some historical tradition that makes Rishabhdev the first Tirthankar. Independent genesis of Jainism cannot be denied anymore."

Buddha says in his gospel, "Thus far, Sari Putta, I did go in to my penance. I went without clothes. I licked my food from my hands. I took no food that was brought or meant especially for me. I accepted no invitation to a meal." This suggests that he may have practiced Jainism prior to developing his own theology now known as Buddhism

Mr. Rhys Davis an eminent Buddhist scholar has observed that "Buddha found his two teachers Alara and Uddaka Rampata (Both Jaina followers) at Vaisali and started his religious life as a Jain. Buddha's father was a follower of tradition of Parshavanath 23rd Jaina Tirthankara."

Dr. Guseva, the Russian scholar in her ethnological monograph on Jainism observes that:

"Ancient Indian literature contains indications of the deep antiquity of the sources of Jainism and it also indicates that the Kshatriyas and ascetics from Vratya i.e. "non-Aryans" played noticeable role in establishing non-Vedic teachings". She further goes on saying that "Only one interpretation can be given to this, and that is, in those times followers of Jainism or competing Buddhism were, in the main, representatives of pre-Aryan population of the country or fringe of the Aryan society."

Several testimonials from experts give strong creditability to Jaina's belief of their pre-Vedic roots. Parshavanath 23rd Tirthankara lived 250 years prior to Mahavir, so this easily takes us to early 8th Century BC. Neminath, 22nd Tirthankara lived during Mahabharata's time, this takes us to 12th century BC or beyond.

However, there is a catch here. We do not know for sure what these reformist sects were called by Indian masses during 6th century BC other than rare vague textual references, as the name of Jainism and other religious terms were born after early Common Era. The Arabs and Greek travelers who visited India must have experienced hard time distinguishing between different Shramanic sects, whether if they were Shivaite, Ajivikas, and Jaina or Buddhist ascetics (generically called Shramana). Greeks called them “Calanus” and Arabs called them “Bud”. Chinese travelers call them all Buddhist.

Movements against established traditions:

The 5th and 6th century BC was very unique for human history when three great eastern civilization of the world, Persia, China and India experienced spiritual renaissance. Persia saw the rise of Zoroaster. India saw the rise of Mahavira and Gautama Buddha. While China saw the rise of Confucius and Lo-Tse. They were all great teachers who challenged the established religious traditions and beliefs of the time that involved the practice of human rituals, sacrifice and paganism. It was the age of enlightenment for all Asians. Elsewhere in the world, the Jews developed their tenacious faith in Jehovah under Babylonian captivity and the first bible was born. While Sophist in Greece began intellectual development in thoughts and philosophy for mankind and great philosophers like Socrates and Aristotle came into prominence. These coincident but simultaneous social and religious changes in the world history can be attributed to new human consciousness against the prevailing and dominating tyrannical order of rituals and dominance of the priests and their master kings. The world experienced the first documented freedom of thoughts that involved all centers of major world civilizations.

India of course was the leader of new thoughts and religious movements that spread like a wildfire and caught the imagination of rulers, priests and masses. Interestingly, Gosala, Mahavira and Buddha who rose against “Brahmanism” had in their fold large number of Brahmins. These Brahmin disciples made a major contribution in keeping the movement alive and kept growing for centuries after the death of Gosala, Mahavira and Gautama Buddha. These Brahmins were responsible for producing and collating the canonical texts of all the Shramanic religions of India. They were the literate intellectuals and can read and write in holy Sanskrit language and their creativity and the ability to imagine and create mythology for mass acceptance of new religions.

Digha Nikaya of Buddhist text describes the existence of about sixty three different philosophical schools of thoughts outside of main stream Vedic religion. Jain text Bhagavati Sutra and Suttrakritanga texts describe the large number of heretical sects. There may be some exaggeration but we know from Buddhist and Jaina texts that there was a significant proliferation of philosophical and religious thoughts in all centers of India revolving around the theory of rebirth, relationship of humans with material and animal world, the existence of universe and who control it, ultimate salvation of souls and effect of “karmic” action on rebirth.

Other teachers of prominences during Buddha and Mahavira’s time were: [Purana Kassapa of Akriyavada sect \(Now extinct\)](#), [Pakudha Kachchayana of Satta Kaya Vada sect \(also extinct\)](#) and [Ajita Kesakambhin of Tam-Jiva-Tam-Sharira Vada sect \(also extinct\)](#). [Ajivikas sect](#) survived until 1100 AD and then merged with the Digambara branch of Jaina sects. They all espoused different philosophy of life and conducts. The doctrinal differences of these extinct sects are not that important for this article as they did not survive today but they advocated very interesting philosophical ideas that require further study. The central theme of all these sects were what happens after life and how the suffering of rebirth can be eliminated or what causes is not eliminated.

The present Shramanic religious philosophy embedded in Shaivism, Jainism and Buddhism are important to discuss. In this article, we will be concerned with the main topic of Paccekabuddha and Paccekajinas (Jina was the term applied to Tirthankaras or early Tirthankaras). The Buddhism is centered upon the life and teachings of Gautama Buddha, whereas Jainism is centered on the life and teachings of Mahavira and his predecessor Tirthankara, mainly Parsvanatha. Jainism is atheist form of religion while Buddhism is a polytheistic form of the religion. Jainism in way can be classified in its time may resemble something similar to [modern “Scientology” but not exactly same](#). This is why Vedic Brahmins regarded all of them as heretics. Jainism objects to the idea of a creator deity (or God) that is responsible for the manifestation, creation, or maintenance of this universe. Jaina doctrine teaches us that the universe and its constituents (basically living soul, non-living matter, space, time, and principles of motion) are always eternal and infinite. All the constituents and actions are governed by universe’s natural laws and an immaterial entity like God cannot create a material entity like the universe. Jainism incorporates highly complex cosmology (Astrological-physical science) and way to ultimate liberation of soul from cycle of reincarnation and bliss to live a life of harmlessness and renunciation of violence towards all. While practicing Jainism, it strives for perfection of the knowledge and to gain enlightenment. Buddhism is polytheistic religion and believes in Gods (Devas) but it teaches "right way of living", that encompasses a variety of traditions, beliefs and practices largely based on

teachings attributed to Siddhartha Gautama or Buddha ("the awakened one"). Buddhism also has the same goal as Jainism to attain enlightenment to gain freedom from rebirth or escape the reincarnation wheel.

Basic Principles of Jainism and Buddhism:

To accomplish the final goal, Jainism advocated Mahavira's teaching five vows. Mahavira added extra vows to Parshvanatha's four Vows. They are:

1. Non-violence (**Ahimsa**), 2. Truth (**Satya**), 3. Non-attachment (**Asteya**) 4. Non-possessiveness over desires and senses. (**Aparigraha**) 5. Celibacy (**Brahmcharya**). The Greater emphasis on non-violence and truth was placed by Jaina. Jaina also follows: "Trianka" or three jewels like Buddhism 1. Right Perception 2. Right Knowledge and 3. Right Conduct

It is believed that Buddha abandoned Jaina coaching of practicing hard asceticism and he felt that hard asceticism was not necessary to gain the liberation.

Buddha emphasized the threefold (Trianka) Training: 1. Morality, 2. Concentration, and 3. Wisdom. There are many similarities and some differences between Jainism and Buddhism. There was an intense competition among these sects to steal disciples from other's Sangha (Order) or obtain a royal mandate to accumulate followers.

These references are found in canonical texts and Jataka stories in both Buddhism and Jainism. Again, we do not need to deviate from the main topic. However, it should be emphasized that all these reformist sects influenced each other's theology. Therefore, it should be no surprise as one sect borrowing concepts from others. They also shared the monasteries and cave dwelling for overnight stays and meditation and collectively moved to gather to beg for alms and shared with each other. These observations were made by Chinese travelers visiting India in 4th century AD.

Now, having established the origin, reasoning for formulation of reformist sects, deep connection and competition among Jainism and Buddhism and the facts learned from Jaina and Buddhist texts that Buddha was thoroughly indoctrinated with Jaina's theology due to his family's following including his first teacher was Jaina ascetic named Uddaka Rampata. We can conclude that Buddha decided to avert hard asceticism dictated by Mahavira to find a "Middle Path" to accomplish the same objectives. He succeeded in his objective with supreme confidence. So, he was able to prove that there are more than one ways. This was a shrewd and tactical move by Buddha because he became more successful than Jainism in

early ages to get worldwide recognition. Mahavira's Nirgrantha sect's insistence on nudity, celibacy and caved dwelling regardless of environmental condition depleted the ranks as well as promoted the defection. The prohibition of violence to the point of not eating meat was another inducement to neighboring states of Bactria and Khorasan to quickly adapt to Buddhism. Buddhism spread more quickly outside of India while Jainism stayed confined to India. Buddhism from a living condition point of view was better organized in monasteries with flexible monastic rules when compared to early Jainism.

Difference between Arhants, Kevlin(s), Acharyas, Monks in Jainism as contrast to Arhants, Buddha, Bodhi sattva and Bhikshus and shravaka (Practioners)

A. Arhant (Pali-Buddhism) and Arihant (Prakrit-Jaina):

Theravada Buddhism is being considered more archaic than other branches of sects like Mahayana. Bhikhu Bodhi concurs that the term Arhant or Arihant were in use long before Mahvira and Budha and meant to imply same thing. Jaina agrees with that observation too. According to Jainism and Buddhism all Previous (Pacceka) Buddha and Tirthankaras were Arhant or Arihant. Rig-Veda, the oldest text mentions the word for Arhant as Sanskrit "Arhatta". Same word is also appears in many Purana texts. Since Purana were written at later rime, we can conclude that it came from Rig Veda. However, the interpretation may vary. **Rig-Veda suggests that Arhatta in Sanskrit means "deathless".**

Bhikhu Bodhi's interpretation for Pali word "Arhant" can be summarized as follows:

"The Pali word "Arahat" means "to be worthy," and it implies a person who is truly worthy for veneration and offerings. In Buddhist context, it applies to a person who had attained the ultimate goal, and that is why he is worthy of veneration and offerings."

Arihant in Jainism means conquerors of all Karmas that are enemies and cause of self destruction. Arihant is a stage prior to becoming "Siddha" and the world derives from similar Sanskrit word "Arhat". Siddha also means who is accomplished. According to Jainism, Siddhas are liberated souls who have destroyed all the bonds of karmas. Siddha do not have any kind of form or body but they are spirit and soul that exist in its purest form. According to Jaina belief, they reside in Siddha-shila which is situated at the top of the Universe. The Jainas believe that the Arihant has defeated anger, ego, deception, and greed - inner enemies or kashayas (instincts) responsible for the perpetuation of ignorance.

Arhant in Buddhism should mean the same thing but canonical text frames it differently. Arhant is a person who has the insight (Prajna), Knowledge (Vidya) and abandonment of disturbing emotions and desires (Nirvana). When we parse each word of both sects we came to the same conclusions that it is one and same, just worded and branded differently to show their own distinctiveness.

B. Tirthankaras and Buddha

In today's professional world this can be defined as two co-chairmen or two co-executives having equal status and power. The Jainism defines Tirthankara as the one Supreme Being who has escaped cycle of rebirths (Samsara) and teaches the followers how to achieve "moksha" or salvation of soul. In short the canonical text of Jaina tells us a person achieving Tirthankara status helps others to cross Samsara (wheel of rebirth) becomes a "Tirtha" ("ford") and a person who fills that role is a Tirthankara ("Ford-maker"), who is suitable for worship and offering. WIKI defines "In Jainism, a Tirtha (Sanskrit: Tirth-"ford", a shallow part of a body of water that may be easily crossed)". This is used to refer both to pilgrimage sites as well as to the four sections of the Sangha. A Tirtha provides the inspiration to enable one to cross (river of Samsara) over from worldly engagement to the side of nirvana."

On the other hand Buddha is "awakened one" by having a right knowledge, right wisdom and detaching from karmas, he has secured his release (Vimutti) and attained Buddha hood. What the word "awaken" means is still debated among Buddhist school of thoughts. Western world interprets this as spiritual awakening or self realization. Most of the experts have taken a cue from Sanskrit word "Bodhi" means "enlightenment with knowledge and understanding true nature of things". Theravada and Mahayana differ in interpretation due to its vagueness of the wording but then they resort to the life of Buddha as an example to explain away the meaning. This little degree of ambiguity is understandable as Buddhism have absorbed wide variety of ideals and theologies outside of India. However, the Original Buddhist text "Nikaya, probably reflects the understanding that existed in early Buddhist time. Bhikhu Bodhi, an eminent scholar explains that "when Buddha attained Arhant status, he remained silent prior to teaching others how to attain the nirvana and enlightenment."

The author's conclusion from the above is that once one becomes Arhant or Arihant, and you can teach others the same methods of liberation from cycle of rebirth or enlightenment successfully so they can liberate themselves then one will attain the status of Tirthankara or Buddha. The successful teaching is important part of that process to gain purest form of spirituality and ultimate status of purest form of soul that escapes the cycle of rebirth and reaches the ultimate point of "deathless", similar to the concept of God Shiva and other Vedic

gods deities like Brahma who are eternal. The different wording of different stages of asceticism now can be compared to denote similarities between Jainism and Buddhism.

Kevlin(S) (omniscient of Jaina) and Bodhisattvas of Buddhism:

Jainism is very clear in defining Kevlin. The Kevlin are omniscient, knowing everything and is synonymous with being wise and seeing everything (past, present and future) but they are not quite Tirthankaras yet but good souls and have achieved moksha or liberation. Similarly in earliest Buddhist tradition, Bodhisattva status is similar to that but has not reached the status of Buddha. Other Buddhist tradition that were developed outside of India may vary and may compare Bodhi Sattva as the same as Buddha. So, among Buddhist it remains matter of debate. Devdatta, cousin and brother-in-law of Buddha and brother of Ananda (constant companion of Buddha) took the decision to split Buddha's Sangh due his difference with Buddha and took 500 disciples away from him. Devdatta believed that Buddha was preaching laxity while he preferred vigorous life style perhaps not as vigorous as Mahvira. At the same time, we find similar example that why Mahavira split with senior Gosala as Gosala demanded more vigorous life style and other deviant philosophical correctness that Mahavira rejected. In both cases, Mahvira and Buddha ultimately succeeded. In spite of the canonical text explanation given here, the author believes that both of these traditions became teacher centric or teacher driven and now it is hard to tell that it was driven by power or the difference in theology due to tradition of long oral history and lack of writing. Later Jainism and Buddhism displayed more "power driven" splitting of various sects and sub sects claiming that they had the original knowledge and teachings of these two great men. We find the splitting of sects in Christianity and Islam on the same basis that is teacher gathering power.

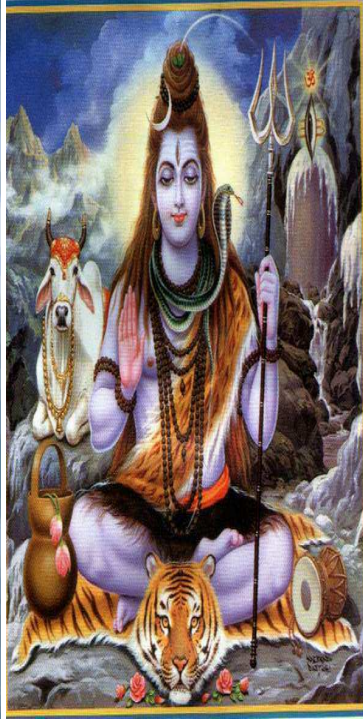
Faxian and other Chinese pilgrims who travelled to India in the early centuries recorded the continued existence of "Gotamaka" Buddhists, followers of Devdatta. This group of Buddhist monks, a splintered group is referred to in Pali texts, existed during 2nd through 5th centuries AD. The followers of Devdatta are recorded to have honored all the Buddha's previous to Shakyamuni or Buddha, but not Buddha himself. According to Faxian, Xuanzang and Yijing's writings, some people practiced in a similar way and with the same books as common Buddhists, but followed the similar tapas and performed rituals to the past three Buddha and not Buddha himself. Many followers of that sect listened to the lessons in the Nalanda with the others, (?) but it is believed by many that they were not students of Devdatta. However, there are still those who say they follow Devdatta today at Bodh Gaya.

Some question and interpretation can be derived from the above paragraph.

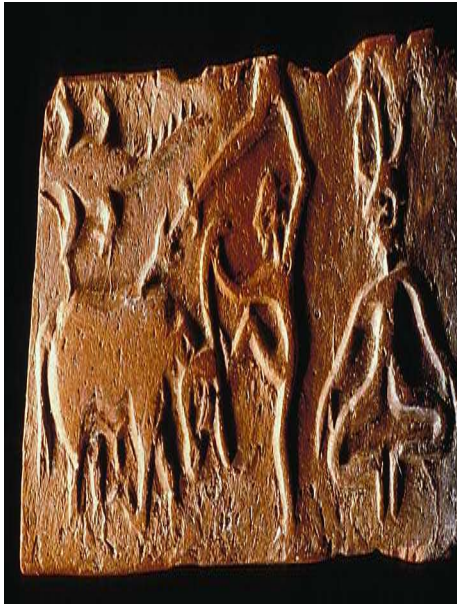
1. Who were others at Nalanda? Were they followers of Mahavira who practiced hard astecism but not in the same line as prescribed by Devdatta? Or they were other sects of Buddhism?

2. Devdatta was certainly important figure in early Buddhism and he worshipped three known previous Buddha. Jaina similarly recognized well defined and known three Tirthankaras 1. Rishabhdeva (equated to Shiva), Neminath (cousin of Krishna) and Parsvanatha who lived 250 years before Mahavira and Buddha and both of their families followed him.

Some scholars have speculated that these three known previous Budhhas and three previous Tirthankaras are one and the same. The later writers of each sect assigned different names for their own brand identification. The information on three previous Budhhas are very sketchy and limited while Jaina gives more details. Rig Veda has bestowed a hymn on Rishabhdeva. Jaina describes him as first agriculturalist of the world and a king and taught people how to become the successful agriculturalists. He adopted astecism and gave his son Bharat his kingdom while his other son Bahubali followed him and his statues still stands In Karnataka dated to 11th century AD. God Reseph of Egypt/Mesopotamia have similar description of teaching of agriculture but like Shiva in Bhairav form he can be a destroyer as well. The Yogi seal or Pashupati seals shown above depict the control of animals. God Shiva is shown providing water for fertile plains of India through River flowing from his head (presumed to be Saraswati or mighty Ganges), Shiva rides Bull, a sign and symbol of agriculture of first urbanites while Reseph holds the lamb like animals probably used as domesticated animal in ancient Mesopotamia. Could they to be same with transfer and exchange of tradition and ideas?



First two images of Shiva as described above and last one is Jaina Tirthankara with animals



“Rikhavite in Indus Seal with Bull “



Modern Rishabha as naked ascetic



Reseph with Qutesh and Min

Acharyas and Bhikshus

These are equivalents hierarchical positions that have not made it to Kevlin or Bodhisattvas status but there are engaged in spreading theology and following and sharing the preaching of Tirthankaras and Buddha. They follow the monastic tradition laid out by the former. They also organize the “Sangha” or group. They can attain the higher status of Kevlin or

Bodhisattva. Bodhisattva concept may have originated outside of India but was integrated through other branches of Buddhism. In Christianity, we find several levels of clergies like Priests, Bishops, cardinals, Pope and Christ. These are religious and organizational hierarchy.

Shravaks and Shravikas

These are laymen and followers who practices principles laid out by the teachers and implements in their life as ordinary folks.

These close similarities except differences with monastic and ascetic rules and standards separates these two ancient traditions. Northern Buddhist claims 25 Budhhas while Jainas came 24 Tirthankaras. The time spans or era or Kalpa assigned to their intervals appears sheer exaggeration like first Sumerian dynasty chronology. The names given to previous Buddha and Tirthankaras are different but there are no more than three to four where some biographies are given in Canonical texts that raises the questions of authenticity as mentioned earlier. We can formulate packing order of these traditions in tabulated forms. There is a suspicion based on lack of details on historicity that the number 24 derives from sacred numerology of the ancient. See more in this link.

https://www.academia.edu/3575775/Sacred_Numerology_and_Axial_Thoughts_of_Ancient_India

Mahayana Buddhism advocates the concept of Bodhisattva, and does not to fall back to the level of Arhats or Acharyas. They regard Arhats pursuing their own freedom while Bodhisattva assists others in seeking their salvation. Their understanding and interpretations is slightly different. The Hierarchal positions of various religious traditions can be approximately sketched out. Shaivism is not well organized in layered form as Buddhism and Jainism. Shankaraacharya attempted to do that.

Brahmanism	Shaivism	Jainism	Buddhism
Devas-Brahama, Indra, Varuna and Surya	Shiva , Rudra, Lingo and Bhairava	24 Tirthankaras including Mahavira	24 or 24 Buddha including Gautama Buddha
Arhatta or Arhant	Maha Rishi	Arhant- Liberated One	Arhat-Liberated
Rishi and Mendicants	Priests or Ascetics	Kevlin-Siddha	Bodhisattva
Wondering Ascetics	Wondering ascetics	Acharya-Airy	Acharya-Bhikshus
Brahmins for rituals	Brahmins & Priest	Monks & Nuns	Bhikshus & Nuns
Followers	Followers	Shravaka-Shraviki	Shravaka-Shraviki

The clues of the packing order are given in ancient hymn of Jaina called “**Namokar Mantra**”.

The Namokara Mantra

Namō Arihantāṇaṃ

I bow to the Arihant, the Conquerors of all desires & instincts.

Namō Siddhāṇaṃ

I bow to the Siddhas, the Liberated ones.

Namō Āyariyāṇaṃ

I bow to the Acharya (who were the Preceptors).

Namō Upajjhāyāṇaṃ

I bow to the Upadhyaya, the learned Teachers.

Namō Lōē Savva Sāhūṇaṃ

I bow to all the Sages of the world.

**Ēsōpañcaṇamōkkārō,
savvapāvappaṇāsaṇō**

This five-fold salutation completely destroys all the sins.

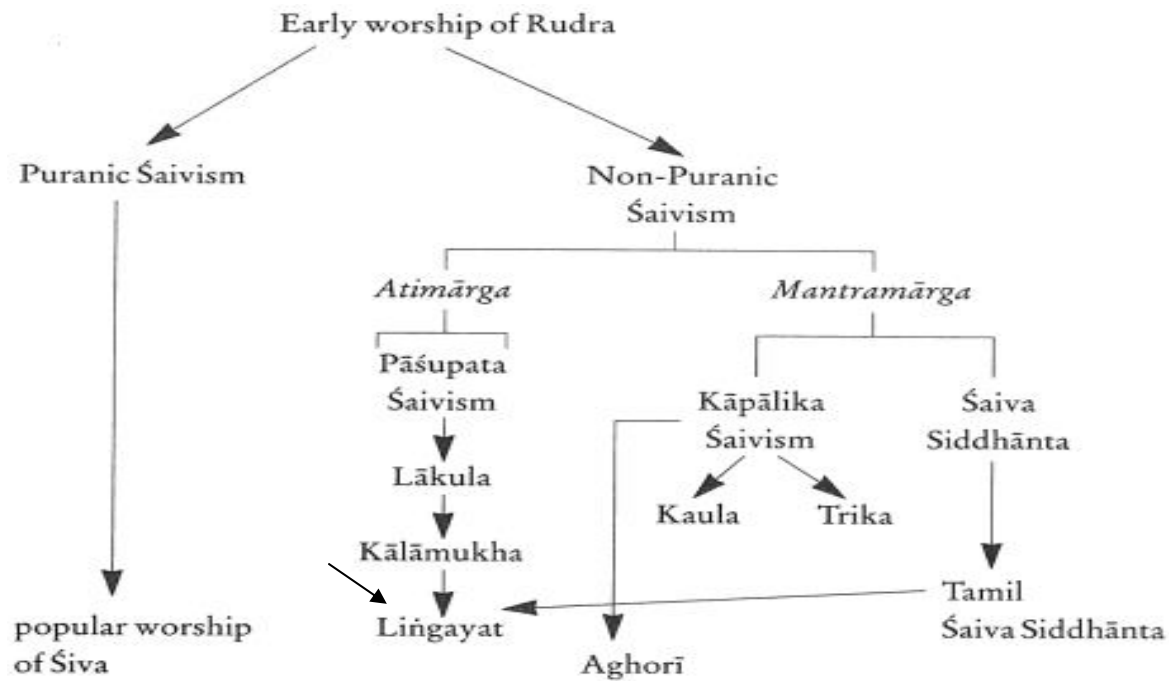
**Maṅgalā ṇaṃ ca savvēsiraṃ, paḍamama
havaī maṅgalaṃ**

And, of all auspicious mantras, This is indeed the foremost auspicious one.

Many Jain worshippers do not realize that an oldest Jaina prayer of the centuries gives us the clue of hierarchical order to ultimate Tirthankaras’s position. Tirthankara and Arhant sometimes are equated to gather and in a broader context, however, you have to help other people to attain Arhant status deserves to be Tirthankara.

Brahmanism and Shaivism are hard to define as it covers a wider spectrum and had no central organization concept but it exists as independent entity. Among the sects the packing order will be different. The following chart shows how non Vedic Shaivism was incorporated in Vedic branch. The difference here is there is one Shiva while in Jainism there are 24 Tirthankaras and in Buddhism there are 24 Budhhas and countless Bodhisattvas. While Kevlin (Keval Gyan) to see the past, present and future and have a total knowledge of universe is also considered Siddha in all Vedic and non-Vedic religious traditions.

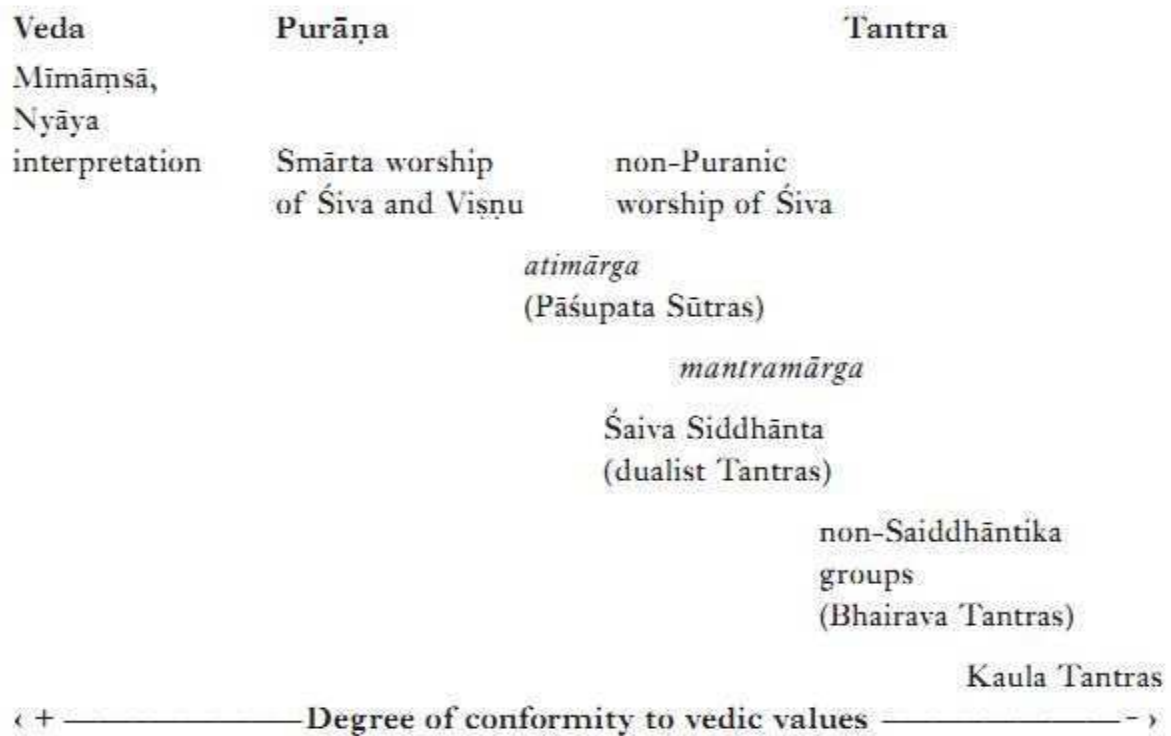
Shaivism:



Lingayat or Tribal name "Lingo" should be regarded as equivalent here

The Tantric Revelation

(based on Sanderson's mapping of the traditions)



24 -25 Budhhas and 24 Tirthankaras:

Devdatta worship existed until 5th century AD as per Chinese Traveler's account and that can be the source of discrepancy of counting 24 vs. 25 Buddha in various Buddhist school of thoughts. The recent version of Pali texts and may not reflect the distortion caused by rivalries between Buddha and Devdatta. It is obvious Devdatta commanded and received very high respect among Sakya clan members. Jaina story mentions one disciple of Buddha defected to Mahavira but gives no other details as to relationship to Buddha. However the question of numerical number 24 will always remain in the minds of scholars.

Helena Petrovna Blavatsky was a Russian occultist, spirit medium. She also was co-founder of the Theosophical Society in 1875 AD. She gained an international following as the leading theoretician of Theosophy, the esoteric movement that her Society promoted. As Mahavira was 24 Tirthankaras of Jaina, Northern Buddhist refer to 25 Budhhas. Devdatta died earlier than Buddha. The Jaina scribes have put Gosala in same category as Buddhist scribe have done to Devdatta. We know only from their canonical texts that echoes their perhaps biased sentiments. Gosala was jealous of Mahvira, (once his companion) and Devdatta was jealous of Buddha. From Chinese traveler's account, Devdatta tradition survived until 6th century AD and Ajivikas tradition survived by 11th century AD (as per Rajtarangni). If we take that into account, H. P. Blavatsky explanation that first 23 Jain Tirthankaras are identical with 23 Buddhas. Peccekatirthankaras and Paccekabuddha are the same except that scribe assigned them different names in their respective texts. These previous Budhhas and Tirthankaras are the divine teachers and or monarchs of Indian mythology. Most of them were once living men, great Saints, in whom the 'Sons of Wisdom' was incarnated, and who were, therefore, so to speak, minor Avatars of the Celestial Beings -- eleven only belong to the Atlantean race, and 24 to the Fifth race, from its beginnings." (The Secret Doctrine, II. 423.)

Akaranga Sutra (I, 6, 3, 3) states that the Tirthankaras and their teachings while in the company of these noble ones assures you that you are in **the island of safe refuge**. Similar sentiment are displayed in Buddhist confession of faith, **I take refuge in the Buddha; I take refuge in the light of his teachings; I take refuge in the company of the Holy Ones.**

H. P. Blavatsky maintains that Mahavira became an Arhant, a Jina, a Siddha, having conquered his karma, overcame danger and reached omniscience. But he did more. He returned. First he instructed the Devas (Demi-gods), and then, during thirty years' wandering throughout India, he taught the Way of renunciation and final violence followed with final liberation to all. And his following grew into a large community.

His most famous pupil, H. P. Blavatsky argues, was Gautama Buddha (563-483 BC). It is possible that they walked together, the young prince of Kapilvastu and the last of the great Tirthankaras, discussing problems of life and the cause of suffering, disease and death. All the while Gautama's thoughts matured, and some harmony arose between their ideas which have withstood the years but disagreement on monastic tradition separated them. They probably differed in the degree of asceticism (nudity and cave dwelling and monastic life) to accomplish the goals but Buddha did his own way. Jainism and Buddhism tried to provide clarity to India's spiritual tradition or Shramanism. When analyzed they both displayed similar philosophical doctrines, though with different emphasis. Buddha's choice of Middle road and Noble Eightfold Path of steady, commonsense development are so appealing that his teachings have spread to every surrounding land of ancient India as followers find that easy to practice and adopt. Mahavira, though enunciating the same high ethics, placed heavy emphasis on hard asceticism and hard monastic tradition that made it hard to follow. This approach of strict discipline considerably limited his followers and Jainism remain confined to Western India.

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