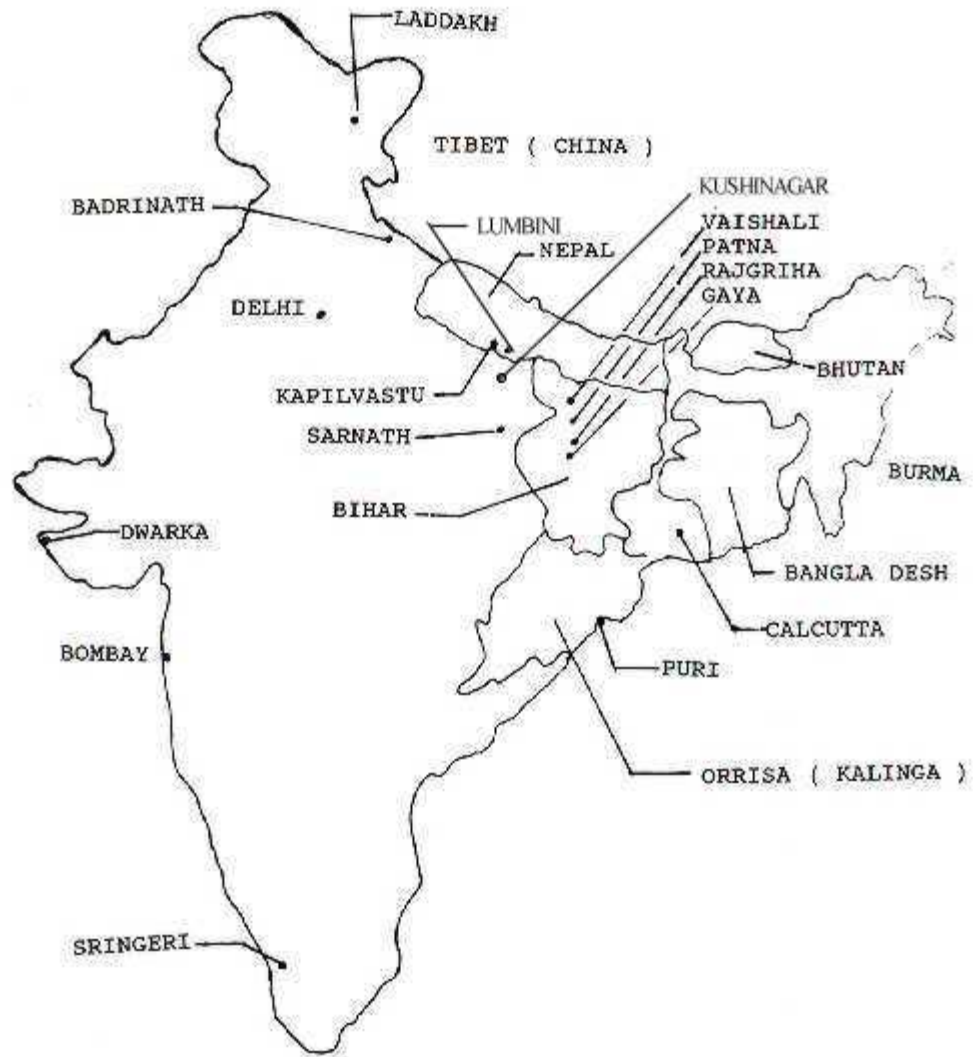
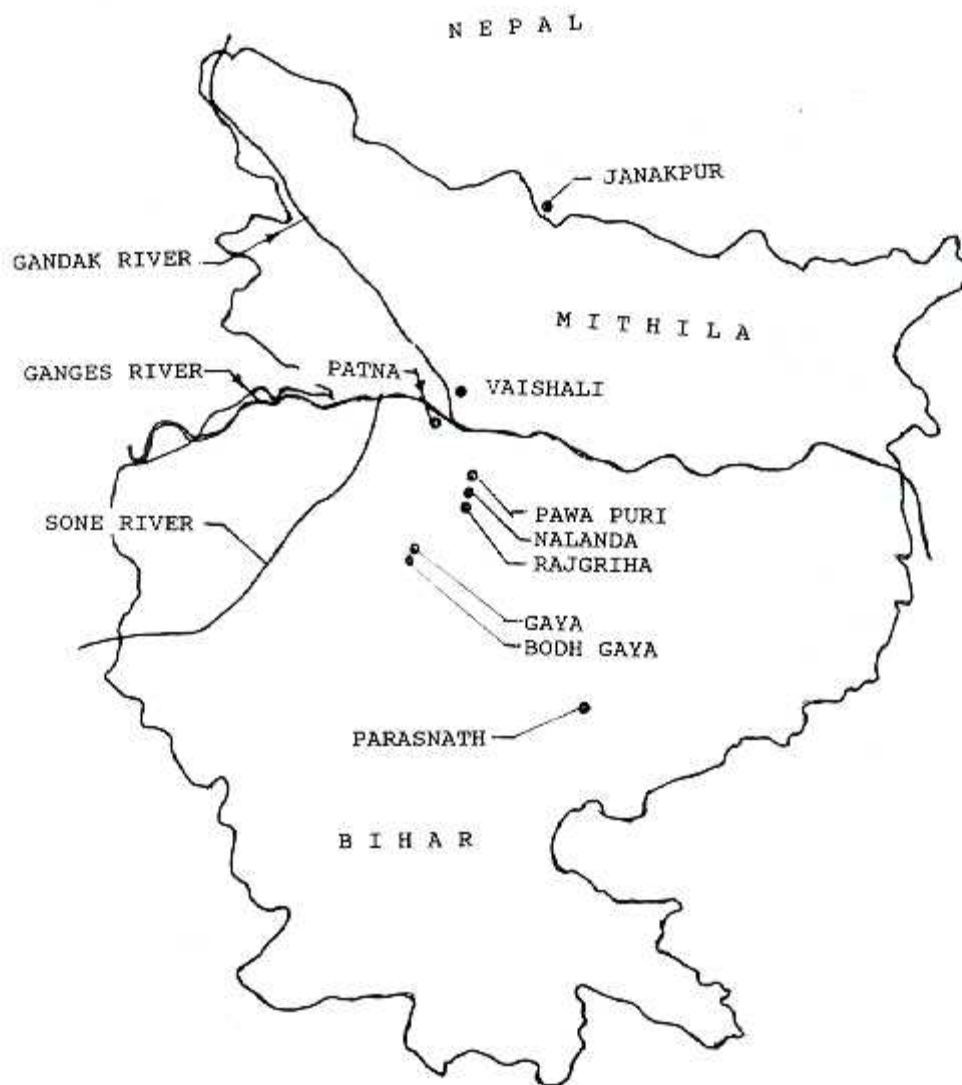


THE JAINISM



A SKETCH OF INDIA SHOWING DIFFERENT PLACES OF INTEREST.



1 Map of Bihar Showing Various Important Places

The followers of this religion believe that its roots within India are even older than the Brahmanism (Hinduism) which they believe came with the people (the Aryans) migrating from other parts of the world (near the Caspian Sea). The naked statues resembling the Jain monks amongst the remains of the Indus Valley Civilization, do substantiate some of the claims. However, there is no conclusive evidence that most of the concepts in Hinduism came from outside India. In fact, even the Aryan invasion theory has not yet been proven . In those days, people from other parts of the world came to India in a gradual manner. India offered milder climatic conditions and where, agriculture was better developed than several other places in the neighbouring countries. Gradually, these people adopted the life style prevalent in India and that is how, it is a country made up of different kinds of people and in real sense, it is a melting pot.

Jainism lays heavy emphasis on non-violence (ahimsa) and the believers of this religion, whether a monk or a householder, follow a very strict, well disciplined life. In fact, the householders are supposed to evolve to the monkhood in the later stages of life as was the case with the Hinduism in the Vedic era.

The first Tirthankar, Rishabhdev flourished prior to the Indus Valley Civilization and has been referred to as Lord Vishnu in the Puraanas. This name is also mentioned in the Vedas. This shows the inseparability of the two religions in the earlier times. His sons, Bharat and Bahubali (his 57 feet high statue at Shravanabelgo in Karnataka is quite famous) are well known in the Indian history.

The ancient Indian script, Braahmi, is believed to be named after his (Rishabhdev's) daughter. He was followed by 23 other Tirthankars who did not necessarily follow in a continuous manner, one after another. Their names are:

1. Rishabha
2. Ajita
3. Sambhava -----
4. Abhinandana
5. Sumati

6. Padmaprabha-----The Jains believe that the Indus Valley
7. Supaarshva-----Civilization flourished during the times
8. Chandraprabha-----between the third and the ninth
9. Pushpadanta----- Tirthankaras
10. Shitalnatha----- The Aryans arrived into India
11. Shreyaamsha
12. Vaasupujya
13. Vimala
14. Ananta
15. Dharma
16. Shanti
17. Kuntha
18. Aara
19. Mallinaatha-----The Aryanization of India complete
20. Munisuvrata
21. Nami
22. Nemi
23. Paarshvanath
24. Mahavira

The birth places of the 13th, 19 - 21, and 24th Tirthankaras were in Bihar ; and on the hills of Parasnath (Shikharjee), 20 out of 24 Tirthankaras obtained nirvana. Lord Mahavira obtained nirvana at Pawapuri in Bihar.

Magadha was the center of Jainism in the written history of India. Starting with Bimbisar, the kings of the Nanda dynasty and the early Maurya dynasty were believers of Jainism, according to the Jain literature. The Hindus consider them to be the believers in the Hinduism. Lord Mahavira gave his first sermon on the Vipula Peak at Rajgir. He was born at Vaishali in a noble family. They practised democracy in Vaishali, and some of the remains of the glories of those days, is still preserved in a museum there. It includes, potteries, coins,



11. A VIEW OF THE PAARSHWANATH TEMPLE FROM THE SURROUNDING HILLS

and other pieces of art. The 23rd and the 24th Tirthankaras had tremendous impact on Hinduism which had degenerated because of (a) the practice of the untouchability of the shudras, (b) the animal sacrifices in the yajnas, and (c) the dominance by the brahmin caste in the religious matters. Both these Tirthankaras were kshatrias and were princes. Lord Mahavira was given a name - Vardhamana, which means rising or growing, by his parents because the family saw its prosperity after his birth. They were strict followers of the 23rd Tirthankara who had lived around 250 years before Lord Mahavira. Vardhamana renounced the world at the age of 30, became ascetic and then spiritually advanced through the stages of Arhat to Kevalin or Jina (conqueror of the self). In the Pali Buddhist texts, he is referred to as the Niggantha Nataputta. After leaving home, for twelve years, he devoted himself to self discipline and practised severest penance and austerities. He preached for the next 30 years, i.e. until the age of 72 when he obtained nirvana. His first sermon was at Mount Vipula, one of the five hills surrounding Rajgir. His first disciple was Indrabhuti Gautama. The female ascetics of the order were headed by Chandana and the male laity, by Shrenika also called Bimbisara, the emperor of Magadha. In his teachings, women had equal role to play. They were not looked down upon.

JAINISM IN INDIA AFTER LORD MAHAVIRA

This religion flourished in Magadha and elsewhere because of the strong rulers at Pataliputra. At the time of Alexander the Great's invasion on the borders of the Magadha Empire, it was the Jain rulers who were in firm control at Pataliputra. Alexander's forces were tired and did not advance any further to challenge this empire.



12. THE PAARSHWANATH TEMPLE ON THE TOP OF THE HILL



13. A VIEW OF DIFFERENT SMARAKS (MEMORIALS) BUILT FOR JAIN TIRTHANKARS WHO OBTAINED NIRVANA ON THE TOP OF THE PARASNATH HILLS



14. A SVETAMBAR JAIN TEMPLE AT THE FOOT OF THE HILLS AT PARASNATH.



15. A CLOSE UP VIEW OF THE TEMPLE AT PAWA PURI WHERE LORD MAHAVIRA OBTAINED NIRVANA

Many centuries later, there was a famine in Magadha and it led to mass migration of the population to South India (present day Karnataka) and after some time, another migration took place to Gujarat (Girnar). The first group was called Svetambars because they started wearing white clothes, whereas the other ones (Digambars). These were strict and not willing to change. A third influential group developed after migration from Bihar to near Mathura, which tried to patch up between these two groups for a long time. Udaygiri (Orrisa) was also, one of the important Jain centres. In the olden days, this religion was also practised in Sri Lanka. All of this happened approximately 2000 years back.

THE JAIN DOCTRINE

Since it is very old religion, it has a well developed doctrinal basis comprising of (a) metaphysics and ontology, (b) cosmology and cosmography, (c) theology and mythology, and (d) ethics, etc. It discourages superstition and blind faith and encourages free and rational thinking.

1. Metaphysics and Ontology - It starts with the axiom that nothing is destructible i.e. nothing can be created out of nothing - which is also common to the Samkhya system. The cosmos or universe is uncreated and real by virtue of its being existential. Therefore it is eternal, everlasting, without a beginning and without an end. It differs from Vedantic concept or proof of the Creator.



16. A DIGAMBAR JAIN TEMPLE AT RAJGRIHA



17. A SVETAMBAR JAIN TEMPLE AT RAJGRIHA

Jiva (living beings) are infinite number of souls (spirit units). The non living (Ajiva) belong to five categories (a) matter (pudgala), (b) medium of motion (dharma), (c) medium of rest (adharma), (d) space (akasha), and (e) time (kala).

2. Classes of Jivas (souls) - They are of two kinds, (a) the liberated (mukta) and (b) the mundane or embodied (Samsari). The second kind are mobile and immobile. The souls embodied in earth, water, fire, air and vegetation are immobile kind and have, one sense organ. There is marked difference between the Hinduism and this religion here because, even for those Hindus who believe in the duality - air or water, etc., the inert substances , are not considered to have embodied souls.

Among the mobile living beings there are different kinds. There are some which have between two to five sense organs, and only a few of the five sensed beings are equipped with mind and intelligence; others do not have this faculty. The mundane Jivas go through the cycles of birth and death until they attain nirvana.

3. The Karma Doctrine - It is quite different from those of the Hindus. Here karma is a subtle matter which flows into the soul when the latter comes under the influence of attachment (raga) or aversion (dvesa). The mundane soul has to go through the cycle of birth and death unless it frees itself from the karmic matter which clings to it and which can be of two types (a) bhava karmas (involving feelings, emotions, passions) and (b) dravya karmas (material forms).

To get the soul free, one has to basically perform all satvik actions, even in Jainism. The difference here is that there is no merger of this soul with the Parmatman because It does not exist for the Jains as it does for the Hindus

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The Jainist Theory of Karma is founded on simple law of cause and effect. No effect is without a cause. One has to bear, sooner or later, the consequences of one's actions; it is not possible to escape from them. The diversities in the physical and mental conditions, etc. at the birth of human beings or other living beings, can easily be explained by this theory. With its help, one can also prove the Theory of the Transmigration of Souls. It shows that the human beings themselves are the preserver or dispenser of justice. It inspires persons to get their souls free of the karmic forces by developing will power and proper actions.

4. Divinity - The Jain concept of divinity is unique. Here each of the souls, after freeing the karmic material becomes 'svambhu' and is transformed into divinity. It is a state of highest spiritual evolution. The Siddhas and Arhatas represent two types of divinities; the former are absolutely liberated and the latter, those obtained emancipation (Jivan Mukta) from life. These (the latter ones) are also called Kevalins or Jinas.

Jainism believes in Godhood but does not believe God to be the First Cause as in the Advait philosophy. There are large pantheon of godlings, celestials or angels who are superhuman in this religion just like the Hindu gods. These beings are also considered mortal just like humans.

5. Pragmatic Optimism - This world is looked upon as 'Vale of Tears'. It involves suffering, struggle, anxiety, etc. One reaches the end of journey after attaining nirvana.

6. The Jains believe in Idol Worship just like the Hindus.

THE TEACHINGS OF LORD MAHAVIRA

Lord Mahavira was born on March 30, 599 B.C. and attained the nirvana in the year 527 B.C. at the age of 72. He was a contemporary of Lord Buddha. He was the 24th and the last of the Tirthankars. The present form of Jainism was shaped by him.

The cardinal principles of Jainism are:

- 1. Ahimsa (non-violence)**
- 2. Anekantvada (multiplicity of views)**
- 3. Aparigraha (non-possessiveness)**
- 4. Non-stealing**
- 5. Brahmacharya**

The first and the third are quite simple to understand but the second one needs some explanation. It is dealt under 'Multiplicity of Viewpoints and Relativism (Syadavada)', in the Jain literature. Difference of view points, quite often, add to the knowledge and one should infer, only after hearing diverse views on any subject. If it is not done, then the conclusions



18. A MEMORIAL STONE LAID AT THE BIRTH PLACE OF LORD MAHAVIRA AT VAISHALI



19. A TEMPLE AT THE CENTER OF THE LAKE AT PAWA PURI WHERE LORD MAHAVIRA OBTAINED NIRVANA

reached could be biased or incorrect. It provides for the tolerance for the views of the others. One can have a better perception only after hearing others. For example, we are all familiar with the story of the eight blind men and an elephant. There the views expressed about the elephant by each of the blind men were correct but only partial knowledge could be obtained from any one view. The total knowledge about the elephant could be had only by listening to all of them.

An object can, on occasions, be described by two completely opposite statements, i.e. it is (ASTI) and it is not (NASTI). These two statements can be made referring to (1) substance, (2) place, (3) time, and (4) form. Let us take an example of a piece of furniture. A piece of furniture made of jungle wood is not made of sandal wood. Similarly, it could be located in a given room but not in other rooms. Thus, it can be specified in either way which seem to be opposite to each other. This way of specification is called ASTI - NASTI - VADA.

Another set of logic lines has been developed by the Jain thinkers which postulate that there can be as many as seven modes of prediction in a given case. This introduces an element of uncertainty in the predictions and therefore introduces the concept of probability. This is called Syadavada or the doctrine of 'may be'.

If we consider the Jainist and the Vedantic philosophies, we will find that both are correct in their own ways. They do not contradict each other. The Jain philosophy does not go into the depth of the process of creation as does the Vedantism and therefore it (Vedantism) arrives at the conclusion of The God as the First Cause. On the other hand, the Jainism comes up with the understanding of the complexity of the universe for the common humans and proposes the Syadavada which is a marvellous concept of accommodation which is necessary for the correct evaluation of anything. The Jainism defines life in almost everything, and therefore, preaches non-violence of extreme degree.

In summary, the Jains consider the highest ideal - Tirthankara who possesses infinite knowledge, infinite bliss and infinite power. This blissful state is similar to that of Vedantic 'Chitananda'. Jainism makes distinction between Arhat and Siddha which are analogous to the Vedantic Jivan Mukta (free from life) and Videha Mukta (free from body). A Jivan Mukta might also be a Videha Mukta as in the case of King Janaka. Tirthankaras are those Siddhas who profound the truth during their life time which is a higher thing. The Jains have Arhats, the Siddhas, and the

Tirthankaras who in the simpler terms and in the corresponding manner are: those who deserve, those who accomplish, and those who sanctify. It is possible for every man to attain the highest state. Tirthankaras take the place of God in the Jain philosophy.

VAISHALI, THE FIRST KNOWN REPUBLIC IN THE WORLD

The history of Vaishali dates back to pre-historic ages. The name of the King Vishala is mentioned in Puraanas like Varaha, Narada, Markandeya and Bhagavata.

At the time of Lord Mahavira it was a famous religious center of Jainism. Lord Mahavira was born when this place was at the peak of prosperity and it was encompassed within three walls with their separate gates and watch towers. There were variety of structures, houses and palaces. The chiefs were elected by the citizens (men and women).

When Lord Buddha renounced this world, and became a monk, he came here in search of a guru. It is believed that Alara Kalama was his first teacher. Uddaka was another guru. Lord Buddha went through Jain method of self discipline but he found that the Jainists practised extreme penance and austerity. So he left Vaishali and went south towards Rajgriha (Rajgir) and then to Gaya. He made several trips to Vaishali during his life time.

Vaishali maintained its position for several centuries in the Indian History. There were matrimonial relationships between the Lichhavi princesses of Vaishali and several kings of the Magadha Empire. The second Buddhist Council was held here. Therefore, it is an important place for the Hindus, Jains, and Buddhists.

MOUNT VIPUL AT RAJGIR

Lord Mahavira obtained enlightenment on Mount Vipul at Rajgir. This mountain is in front of Hot Springs at Rajgir . The author took the photographs below on February 19, 2009. The sequence of photographs are in the order as we enter the mountain area to the top, where there is the main temple showing Lord Mahavira's statues (four in total - pointing in four cardinal directions). Nearby, on the top, there two other temples which includes one for Sheetalnath. The photographs on the top also show the beautiful view of surrounding mountains. The Jain Pilgrims walk on foot - climbing up and down on these high mountains. One can

**not see the top of Mount Vipul from the base or the foot of the mountain.
It has a tedious climb.**



**20 AT THE FOOT
OF MOUNT VIPUL**



22 A VIEW OF THE ENTRANCE



25 THE PATH TO CLIMB IS ROCKY



**27 TEMPLE OF SHEETALNATH
NEAR THE TOP**



26 CLIMBING STAIRS



28 THE MAIN TEMPLE OF LORD MAHAVIRA AT TOP



29 VIEW OF RAJGIR MOUNTAINS AND FORESTS FROM TOP



30 FOUR STATUES OF LORD MAHAVIRA AT TOP LOOKING IN FOUR DIRECTIONS

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[THE EXISTENCE OF IRON IN THE VEDAS, MAHABHARATA, AND RAMAYANA- BACK TO THE HARAPPAN CIVILIZATION](#)