

The eternal true Digambara Jain religion upholds a hierarchy of Tirthankarās (The enlightened saviors) illustrative of the path of soul's liberation, coming down to us since times immemorial. There are two types of cyclic changes in inevitable flow of time in Bharat-Airāvāt kṣetra of Jambūdvīp at Madhyaloka : Evolution epoch (*utsarpīni*) & Devolution epoch (*avasarpīni*). There have been six eras in each one of them and in every fourth penury-cum- plenitude era there are 24 Tirthankarās. In the present [*Huṇḍa*] Devolution epoch, at Bharatkṣetra, there are following 24 Tirthankarās:

01. Rīṣhabhadeva	02. Ajitanātha	03. Sambhavanātha	04. Abhinandanānaṭha
05. Sumatinātha	06. Padmaprabha	07. Supārśvanātha	08. Chandraprabha
09. Puṣhpādantānath	10. Śhitalanātha	11. Śhreyānsanātha	12. Vāsupūjyanath
13. Vimalanātha	14. Anantanātha	15. Dharmānātha	16. Śhāntinātha
17. Kunthunātha	18. Aranātha	19. Mallinātha	20. Munisuvratanātha
21. Naminātha	22. Neminātha	23. Parśhvanātha	24. Mahāvīraswami

All Tirthankarās in Bharat kṣetra have five auspicious phases in their life, known as Kalyāṇakās: 1. Conception 2. Birth 3. Austerity 4. Omniscience 5. Moksha. Since these are instrumental in the liberation of each mundane soul, they are known as Kalyāṇakās'.

In the present 5th era, the dispensation of the last Tirthankar Lord Mahāvīr prevails. Lord Mahāvīr was born in Kuṇḍgrāma of Bihāra-state in India, about 2610 years ago, on ChaitraŚhukla Trayodaśī, i.e. 27 March 598 B.C. He joined the Digambara order of Jain ascetics at a young age of 30 years and he achieved omniscience at the bank of Rījukulā River at an age of 42 years; thereafter for 30 years in his assembly - the Samavasaraṇa, through his divine speech known as the 'Om dhvani', he enunciated the Basic Tenets of Jainism - Substance-Attribute-Mode (*dravya-guṇa-paryāya*), Permanency with a change, i.e. Origination-Cessation-Permanence (*utpāda-vyaya-dhruvya*); Multiphase-Relativity (*anekānta-syādāvāda*); Six Substances (*six dravya*), Five Existents (*five astikāya*), Nine Entities (*nine padārtha*), Seven Reals (*seven tattva*); freedom of existence (*vastu-svātantrya*); Soul as a principle of consciousness, pure and incontrovertible (*traikālika-suddhātma-bhagvat-svarūpa*); The path of Salvation i.e. Right Belief - Right Knowledge - Right Conduct (*samyagdarśan-gīṇān-chārītrāni svaroop mokṣa-mārg*); Ten distinguishing features of Soul's Nature (*daś-lakṣṇa dharmā*); The appropriate conduct of Monk & that of Householder (*muni-śrāvaka dharmā*), Five Complete Vows- Nonviolence, Truth, Non-stealing, Celibacy, Renunciation of Attachment (*pāñ cha mahāvratā - abinsā-satyā-acharya-brabhmacharya-aparigraba*); Sequence-Bound-Mode (*krama-buddha-paryāya*); Real & Instrumental cause (*upādāna-nimitta*); Fourteen Spiritual Stages (*fourteen guṇa-sthāna*), Fourteen means of investigations (*fourteen mārgaṇā-sthāna*), Fourteen Taxonomy (*fourteen jiva-samāsa*), Eight Karmās, Source of knowledge (*pramāṇa*) - Reasoning (*naya*) - Positing (*nīkṣhepa*); Branches of Scriptures (*Four Anuyoga*); Factual & Empirical Reasoning (*nīśāya-vyavahāra naya*); Seven Predicators (*sapta-bhaṅgi*) etc. By expounding the true nature of the aforesaid, he showed the path of peace and salvation to the restless beings of the world.

Lord Mahāvīr achieved salvation from Pāvāpurī (*Bihāra*) at an age of 72 years. The festival of Dipāvalī is celebrated as a commemoration of his salvation, and considered as main festival of India.

During a time span of 62 years after lord Mahāvīr, there have been three Adjunct omniscients (*Anubaddha Kevalī*) - 1. Gautamaswāmī 2. Sudharmaswāmī 3. Jambūsawāmī. Thereafter in 100 years, five monks, known as Śhrutkevalis, successively became the possessors of knowledge of 12 Primary Texts (*Dwadas Ang*) viz. 1. Viṣṇupukumar 2. Nandimitra 3. Aparājita 4. Govardhana 5. Bhadrabāhū-I. After that many more became the possessors of knowledge of solitary Primary Text or part thereof. salvation of lord Mahāvīr, there had been an oral flow of the hierarchical spiritual knowledge for about 500 years and till then the monk hierarchy also continued in its undefiled naked digambara format.

HIERARCHY OF THE DIGAMBARA JAINA ĀCHĀRYĀS & MONKS

The spiritual knowledge obtained from the hierarchy of Tirthankarās has been preserved by digambara jain acharyas in two fundamental texts known as śhrutakandha, literally meaning the revealed chapters. The compiler of the first fundamental text was Āchāryasrī Dharasena. At mount Giranāra-giri from the enlightened knowledge inherited from him, Monk Puṣhpādanta and Monk Bhūtābali wrote śhaṭkhandāgamasūtra (*six divided aphorisms of inherited wisdom*). The compiler of the second fundamental text was Āchāryasrī Guṇadhara, who wrote kasāyapāhuda. In his tradition comes Śrīmad Kundakundāchāryadeva famed as the omniscient of the penury-era (*Kali-kāla-sarvagīna*). He wrote a number of sacred books along with the 84 pāhuda texts, among which the following five are prominent called as 'Pancha Parmāgama': Samayasāra, Pravachanasāra, Panchāstikāyasāgraha, Niyamasāra and Aṣṭapāhuda.

Āchārya Kundakundadeva, offered a coherent and lucid account of the Jain metaphysics and thereby, provided a reassuring base to the digambara tradition. This is the reason, why his name is remembered along with Tirthankara Mahāvīra and his prominent ascetic leader Śrīmad Gautamaswāmī.

Maṅgalam+ Bhagawāna Vīro, Maṅgalam+ Gautamo Gaṇī I

Maṅgalam+ Kundakundādhyo, Jain Dharmostu Maṅgalam+ II

Āchārya Kundakundadeva, personally heard the omniscient revelation from Existing Tirthankara Lord Simandharaswāmī in Vidhākṣetra. Related to this episode, there are many inscriptions and articles of later Āchāryās.

In the Digambar tradition, in addition to above mentioned Acharyas, from time to time, there have been a number of passionless Achāryās, Preachers and Monks, who have made remarkable contribution in the field of Jain Literature.. The names of some of them alongwith their notable scriptures are listed below:

Āchārya Yativrābha (*Tiloya-paṇṇatti*); Āchārya Vaṭṭakera (*Mulācāra*); Āchārya Śivarya (*Bhagavati-ārādhanā*); Āchārya Umāsawāmī (*Tattvārtha-sūtra*); Āchārya Samantabhadra (*Ratna-karaṇḍā-srāvaka-cācāra*); Āchārya Kārtikeyaswāmī (*Kārtikeyānupreksā*); Āchārya Pūjyapāda Devanandī (*Samādhi-tantra*); Munirāja Yogindu (*Parmāma-prakāśa*); Āchārya Siddhasena (*Sanmati-sūtra*); Āchārya Mānatuṅga (*Bhaktāmara-stotra*); Āchārya Akalanīkadeva (*Tattvārtha-rājavārtika*); Āchārya Raviṣeṇa (*Padma-purāṇa*); Āchārya Jinsena-I (*Harivansa-purāṇa*); Āchārya Vādibhasinha Śrī (*Chatra-cūdāmaṇi*); Āchārya Vidyānandī (*Tattvārtha-sloka-vārtika*); Āchārya Virsenaswāmī (*Dhavalatika*); Āchārya Mahāvīra (*Gaṇit-sāra-saṅgraha*); Āchārya Jinsena-II (*Adipurāṇa*); Āchārya Guṇabhadra (*Uttarapurāṇa*); Āchārya Amṭacandra (*Atma-khyātī/Puruśārtha-siddhyupāya*); Āchārya Devsena (*Alāpa-paddhati*); Āchārya Māilla dhavala (*Dravya-svabhāva-prakāśaka nayacakra*); Āchārya Amitagatī (*Yogasāra-prabhṛta*); Āchārya Nemichāndra Siddhānta-Chakravartī (*Gomatta-sāra*); Āchārya Maṇīkyanandī (*Parikṣā-mukha*); Āchārya Prabhāchandra (*Prameya-kamala-mārtaṇḍa*); Āchārya Śubhāchandra (*Jnānārava*); Munirāja Vādīrājaswāmī (*Ekibhāva-stotra*); Āchārya Padmanandī (*Padmanandī-pāñ ca-vīnsatikā*); Śrīmad Nemichandra Siddhāntideva (*Dravya-saṅgraha*); Āchārya Vasunandī (*Pratiṣṭhā-sāra-saṅgraha*); Āchārya Brahmadeva (*Parmāmaprakāśa tikā*); Āchārya Jayasena (*Kundakunda-trayi tātparya-vṛttī tikā*); Āchārya Laghu Anantavīrya (*Prameya-ratna-mālā*); Munirāja Padmaprabhamaladhārideva (*Niyamsāra Tātparya-vṛttī tikā*); etc.

HIERARCHY OF THE DIGAMBARA JAINA SCHOLARS & POETS

Along with sovereign passionless ascetic, there flourished a tradition of house-hold scholars & poets, who made notable contributions in the field of Jain Philosophy and literature. Prominent names among them are : Great Poet Dhananjaya (*viśāpabāra-stotra*); Pt. Āśādharā (*sāgarā/anagāra-dharmamṛta*); Pānde Rājamalā (*samaya-sāra-kalāś-atikā*); Pt. Banārāsīdāsa (*samayasāra-nāṭaka*); Pānde Hemarāja (*pravacanasāra-vačanikā*); Kavivara Santalālā (*siddhacakra-vidhāna*); Bhāiyā Bhagavatīdāsa (*brahma-vīlāsa*); Pt. Dipachandra Śāha Kāsalīlā (*amubhava-prakāśa*); Āchāryakalpa Pt. Todaramalā (*moṁkṣa-mārga-prakāśaka*); Kavivara Bhūdharadāsa (*jaina-sāṭaka*); Pt. Tekachandra (*sudṛṣṭi-taraṅgiṇī*); Kavivara Budhajāna (*budhajāna-vīlāsa*); Pt. Daulatārāma (*cbabadhālā*); Pt. Jayachandra Chhābadā (*samayasāra vačanikā*); Kavivara Bhāgachandra (*sattā-svarūpa*); Śrīmad Rājacandra (*apūrva-avasara-kāvya*) etc.

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