

Tirthankara

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In Jainism, a **Tirthankara** ("**Fordmaker**") (also **Tirthankara** or **Jina**) is a human who achieves enlightenment (perfect knowledge), through asceticism. A Tirthankar becomes a Jina (after totally conquering anger, pride, deceit, desire, etc.). A Tirthankar is the founder of a "Tirth", a Jain community which acts as a "ford" across the "river of human misery".

After achieving enlightenment, a Tirthankar shows others the path to enlightenment. The Tirthankar's religious teachings form the Jain canons. The inner knowledge of all Tirthankars is perfect and identical in every respect, for the teachings of one Tirthankar do not contradict those of another. However, the degree of elaboration varies according to the spiritual advancement and purity of humans during that period. The higher the spiritual advancement and purity of mind, the lower the elaboration required.

At the end of his human life-span, a Tirthankar achieves liberation ('moksh' or 'nirvan'), ending the cycle of infinite births and deaths.

Jainism states time has no beginning or end. It moves like the wheel of a cart. There have been an infinite number of time cycles before our present era and there will be an infinite number of time cycles after this age. At the beginning of the twenty first century, we are approximately 2,530 years into the fifth era of the present half cycle.

Twenty four Tirthankars are born in each half cycle of time (that is forty eight in each full cycle), in this part of the universe. In our current (descending) half cycle of time, the first Tirthankar Rishabh Dev^[*citation needed*], lived billions of years ago and attained liberation ('moksh' or 'nirvan') towards the end of the third era. The 24th and last Tirthankar was Mahavir Swami (599-527 BC), whose existence is a historically accepted fact. Digambaras believe that all twenty four Tirthankars were men but Svetambaras believe that the 19th Tirthankar, Malli Nath, was a woman.

The next Tirthankar in our part of the universe will be born at the beginning of the third era of the next (ascending) half cycle of time, in approximately 81,500 years.

As Tirthankars direct us to enlightenment, their statues are worshipped in Jain temples by Jains aspiring to achieve enlightenment. Tirthankars are not God or gods. Jainism does not believe in the existence of God in the sense of a creator, and gods are beings superior to humans but, nevertheless, not fully enlightened.

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Particular Tirthankars



Tirthankaras in British Museum

Depictions in various forms, including images, statues, etc., of the Tirthankaras are always represented as seated with their legs crossed in front, the toes of one foot resting close upon the knee of the other, and the right hand lying over the left in the lap. Only two are represented differently: that of Parsvanatha, the twenty-third, who has snake-hoods over him, and Suparsva, the seventh, who the Digambarashas depict with a smaller group of snake-hoods.

Digambara representations are quite nude, while those of the Svetambaras are clothed and decorated with crowns and ornaments. They are further distinguished from one another in representations by their attendant Yakshas and Yakshinis, as well as by their associated chihnās (cognizances) carved on the cushions of their thrones.

All but two of the Jains are ascribed to the Ikshvaku family (or Kula or Kul, which in Sanskrit means "heart community" or "intentional/chosen community/family"). Munisuvrata, the twentieth, and Neminatha, the twenty-second, were of the Harivamsa race.

All but Rishabha received diksha (consecration) and jnana (complete enlightenment) at their native places. Rishabha became a Kevalin at Purimatala, Nemi at Girnar, and Mahavira at the Rijupaluka river. Twenty Tirthankaras died or obtained moksha (deliverance in bliss) on Sameta Sikhara. However Rishabha, the first, achieved nirvana on the Kailasa Mountain of the Himalayas; Vasupujya died at Champapuri in north Bengal; Neminatha on Mount Girnar; and Mahavira, the last, at Pavapur.

Twenty-one of the Tirthakaras are said to have attained Moksha in the Kayotsarga posture; Rishabha, Nemi; and Mahavira on the padmasana (lotus throne).

Narration Chart of 24 Tirathankars

The following particulars for each Arhat are given below:

Tirthankar	Heaven	Birthplace; Consecration	Parents	Complex	Symbol	Height	Age	Tree	Attendant spirits	Male disciple; Female disciple
I. Lord Rishabha (Adinath)	Sarvarthasiddha	Vinittanagari; Purimatala	Nabhiraja by Marudeva	golden	bull or ox	500 dhanusha (poles)	8,400,000 purva (great years)	Vata (banyan)	Gomukha and Chakresvari	Pundarika; Brahmi
II. Ajitnath	Vijayavimana	Ayodhya; Sammet Shikharji	Jita[’s]atru by Vijayamata	golden	elephant	450 dhanusha	7,200,000 purva	[’S]ala (Shorea robusta)	Mahayaksha and Ajitabala; or Rohi[n.]i	[’S]i[. m]hasena; Phalgu
III. Sambhavanath	Uvarimagraiveka	Savathi; Sravasti	Jitari by Senamata	golden	horse	400 dhanusha	6,000,000 purva	Prayala (Buchanania latifolia)	Trimukha and Duritari; or Prajnapti	Charu; Syama
IV. Abhinandannath	Jayantavimana	Ayodhya; Sammet Shikharji	Sambararaja by Siddhartha	golden	monkey	350 dhanusha	5,000,000 purva	Priyangu (Panicum italicum)	Nayaka and Kalika; or Yakshesvara and Vajrasrinkhala	Vajranabha; Ajita
V. Sumatinath	Jayantavimana	Ayodhya; Sammet Shikharji	Megharaja by Mangala	golden	curlew or red goose	300 dhanusha	4,000,000 purva	Sala	Tumburu and Mahakali; or Purushadatta	Charama; Kasyapi
VI. Padmaprabha	Uvarimagraiveka	Kausambi; Sammet Shikharji	Sridhara by Susima	red	lotus	250 dhanusha	3,000,000 purva	Chhatra	Kusuma and Syama; or Manovega or Manogupti	Pradyotana; Rati
VII. Suparshvanath	Madhyamagraiveka	Varanasi; Sammet Shikharji	Pratish[t.]haraja by P[r.]ithvi	golden or emerald	swastika	200 dhanusha	2,000,000 purva	Sirisha (Acacia sirisha)	Matanga and Santa; or Varanandi and Kali	Vidirbha; Soma
VIII. Chandraprabha	Vijayanta	Chandrapura; Sammet Shikharji	Mahasenaraja by Lakshmana	white	moon	150 dhanusha	1,000,000 purva	Naga	Vijaya and Bhrikuti; or Syama or Vijaya and Jvalamalini	Dinna; Sumana
IX. Pushpadanta	Anatadevaloka	Kanandinagari; Sammet Shikharji	Sugrivaraja by Ramarani	white	Crocodile	100 dhanusha	200,000 purva	Sali	Ajita and Sutaraka; or Mahakali	Varahaka; Varuni
X. Sheetalnath	Achyutadevaloka	Bhadrapura or Bhadilapura; Sammet Shikharji	Dridharatha- raja by Nanda	golden	Kalpavriksha or ficus religiosa	90 dhanusha	100,000 purva	Priyangu	Brahma and Asoka; or Manavi	Nanda; Sujasa
XI. Shreyansanath	Achyutadevaloka	Simhapuri; Sammet Shikharji	Vishnuraja by Vishna	golden	rhinoceros	80 dhanusha	8,400,000 common years	Tanduka	Yakshet and Manavi; or Isvara and Gauri	Kasyapa; Dharani
XII. Vasupujya	Pranatadevaloka	Champapuri; Sammet Shikharji	Vasupujya by Jaya	ruddy	female buffalo	70 dhanusha	7,200,000 years	Patala (Bignonia suaveolens)	Kumara and Chanda; or Gandhari	Subhuma; Dharani
XIII. Vimalnath	Mahasaradevaloka	Kampilyapura; Sammet Shikharji	Kritavarmaraja by Syama	golden	pig	60 dhanusha	6,000,000 years	Jambu (Eugenia jambolana)	Shanmukha and Vidita; or Vairo[t.]i	Mandara; Dhara
XIV. Anantnath	Pranatadevaloka	Ayodhya; Sammet Shikharji	Simhasena by Suyasah or Sujasa	golden	porcupine	50 dhanusha	3,000,000 years	Asoka (Jonesia asoka)	Patala and Ankusa; or Anantamati	Jasa ; Padma
XV. Dharmanath	Vijayavimana	Ratnapuri; Sammet Shikharji	Bhanuraja by Suvrita	golden	vajra	45 dhanusha	1,000,000 years	Dadhiparna (Clitoria ternatea)	Kinnara and Kandarpa; or Manasi	Arishta; Arthasiva
XVI. Shantinath	Sarvarthasiddha	Gajapura or Hastinapuri; Sammet Shikharji	Visvasena by Achira	golden	deer	40 dhanusha	100,000 years	Nandi (Cedrela toona)	Garuda and Nirvani; or Kimpurusha and Mahamanasi	Chakrayuddha; Suchi

XVII. Kunthunath	Sarvarthasiddha	Gajapura; Sammet Shikharji	Suraraja by Srirani	golden	goat	35 dhanusha	95,000 years	Bhilaka	Gandharva and Bala; or Vijaya	Samba; Damini
XVIII. Aranath	Sarvarthasiddha	Gajapura; Sammet Shikharji	Sudarsana by Devirani	golden	fish or Pisces	30 dhanusha	84,000 years	Amba (Mango)	Yaksheta and Dhana; or Kendra and Ajita	Kumbha; Rakshita
XIX. Mallinath	Jayantadevaloka	Mathura; Sammet Shikharji	Kumbharaja by Prabhavati	blue	jar or Kalasa	25 dhanusha	55,000 years	Asoka	Kubera and Dharanapriya; or Aparajita	Abhikshaka; Bandhumati
XX. Munisuvrata	Aparajita-devaloka	Rajagriha; Sammet Shikharji	Sumitraraja by Padmavati	black	tortoise	20 dhanusha	30,000 years	Chompaka (Michelia chompaka)	Varuna and Naradatta; or Bahurupini	Malli; Pushpavati
XXI. Nami Natha	Pranataadevaloka	Mathura; Sammet Shikharji	Vijayaraja by Viprarani	yellow; or emerald	blue water-lily or blue lotus	15 dhanusha	10,000 years	Bakula (Mimusops elengi)	Bhrikuti and Gandhari; or Chamundi	Subha; Anila
XXII. Neminatha	Aparajita	Sauripura and Ujjinta (Ujjain); Mount Girnar (Girnarji)	3 by Senamata	black	conch	10 dhanusha	1,000 years	Vetasa	Gomedha and Ambika; or Sarvahna and Kushmandini	Varadatta; Yakshadinna
XXIII. Parshva	Pranataadevaloka	Varanasi; Sammet Shikharji	Asvasenaraja by Vamadevi	blue	snake	9 hands or cubits	100 years	Dhataki (Grislea tomentosa)	Parsvayaksha or Dharanendra and Padmavati	Aryadinna; Pushpachu[d.]a
XXIV. Mahavira	Pranataadevaloka	Kundagrama or Chitrakuta; Rijupaluka	Siddhartharaja, Sreyansa or Yasasvin by Trisala Vidchadinna or Priyakarini	yellow	lion	7 hands or cubits	72 years	teak	Matamga and Siddhayika	Indrabhuti; Chandrabala

See also

- Jainism
- Deshna

External links

- 24 Tirthankaras (<http://www.24tirthankaras.com/asp/default.asp>)
- JainismForWorld E-Gurukul (<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/jainismforworld/>)

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Categories: Jainism

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Cubit = 17.49 inches Dhanush = 3 meters (9 feet) Purvas = 25,000 years

Re: Data of 24 Thirtankars given above.

The name of the male and female disciples are mentioned who helped create the Thirthankar and lead him to the stage of enlightenment.

The disciple finally, becomes the teacher.

The role of the guru and student are always and constantly interchanged in their closer relationship.

Also the names of 3 or 4 Spirit Attendants (Spiritual Guides) of each Thirtankar are mentioned in this chart.

The Disciples and Spiritual Guides helped create each of the 24 Tirthankaras.

Incidentally, the Book of Revelations (Bible) also mentions of 4 and 20 Elders, which I believe are these very same 24 Tirthankaras.