INDRA IN THE BUDDHIST AND THE JAIN CANONICALS TEXTS.
CHAPTER V

INDIA IN THE BUDDHIST AND JAINA CANONICAL TEXTS

The teaching of Buddhism is a development of Brahmanical philosophy of the Hindus, so the mythology which developed about Buddhism drew upon the traditions of the land in which the doctrine was first taught. Basically popular Buddhism is a strange mixture of Mahayana and the Hindu Pantheon and Cosmology. This is evident from the fact that throughout the Canonical Books Brahma, Sakka or Indra, Mara and other divine or supernatural personalities, good or evil, are mentioned. But this is not in line with Gautama Buddha's an-atma doctrine of the transience of personality; so the appearance of Hindu Gods and evils in Buddhist text is purely on account of its association and subsequent influence of Hindu Philosophy and Buddhism finally extinguished in India. The personification of divinity is a process natural to the human mind whether in Asia or Europe, Buddha was also inclined to the theory of impersonal divinity of the Hindus. It is also certain that he was acquainted with the Hindu doctrine of transmigration. But this theory is completely opposite to his an-atma theory. Still he was influenced by this doctrine of transmigration. Also Brahmanical concept of Karma or action also influenced Buddha. So a religious philosophy influenced by Hindu Philosophy can not altogether reject the Hindu Gods and Goddess though Hindu Gods in Buddhist Canonical texts occupied inferior position to Buddhas and also to number of his disciples. Much of the
Hindu Pantheon had also been adapted to meet the needs of the popular Buddhism theory though the Gods functions were generally quite different. Indra (Sakra or Sakka) was still the King of the Gods and Yama called Dharmarāja, presided over the hell. But Sīva and Pārvatī usually called Mahākāla and Mahakālī were reduced to the status of door-keepers of Buddha while Kubera called Jambalā, was his bodyguard. Brahmā was also considered an important god in Buddhist texts. The goddesses in Buddhist pantheon were more cruel than Dūrgā and Kālī.

That the Hindu gods relegated to inferior position will be apparent from the Buddhist universe called Chakravāla. There were three planes - above, around and below mount Meru. One reserved for sinners, another heaven for four kings i.e. four guardians of the world. Above mount Meru, was heaven of thirty three divinities or heaven of Sakra (Indra). Above there two heavens, there were twenty-four heavens meant for Buddha and other enlightened ones. So in discussing Buddhist and Jaina Canonical texts we find the presence of some of the Hindu deities in their religious script. But most interesting part of their text is the predominance of the supreme vedic god, Indra known as Sakka in their literature. We have observed that Indra started losing his importance as the supreme god from later Vedic period. First of all, Prajāpati, later known as Brahmā, became the predominant deity and in epic and puranic ages, two other gods viz. Sīva and Viṣṇu occupied the
the primary positions in Hindu Mythology and they were regarded as the mostly worshipped God. So, Indra could, no longer, maintain his supreme position among the gods, but was all along considered as the king of Gods. This happened on account of various reasons such as peoples aspiration for spiritual development, advent of Bhakti cult etc. When position of Indra started declining in Hindu Mythology, he appeared to emerge as one of the most important and popular god along with Brahma in Buddhist and Jaina religion. While most of the other Vedic and subsequent deities could not find proper position in their text as stated earlier. Now we would discuss the position and worship of Indra as found in Buddhist and Jaina Canonical texts.

The god Indra plays a very important role in the literature of The Buddhists and the Canonical Buddhist writers particularly are quite fond of Indra, and numerous reference to him in the Pali Buddhist texts directly prove his popularity with the early Buddhists, but also in both the pre-Mauryan and pre-Christian periods, as we know that a good bulk of the Tripitaka was completed before Ashoka, as one of his epigraphs² found near Bairat in Rajasthan, mentions some of the early Buddhist texts. Curiously enough, the Buddhists have not only represented Indra as a god, but also as a benevolent Yaksha. Let us first examine the position of Indra as found in the Pali Canonical texts.
Indra is called by various names in the Pāli literature and his most popular name is Sakka, which is the Pāli form of Sanskrit Śakra. Other popular names of Indra, mentioned in the Pāli literature, are Mahāvācyā, Purinādā, Vasava, Kosiyā, Vajirapāni, etc. The first name reminds us of the name Mahāvanta, the second of Purandara. The third name is common both in Sanskrit and Pāli, the only difference is that in the Sanskrit has a long 'a', while the Pāli has a short 'a'. Kosiyā is the same as 'Kauśika', which is one of the names of Indra in the Mahābhārata. Vajirapāni is obviously the same as Vajrapāni, another name of Indra in the Sanskrit literature.

Sakra in the Pāli literature is largely represented as benevolent and friendly deity, who never hesitate to befriend both Buddha and his disciples. A very significant passage of the pali Samyutta Nikāya has represented Indra or Śakra as praising various virtues in twenty-five short passages. In the first two, Śakra is shown as praising energy, in the third he himself denounces timidity, in the fourth he shows forbearance to his enemy, in the fifty he advocates the conquest of anger by kindness, in the sixth he asks people to show kindness to animals, in the seventh he denounces trickery, in the eighth he denounces trickery even towards animals, and in the ninth he preaches courtesy and in the tenth respect towards the wise. In the eleventh are described the seven life-long habits, which raised him to his present eminent position, twelve and
thirteen repeat this and explain his titles. In the fourteenth Sakra explains how new gods, who outshine the old ones, do so because they have observed Buddha's teachings. In the fifteenth he says that the most beautiful spot is that one, where the disciples of Buddha's dwell. In the sixteenth he praises gifts to the order, in the seventeenth he praises Buddha. In the eighteenth to twenty he says that whereas Brahmins and others worship him, he himself adores good men and Arhants. In the last five he denounces both anger and deceit. The abovementioned passage, found in such an early text as the Samyutta Nikaya, clearly shows that in the Buddhist literature, Indra is surely depicted as a god of high moral character. Many scholars are of the opinion that Buddha and Sakka (Indra) are identical one, Sakka being the other name of Buddha. One of the main reason for this stipulation is probably an account of Buddha being addressed as Sakka in number of occasions. But in-depth study of these Canonical texts reveal otherwise. It is definite that Sakka in Buddhist Canonical texts is not but the supreme Vedic god Indra incorporated in this texts. Buddha is addressed as Sakka because the Buddhists used to consider Indra or Sakka as very powerful and ideal god. Certainly, this is a proud privilege for this Vedic god to be identified with Buddha, the supreme divinity of the Buddhists. In number of occasions Buddha is addressed as Sakka, the thousand eyed and the
all seeing one. Also the world of the gods and men are termed as possessor of nothing while Buddha as Sakka can cast off the doubts of anyone, so in the Buddhist Mahamayur texts, Buddha, when addressed as Sakka, is being asked certain question regarding the spiritual development. It is possible that the Buddhists also consider Indra as one who knows everything as stated in the Vedic literature. The Buddhists have found Indra deemed suitable to be identified with their supreme divinity and no doubt this is a glowing tribute to India.

In Buddhist canonical texts, at number of places Buddha is compared with Indra. Indra is termed as king Sakra and the sages fix their attention on him. Also in the same text Buddha is compared with sakra in respect to honour. In Buddha carita of Asvaghosa, Buddha is compared with Indra and his wife. Again Buddha is compared with Indra and Buddha is supposed to control all his sons as like Indra.

So it is clear from these comparisons that Indra appears to be a very honourable and self controlled god like that of Buddha, the Supreme being in Buddhist texts, in Vedic mythology, Indra appeared as the god of great performance. The people used to worship him on account of his wonderful power of fulfilling the desires of the worshippers. In comparison of Buddha we also come across with this performance of Indra. When Buddha is expected to
fulfill desires he is compared with Indra. Buddha is compared with Indra in various ways and in such a comparison Indra is termed as the lord of the gods, the personified glory of the universe and he lighted up the entire wood like the sun. Buddha has been compared with Indra in relation to penance. Buddha also like Indra can give prosperity, even to Brhaspati as given by Indra.

Indra along with Brahma occupies such an important position in Buddhist texts that wise man is known as Brahma and Indra. Here Indra and Brahma are possessor of three fold knowledge and hav destroyed regeneration.

When Buddha, the blessed one, died, Sakka, the king of the gods, at the moment of his passing away from existence, uttered the following. "They are transient all, each being parts and powers. Growth is their nature and decay. They are produced, they are dissolved again. And then is the best, when they have sunk to rest".

It is evident that Indra considers Buddha's preaching very beneficial and as such by the sound of his trumpet, Indra makes all silent when Buddha preaches so that he can preach peacefully and the listeners can attend amidst absolute silence. In Vinaya texts Indra's adoration to Buddha's preaching has been described beautifully. "And on a beautiful night Sakka (Sakra or Indra) the king of the Devas, filling the whole grove
with light by the brilliancy of his complexion, went to the place where the Blessed one was, having approached him and respectfully saluted the blessed one, he stood near him like a great firebrand, surpassing in beauty and brilliancy the splendour of the former appearances.16

Here not only Buddha's preaching is beneficial to Indra but Indra stands inferior to Buddha in relation to beauty and splendour. Indra, along with Brahma and others, honours Buddha, the preacher17 (see Max Muller, Vol. 21, p. 349).

It is however a fact that the Buddhists have everywhere represented Indra as a great devotee and admirer of Buddha. He is often represented as visiting Buddha and receiving instructions of dharma from the latter. In the Samyutta Nikaya Buddha teaches Indra seven rules of conduct which Sakra carried out as a human being and thereby attaining to his celestial sovereignty.18 In the Sakka Panha Sutta,19 Sakka is said to have visited Buddha, at Vediyagiri and received instructions from him. In this Sutta we find Buddha giving him replies to fourteen questions, which he had asked. There is another Sutta called Cūlatānasāṅkhaya Sutta included in the Majjhima Nikāya20 in which Buddha had given Indra a lecture on an obscure topic which Sakra did not properly understand. Afterwards Maudgalayana explained the difficult points of Buddha's original lecture and only then, Indra properly understood it.

Sakka or Indra when becomes aware of Ānanda in his mind and considers him as great king of glory, he being
the king of gods directs Visvakarman to construct a palace for Ananda in the following language.

"Come now Visvakarman, create me a mansion for the great king of glory a palace which shall be called 'Righteousness'."

But here we find one interesting point that Indra, inspite of being king of gods, Visvakarman took Ananda's permission for construction of the mansion. Indra also considers Buddha righteous.

That Indra is inferior to Buddha and still a powerful god is evident from the services done by Indra to Buddha. But it may also be interpreted that in many occasions, the gods help each other as in epics we have found that Visnu entered in the foams of ocean with which Indra killed Vṛtra. We find references of Indra's service to Buddha in admission to order of Bhikkus - Mahāvagga as below.

Buddha had rags taken from dust heap and thought where to wash the rags Indra dug a tank for him. Then he thought where to rub the rags Indra made a stone for him. Then Buddha thought where to lay the rags for drying Indra put a great stone for him. Buddha narrated this story to Cētāla Uruvela Kassapa and he thought that Buddha possesses high magical powers and great faculties since Sakka, the king of the davas, does service to him. The Buddhists further tells us that on innumerable occasions Sakra helped
Buddha. He was present at the Vaisali, when Buddha visited that city in order to get rid of its plagues. His presence drove away the evil spirits and thus Buddha's task was made easier.23 Once when the ponds in the Jatavaka of Sravasti were dry, Buddha wished to bathe, and Indra immediately caused rain to fall, and the ponds were filled. 24 This story fully proves that according to the early Buddhist Canonical writers Sakra or Indra was basically a god of rains.

Once Indra, in the form of a young Brahman, sat near Buddha and other Bhikkus, appreciated him, then the Bhikkus asked that whose attendant he was. Indra answered "he who is wise entirely self controlled, the unrivalled Buddha, the Arhat, the most happy upon earth his attendant am I." 25

Indra approached Buddha and asked him for any service that he could do. Buddha requested him to find a way for dispelling the doubts of king Milinda who his hand to be defeated. Indra suggested the name of god Mahasewar who should be advised to take birth. But Mahasewar refused Indra's request thrice and when Buddha requested him, he readily agreed. 26

Indra offered a Haritaki fruit to Buddha which he ate and planted the seed to grow to a tree. 27 In another occasion, Buddha refused to acknowledge service from Sakra on the plea that the buddhists seek their livelihood by the walking of miracles. 28
We also find reference of Indra's wife and son in the Buddhist text. Suddhodhana and his wife, parents of Buddha, are compared with Indra and Saci while Buddha was Indra's son Jayanta.  

That Indra is mortal is evident from Buddhist texts and Buddha explained Sakra's mortality. Here along with Sakra his attendant also perishes.  

As per Buddhist texts, Buddha's birth is a great event in the religious history of the world and its importance is manifested by the fact that Sakra and Brahma scatters flower, at the birth of Buddha, Sakra also produces scented streams to wash Buddha. Buddha's birth pleases Indra to a great extent and he, as the thousand eyed one takes him gently.  

Indra, the Chief of the gods, and Brahma, covered Buddha with heavenly garments and bestowed him with flowers of heaven, Mandaravas and great Mandararyas thus honouring him.  

Buddha is accepted in the high esteem by Indra and Brahma and as such they entreat Buddha to teach law.  

On Skilfulness we also find reference of Indra in Buddhist text where Buddha considers one to be born as Indra is very auspicious, also having heard Dharmaparyaya one may gain the seat of Indra.  

In Buddhist texts Indra was considered so important divinity that Buddha in different forms such as Gagagalesvara and Avalokitesvara forms preach under the shape of Indra.
It may be possible that the religion of Buddha, comparatively a new doctrine, propounded in a country of Hindus who believed in god concept of their worship, it is easier to convince them by means of assuming form of Hindu gods. In one occasion, Sakra was brought down by a mere parrot to wait for Buddha. 37

At Buddhist time too, Indra was a giver god and Buddha himself accepted a boon from Indra which is described as below,

"If you would grant a boon to me, O, Sakka, lord of every creature, Let none, Sakka on my account, be harmed, whether in mind or body, At any time or place, This, Sakka, This would I choose as boon of boons". 38

Buddha considers Indra as the lord of all the creatures and an almighty one as well. Buddha also describes the qualities of Indra. These are that Indra enjoys perfect bliss, he is full of joy and zeal and he feels no discontent. 39

It is mentioned that Buddha had twenty thousand god as his followers including Sakra. 40

Indra is considered as a universal monarch and to attain his throne is a glorious affair which only Buddha could do after preaching. 41

Numerous references of Sakra or Indra are also found in the Jataka and other literatures of the Buddhist Canonical texts apart from those as stated earlier.
In the Sister's Sermons of the Buddhist Canonical texts Indra and Brahma are together mentioned and they are inferior to Buddha and even they pay homage and respect to beloved disciples of Buddha as in the case of Sunita.  

Also in the texts of Talaputa who was an actor, director, in verses 1108, Indra has been described as great and his thunder has also been mentioned.

In the sisters Sermon too, Sakka has been highly appreciated, admired and hailed as supreme over thrice ten gods and a chieftain unconquered in celestial wars.

Indra was so important to Buddhists that they have all along recited Sermons to celebrate Sakka's adoration.

In the account of the great Enlightenment given in the Pali introduction to the Jataka (Nidana Katha) which is drawn from the Canons, the tempter Mara and the Gods headed by Sakka figure largely, one as opponent and the others as supporters of the future Buddha. The Bodhisatta is defended by Sakka, Brahma, Kalnaga raja, the king of Snakes and others. It is noticeable that the gods are all put to flight by Mara's army and so prove inferior to the human teacher who is victorious.

Sakra is directly mentioned as the ruler of the Devas and also a guardian of moral ethics as found in Vasabha texts where an imposter was reprimended by the King of the gods.

Also in the story of Vangisa, Sakra is addressed as a thousand eyed one and a heavenly dweller.
In Rahanta Miga-Jataka, Indra offered jewellery, gold, the beautiful wives etc. to Buddha but in turn Buddha accepted only ascetic. So Indra was enlightened and went to swell the beat of heaven. The teaching endured for a thousand years. 49

We come across with one beautiful story in verse No 480 of Akitta-Jataka. Once Bodhisatta was born and named Akitta. On being disgusted with gifts and other sensual presentations, he built a hermitage at Ahidipur, the isles of snakes. By the fire of his virtue Sakka's marble throne became hot. Sakka wanted to learn whether Bodhisatta was an aspirant for Sakkahood. On three occasions Sakka begged alms from Buddha in the disguise of a Brahmin. Buddha gave all the food he had and remained without any food for three days. Then Sakka asked him why he was practicing ascetic life in this forest and reply was to free from rebirth and Indra was addressed as Sakka and Vasava and Lord of the beings. Then Sakka was quite content that Buddha was not an aspirant for his throne. So he desired to give him a boon, Buddha refused any sensual objects, in this way Sakka offered him four more boons, but everytime Buddha settled for spiritual goal. On the last occasion, Buddha accepted the boon in a way that Sakka would never visit him because Sakka's company may force him to forget his mission. Then Sakka saluted him and promised him not to visit any more and left. 50

Almost a same story is found in Kanha-Jataka, verse
No. 440 where Sakka's throne is made of yellow stone. He criticised Kanha for his black colour and then was charmed and delighted after communicating with Kanha. On being satisfied, he offered him boons. On all the occasions Kanha desired freedom from malice, hatred, lust, bitterness and also from disease etc. On all the six occasions Kanha chose only that which pertained to the life of renunciation. He also satisfied Sakka's question. Sakka made the tree bear fruits perennially and saluted him. Here Sakka has been addressed as lord of all the worlds. 51

Now we would discuss the Buddhist's theory of why Sakka's throne grows hot. They say that Sakka's throne becomes hot when his life draw towards its ends or when his merit is exhausted and worked out or when some mighty being prays or through the efficacy of virtue in priests or brahmins full of piety.

In verse No 450 of Bitari-Kosiya-Jataka Buddha was born as Sakka for generation and taught his one son a lesson who did not follow his path, thus breaking the family custom.

In the Vidhurapandita - Jataka Sakka's palace Vajayanta of Sudhamma is decorated with Jewels. 52

In the story of Sadhina- Jataka it is said that Sakka gave away his palace Vajayanta to Buddha where he dwelt for 700 years. 53 In the story of Sudhabhojana- Jataka certain description are given about Sakka's heaven. The heaven is ten thousand leagues in extent, and the golden street sixty leagues
long and the vojayanta roared a thousand league high, Sudhamma
compassing five hundred leagues, and his thrones of yellow
marble sixty leagues in extent and his white umbrella with
its golden wreath, five leagues in circumference and his
own person accompanied with a glorious array 25m. of heavenly
 nymphs.

It is said that Asuras used to live in the abode of
gods of thirty three. Once Sakka, the king of Gods, made the
Asuras drunk and threw them below the mount. On coming to
senses, Asuras wanted to back their places and Sakka was lost
in the battle on his chariot. At the time of fleeing his
chariot's movement caused the mighty trees fell down and the
Garulas cried sharp because of the chariot. Sakka thought of
giving up his life in the hands of Asuras than to move further
and destroy life. This story also reveals Sakka's kindler
character. Afterwards when Sakka being alarmed of killing
innocent lives returned to the heaven, already occupied by
the Asuras, the Asuras fled away thinking Sakka has come
reinforced. This reveals the victory of Buddha's doctrines
of Ahimsa and Kindness to the animals.

In the Susima Jataka, the king has been compared
with Sakka and his elephant with that of Sakka's elephant
Eravana. The Jataka book also describes Sakka as Lord of
heaven, surrounded by a Company of Gods and descending from
heaven mounted on the back of Eravana. Sakka's charioteer
Hatali has also been described.
When Buddha refused all the earliest treasurers as offered by Śakka, then Śakka erected a hermitage for Buddha which extended for three leagues. 

Śakka is also assigned as a guardian of moral ethics. To Śakka, drinking of strong drink means destroy of Indra. Śakka explained the misery of drink to the king and the king being admonished ordered for breaking of drink vessels.

Here Indra, the great Soma-drinker undergoes a complete transformation.

Śakka's four daughters has been described as Hope, faith, glory and honour in Jātaka. Here Matali and Nārada also appears. These daughters were very virtuous. This is a unique finding because so far references of Indra's daughter are not found.

In Suruchi-Jātaka, Śakka has been addressed as one hundred eyed. It is stated that Bodhisattva was once Śakka and the guardian of right things.

In the story of Kāma-Jātaka Śakka taught a lesson to one of the princes who became greedy to capture his kingdom by fighting with his own brother.

In the story of Śiva-Jātaka Śakka is addressed as Sujāmpati. So Sujā is the Sanskrit variant of Śaci.

In the story of Sambula-Jātaka, Śakka's abode was
was shaken by the efficacy of the virtues of Sambula and he came out with his thunderbolt in hand and chained the Goblin who wished to seduce Sambula and Sambula returned to her husband safe. 67

Sakka is called Indra in the story of Ayakuta Jataka and also in Kapi-Jataka63.

In the story of Alambusa-Jataka we find the recurrence of the traditional fight between Indra and the demon Vṛtra. Here Buddha said "Then mighty Indra, lord of lords, the god that Vṛtra slew unto his hall the nymph did call, for well his wiles he knew". It is mentioned that statue of Indra adorns the gateway of heaven 70.

A number of popular epithets of Indra are known to these Buddhist writers. These names very clearly resemble those found in Hindu Vedic, Epic and Puranic periods. There are Maghava, Sakka or Sakra, Purandara (Sanskrit Purandara), Sahasākka (Sanskrit Sahasraksha), Vettaha (Sanskrit Vṛtraha), Mahinda (Sanskrit Mahendra) As in Hindu texts, his charioteer is Mātalī and his elephant is Airāvana (Sanskrit Airāvata). His wife is known as Suja which is a variant of Sanskrit Śaci. The Indra of the Buddhists is vajrapaññī (Sanskrit Vajrapaññī).

The festival of Indra known as Sakkamaha is also prominently mentioned in the Buddhist Canonical texts.
Apart from the above stated interesting references of Indra in the Jataka the names of several Asura Chiefs like Baharāṇa, Sambra, Bali, Narauci etc. are obviously taken from the Sanskrit texts.

It is also of great importance to note that this great Vedic god has sometimes been delineated as Yaksha, particularly in the Buddhist works. The Sakka Sutta, included in the Samyutta Nikaya, represents Indra as a Yaksha. The commentary of this text also supports this. The Sanskrit Buddhist work Mahāyāṇa also represents Indra as a Yaksha and it is mentioned that the Yaksha named Indra was particularly worshiped at Indrapura which was probably situated in Uttar Pradesh.

According to the Buddhists, Vasamana is a special friend of Sakra, and he is one of the Lokapālas in the Brahmanical literatures along with Indra, Soma and Varupa. In the Buddhist literature, instead of four Lokapālas, we come across four Maharājas.
The Jains too, have represented Indra as one of the closest friends of the Tirthankaras. The birth of Mahāvīra is also associated with Indra. It is learnt from Akāraṇa Sutra of Jaina Sutra, that compassionate god Indra reflecting on what was the established custom (with regard to birth of Tirthankaras), removed the embryo from the southern Brahmanical part of the place Kāndapura to the northern Kshatriya part of the same place, rejecting the unclean matter and retaining the clean matter, lodged the foetus in the wombs of Kṣatrapīlī Śrīdharā, of the Kasyapa gotra, of the clan of the Bhātri's, and lodged the foetus of the Kṣatriyāni Trisāla in the wombs of Devenāndā of the Śalāndharāyana gotra, wife of the Brahmanā Vishabhādatta, of the gotra of Kodala, in the Southern brahmanical part of the place Kāndapura.

In the Kalpasutra we find him ordering Harinagamasi (Karttikeya), his general to transfer the embryo of infant Mahāvīra from the womb of Brahmani Devananda to that of Kṣatrapīlī lady Trisāla, because according to the Jains, a Tirthankara or any great man, cannot be born in the womb of any other lady, except a Kṣatriyāni.

Like the Buddhist writers, the Jain authors also have represented Indra (Indra) as the lord of the celestial region. Among his popular names in the Jain literature, we may mention Maghava, Pāgasāsana, Sayakkau, Sahasāskha.
The Jains further assert that Indra is the master of the southern part of the universe. According to the Jains, there are under him thirty-two lakhs of celestial abodes, and 84,000 devas. Eight principal wives of Indra are generally recognized in Jain literature. They are Pauma, Siva, Seya, Amyu Amala, Acchara, Navamiya and Rohini. It is interesting to note that Indra, according to the JainCanonical writers, have four Lokapalas, namely Soma, Varuna, Jama (Sanskrit Yama) and Vesamaña (Sanskrit Vaisravana or Kubera). There is therefore no doubt the Jains never considered Indra himself as a Lokapala, and their list of four Lokapalas is also not something new, as this list is known also to the Brahmanical writers.

According to the Jains, Indra or Sakra had helped Konia or Ādhisatru in the great historical battle, popularly known as Mahāśilakantaka. This battle is also mentioned elsewhere in the Jain Agama. Thus we find that even in the known historical period, Indra is taking part in politics. During the birth of the Jinas or the Tīrthaṅkaras, Indra is shown as attending with his retinue, and according to the Jains, Indra is bhakta of their prophets. Sometimes he is represented as taking lessons from the Jinas. Like the Buddhist Indra, the Sakra or the Indra of the Jains, is subject to birth and death.

We are further told, that in the previous birth he was known as Kattia or Kartika, who was a merchant of the ancient
city of Hastinapura. Mahāvīra appears to be so auspicious that Indra honoured Mahāvīra in the following ways.

Indra by the magical transformation produced a great, beautiful, lovely, fine shaped divine pavilion which was ornamented with many designs in precious stones, gold and pearls. In the middle part of the pavilion, he constructed a great throne. Then Indra went to Mahāvīra and worshipped the praised him thrice, anointed him with very refined oil, bathed him with pure water, dressed him with lightest robes. He then produced one great palankin for Mahāvīra which beautifully decorated with ornaments and flowers. Many demons at the command of Indra brought treasure to Siddharta's palace.

In the Jaina Canonical texts, it is stated that Mahāvīra is brilliant like Indra.

In an another occasion, Mahāvīra has refused a robe given by Indra, and as a result many sorts of living beings gathered on his body, crawled about it and caused pain there. Further, the great Indra-festival is mentioned in the Āchārāṅga Sūtra, which is one of the earliest Canonical texts of the Jains. There is no doubt that the festival of Indra, was highly popular in the pre-Christian India. We will afterwards see that its popularity continued till a very late period. In the non-Canonical Jain literature also Indra is
depicted as a great devotee of the Tirthankaras and everywhere he is represented as praising them and the stotras, uttered by him are quite poetical. The poet of the early Prakrit poem, namely Paumacharivam, criticises the author of the Rāmāyana for showing Rāvana as the conqueror of Indra. Let us quote his actual words: "We have further heard that Rāvana, after vanquishing Indra in the battlefield, brought him in chains to the city of Lanka. But who can conquer the mighty Indra, who is capable of uprooting the whole of Jambudvīpa, who has Airavata as his Vahana and terrible Vajra as his weapon? By this very thought, he (Indra) can reduce to ashes any god or man. The deer killed the lion, and dog, the elephant; such contradictory sentences are found everywhere in the Rāmāyana". This passage surely proves that Vimala, who was a pra-Gupta Svetāmarāṇa poet, had a great regard for Indra, and does not hesitate to represent him as the strongest and most influential member of the Indian pantheon.

The other Jains also have mentioned the festival of Indra in their works. The seventh-century Jain author of the Nīśitha Catura, namely Jīvadāsa, informs us that the Indra-worship was held in Gujarat (Lata) on the full-moon day of the month of Srāvana. However, the same author, elsewhere in his work tells us that the Indra-festival was held at Pratishthāna in the month of Bhādra. Elsewhere in the Jain works also this festival has been prominently mentioned.
Indra and Brahmā are two Vedic gods who have retained their position in Buddhist and Jaina Canonical texts. These two religions having been influenced by Hindu religion are still different from it and their doctrines and dialects usually differ. Still Indra or Sakra plays a vital role in these Canonical texts. It is observed that Buddha is even addressed as Sakra i.e., to indicate the prominence of Indra in a sense that the supreme god of the Buddhist is comparable with the supreme Vedic god at a much later period. Interestingly, Indra relegated in Epics, Purāṇa and subsequent Hindu texts, continues to occupy somewhat more important and austere position in these two religions. He is not only a synonym of Buddha but compared with him also, he is termed most honourably such as master, lord of the heaven and all creatures of the universe, personified glory of the universe like Sun. He is supreme of all the gods and unconquered in celestial wars. The Buddhists accept this basic view of the Vedas i.e., no force in the entire universe can meet the might of Indra and ultimately the challenger decays. The War-god character of Indra is retained in Buddhist texts. Indra is an incomparable one, he knows everything. Indra is wise, he is the possessor of three fold knowledge and has destroyed regeneration. This is a unique honour to Indra. The Buddhist doctrine aims towards renunciation which can only be attained if one is free from evils of birth. Indra is said to have three qualities which make one god still more superior. These qualities of Indra are, he enjoys perfect bliss, he is full of joy and zeal.
and he feels no discontent. As in Vedas and subsequent periods, Indra, in Buddhist and Jaina Canonical texts, remains as a god who bestows prosperity and fulfils desires of the worshippers. Indra is capable of giving various types of booms. He is omnipowerful, can do miracles and wonders. He is satisfied immediately, even he offers booms to Buddha and others.

In Buddhist and Jaina Canonical texts, Indra is not only concerned about worldly affairs in Vedas but he is depicted as a pivotal stone towards spiritual development. He is pleased when Buddha is born and takes him up. He helps in the birth of Mahāvīra. He helps them preaching and even himself earnestly listens to their preaching and compels others to do so. Indra's association with the Buddhist helps them to a great extent to achieve their missions and in turn the Buddhists recite to celebrate sermons in favour of Indra. The gods and others headed by Indra protects Buddha against Māra and subsequently annihilates him. Buddhas, time and again, preach under the shape of Indra that is Indra as a religious god is so powerful that preaching under his shape helps the Buddhists to achieve their goal.

The Buddhists also refer to traditional Indra-Vṛtra myth by addressing him as Vṛtra-slayer. In Buddhist text, Indra is projected as a kind god while in Vedas he is figured as a dynamic, ruthless, devastating god, merciless to his opponents. In order to safeguard the life of the innocents...
in the forest, Indra returns to heaven to face death at the hands of the Asuras who have defeated him earlier. It reveals a very soft aspect of Indra's character which is quite unfound in the Vedic mythology. Indra is not projected to distract the sages and austeras as he did in epics and Purāṇas. But Indra does the same when his throne is in danger, then only he comes down and attempts to distract the sage by offering boons etc.

Indra is considered inferior to Buddha and Tīrthāṅkara on account of many reasons, the important one being his services to them. Indra instructs Visvakarmā to construct a palace for Buddha. Not only so, Indra himself does lot of services to them.

Fortunately, another aspect of Indra's character which has spoiled his image in epics and Purāṇas does not find any place in Buddhist and Jaina Canonical texts. This is his flamboyance and flirting nature. He seduced Ahalyā in Rāmāyaṇa and was cursed by the sage Gautama. He attempted to violate Ruci, wife of another sage, but failed. He suffered on account of Brahminicid in epics and Purāṇas. But in Buddhist and Jaina texts, this aspect of his image is quite unknown to them.

Buddhists and Jainas consider Indra as a great god. To them to be borne as Indra and to obtain Indra's seat is very auspicious. They have considered Indra as a universal
Monarch and only Buddha can attain his seat by preaching. This is, no doubt, a great tribute to Indra. Indra is also considered as a guardian of moral ethics. He reprimands one imposter, teaches a lesson to a greater king and also teaches one king the evil effects of hard drinks and ultimately succeeds in preventing him to consume so. The great Soma drinker in Vedas, who was associated with Soma in numerous hymns transforms in Buddhist religion. Here he falls in line with Buddha and advocates against drinks. No doubt, a great upliftment of Indra from spiritual point of view.

In both the Buddhist and the Jaina Canonical texts, among the Hindu deities, Indra along with Brahmā has occupied a very important position. Indra was the supreme God of the vedic aryans. This position he could no longer retain in any subsequent stages. But in Buddhist and Jaina canonical texts, he remained a very powerful god doing wonders and miracles. From the very beginning Indra performed as a door god easily responding to the prayers and sacrifices of the people and jumping immediately to their rescue. In our analysis we find Indra has been basically portrayed in this characteristic aspect only. May be possible that he has been retained in those texts because of projecting two classes of gods. Buddha and Tirthankaras are projected as god for renunciation or spiritual development of the soul. While Indra a god basically meant for worldly comforts and prosperity of the worldly beings. This contrast would enable the people
to achieve their desired goal by following the path of their respective gods as time and again they have rejected number of worldly boons offered by Sakra or Indra. This is a basic teaching to the people to go ahead to the path of renunciation. Another theory behind the presence of Indra in those Canonical texts may be put forward. The Buddhist and the Jaina religions were comparatively new to that of Hindu religion. So Hindu religion and mythology had a profound influence on these two religions and so some of the Brahmanical deities could occupy important positions in their texts. Another proposition may be that when Buddha and Tirthaṅkaras started preaching their religions in India, they thought that unless some Hindu divinities are associated with them, their religion would not make much success in India. And who would be a better choice than Indra, the king of the Hindu Gods? Indra, the most dynamic and powerful deity of the Vedic Aryans associated with Buddhist and Jaina sects had definitely improved the position of their religion in India. Moreover, projecting Indra as inferior to Buddha and Tirthaṅkaras, convinced the people to adopt their religion. It is evident that Indra helped to boost-up the religious spirit of Buddha and Jaina on account of his importance in Hindu Mythology. But unfortunately, on the other hand, Indra was relegated to secondary position i.e. Dikpālas, also in order to suite their demand. But this dynamic Vedic god in the limited scope that he was given, did certain misdeeds and established
the creditability of Hindu Mythology. The Buddhist and the Jaina Canonical texts reveal certain other informations regarding Indra and his effect on religion. Indra is the supreme god of the Vedic Aryans. At that time the people were joyful and concerned about worldly affairs only. The doctrine of spiritual development did not commence at that time. Moreover the lower caste people had very inferior position in the society and their participation in the religious rites and festivals was non-significant. So Indra was projected as a god of Brahmin and Kshatriya. But fortunately people of so-called lower caste participates wholeheartedly in Buddhist religion.

Therefore the religious concept of the Buddhist is spiritual development or renunciation while in Vedas it was for prosperity and victory. Since the lower caste's people start dominating the scenario in Buddhist-religions, the Brahmin or the Kshatriya god no longer continues to maintain the supreme position on account of two reasons, firstly he was worshipped for some other purpose in his peak days and secondly his non-acceptability to all sects of the people.

Still Indra, the most important national god of the Vedic Aryans, steals the limelight over other gods in these two religions, plays a very active role, lives upto the standard of a god only i.e., Mischiefous aspect of his character is not surfaced here. The Buddhists and the Jaines
cannot ignore him, rather find a close ally in him who helps them in their mission. In turn they consider him as a universal monarch and to be borne as Indra and to obtain Indra's seat is very auspicious to them as Buddha does by means of preaching.
Notes on the Buddhists and the Jaina Canonical texts.

1. Veronica Ions, Indian Mythology, p.135
2. Sorensen, Index to the Names of the Mahabharata, p.399.
4. Mulevagga of Vangisasutta, 344, 345 SBE, Max Muller Vol.10(ii) p.58, 196
5. Parayanaavagga - Todeyyamanavapukka - 1089, Ibid vol. 10(ii), 202
7. Ibid. vol.19 p.78.
9. Ibid. V.22
10. Ibid. vi.62
12. Ibid viii.43
13. SBE, Max Muller 10(ii) p.117
14. SBE, Max Muller vol. vii. p.16.
15. Ibid vol. 11-p.142
17. Ibid vol. 21 p.349
21. SBE, Max Muller vol.II. p. 254
25. SBE, Max Muller vol. 13 p. 141
27. Buddha Carita of Asvaghosa XV 65.
28. SBE, Max Muller vol. 36 p. 24
29. Ibid, Vol. 49, p. 5
30. Ibid, vol. 19 p. 275
32. Buddha Carita of Asvaghosa l. 27.
33. SBE, Max Muller vol. 19 pp. 347, 350, 352.
36. Ibid, vol. 21 p. 401, 411
37. Ibid, vol. 36, p. 6
38. Ibid, vol. 36, p. 310
40. Ibid, vol. 21 p. 4
41. Buddha Carita of Asvaghosa Book 16, 93, 110
42. Cf. Sisters p. 146 Verse no 365
44. Ibid, pp. 74-75.
45. Ibid, p. 147
46. The Vedantic Buddhism of Buddha Page 1N 8a 1X1 by J.G. Jennings.
47. SWB, Rhys, Davids. p.118

48. Ibid, p. 409

49. The Jataka or the Stories of Buddha's Former Birth - By Prof. E.B. Cowell vol. i p. 263.

50. Ibid vol. ii pp. 150-152

51. Ibid vol. iii pp. 4-5

52. Ibid vol. iii pp. 45-49


56. The Jataka or the Stories of Buddha's Former Birth by Prof. E.B. Cowell, vol. i pp. 80-81.

57. Ibid vol. i. p.81.

58. Ibid vol. iii p. 237

59. Ibid vol. V p. 73.

60. Ibid vol. Vi 65-67


69. Ibid. vol. V p. 80.
70. Ibid. vol. VI p. 66.
73. Digha II p. 259.
74. D.P.P.N. I p. 214
75. Ibid p. 966
77. See Verse no 49, edited and translated by D.C. Sircar.
78. D.P.P.N. II pp 861 f.
79. Śīrṣa Sūtra of Jaina Sūtra, Book 1 Lecture 15(4)
80. S.E.E. vol. 22 pp. 190
81. See Kalpa 14b Samavāyaṅga, 32.
82. Bhagavati, Para 144, Also Prakrit proper names II p. 542.
83. P.P.N. II p. 745
84. P.P.N. II p 762.
85. Ibid II p. 770 also Bhagavati, 567.
86. P.P.N. II p. 745
87. P.P.N.I. p. 472 and Uttaradhyayana, 11-23
88. P.P.N.II p. 745.
89. Loc. cit.
90. P.P.N II-P 745
91. Loc. cit. Also Bhagavati, 300.
92. Nirayavalika I-1.
93. P.P.N. I p. 156.
94. Akaraṅga Sūtra of Jaina Sūtra Book II
   Lecture 15.
96. SBE, Max Muller vol. 45, P 288.
97. S.B.E. Max Muller Vol 22, p. 79.
98. Ibid vol. 22 p. 92
99. A comprehensive History of Jainism Vol I p. 274
100. Nis. Cū. p. 226, Also M. Sen, A Cultural Study
     of the Nisittha Cūrqi, p. 320.
101. Nis. Cū. III p. 131
102. M. Sen, op. cit. p. 321; Also English Translation
     of Trishātisālakapurussaha Charita, Vol.1, p. 343.