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by

MUNI SHREE MRIGENDRA MUNI MAHARAJ

STORIES FROM JAINISM



By
Muni Shree Mrigendra Muni Maharaj

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DEDICATION

ध्यानमूलं गुरोर्मूर्तिः
पूजामूलं गुरोः पदं ।
मंत्रमूलं गुरोर्वाक्यं
मोक्षमूलं गुरोः कृपा ॥

I offer this book
At the Lotus Feet of
My Revered Mother, Father and Guru
Acharya Shri Chidanand Surishwarji Maharaj
and
Sadhvi Shri Vinita Shreeji

1-6-1994

Your disciple
Mrigendra

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PREFACE

In Jain religious literature there are many stories. These stories are a great heritage of Jainism. They are aimed at teaching good morals for our life. In Buddhist literature we have Jataka Tales. In Hinduism, many stories are narrated in Vedic and puranic literature. In the same way, stories occupy a prominent place in Jain literature. They are known as "Kathanuyoga" i.e. introduction in the form of stories to teach religion. From the earliest time of the Agamas till to-day, the heritage of stories has been preserved in an unbroken tradition. This includes - Uttaradhyayana, Sutra, Jnatadharmakatha, Trisasthisataka - Purusa - Charitra, Samaraditya Katha, Prabhavaka Charitra, Upadesa- prasada etc.

In this modern age attempts are made to present these stories through books and television serials. But these attempts are made in regional languages. No attempt is made to relate these stories in English language.

To-day many Jain families are living outside India - particularly in U.S.A., England and Africa. For the Jain children born outside India, it is very important that these stories should be made available in simple English. They will enjoy reading these stories and will also learn about their religion. Even children in India studying in English medium schools will love to read these stories in English.

With this intention I prepared some stories in Gujarati language. Shri Ratibhai Shah of Navasari kindly agreed to translate them into English. Dr. Amritbhai Upadhyaya also gave useful suggestions. However due to unavoidable reasons, this publication was delayed.

During the monsoon of V.S. 2049 I stayed at Santacruz in Bombay. There I requested a great devotee of the Sai Baba of Shirdi, Smt. Zarine Taraporewala to edit these stories and prepare a final copy. She immediately agreed and with great care and enthusiasm, she prepared it. Smt. Charu Jalundhwala has carefully corrected proofs and assisted in bringing out this publication. Smt. Jui Shah has designed and prepared a beautiful cover for the book, with great devotion and dedication. I am thankful to all these friends for their co-operation.

I could not print illustrations with the stories. I am sorry for this. In our next publication, I will try to include suitable illustrations.

I shall feel obliged if the readers let me know their opinion about these stories. This will encourage me in my further work.

With all humility I present this collection of stories to make our life more ethical and virtuous.

Lastly, I would like to express my gratitude, on behalf of the "Jain Yoga Foundation," for generous financial help and co-operation, in publishing this book, rendered by our well-wishers and charitable trusts, a list of which is given elsewhere in this book.

Babu Amichand Panalal
Adishwarji Jain Temple,
41, Ridge Road, Walkeshwar,
Bombay 400 006.

Mrigendra Muni Maharaj

25-4-1994

FOREWORD

Story-telling has been as ancient as humanity. Man at first, is a listening animal, later an asking animal. Every child is an intensive listener, allowing himself to be transported into the visionary world of the story. As the story ends, the child slowly returns to this world, carrying the indelible impressions of the message of the story. It is these impressions, gathered and nurtured in his unconscious that guide and govern his conscious.

Every religion, therefore, has utilised the art of story-telling as potent seeds for the growth of spirituality. Jainism, in particular, has an enormous mass of stories, myths, legends, parables, etc. both, in prose and verse. These stories are told, even to-day, in families, schools, theatre, etc. re-integrating the human values, harmonising the sacred and secular strings.

Pujya Shree Mrigendra Muniji has rendered an invaluable service to the Jain community by presenting a few select Jain stories in English, in this volume entitled "Stories from Jainism". The well-known stories of Bahubali, Muni Suvrat Swami, King Udayi etc. are retold in simple and lucid language, captivating the attention of the reader as well as of the listener. The printing is pleasing. The next publication, in this series, assures the inclusion of illustrations and pictures also.

These stories in English, in particular, will be found more useful to the students educated through English Medium both

in India as well as outside India. These stories will help us to preserve and proliferate the eternal values of our religion and culture.

We all owe a deep debt of gratitude to Puja Shree Mrigendra Muniji for his valuable work.

Akshay Tritiya
V. S. 2050
13th May, 1994

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ॐ ऋषभदेवाय नमः

My Appreciation

To Muni Shree Mrigendra Muniji Maharaj;

This Collection of Stories presenting Religious and Historical truth about many truth-seekers is splendid. Those Jain heroes are also being paid great homage by this presentation.

I feel that Muni Shree Mrigendra Vijayji is putting in effort to bring awareness about 'Jainism in various aspects of life', so that all those attracted to Jainism could be inspired with the heroic (Religious) deeds of Jain People.

To be successfully dedicated to this inspiring mission is a good fortune of yours.

I bless you to perform in this mission absolutely blissfully.

24.5.1994

Amiji

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BAHUBALI

Lord Rishabhdeo had a son named Bharat. He wanted to be the sovereign over all kings. Hence, he returned home after conquering all the kings of India. But he soon realized that his younger brother Bahubali was not under his suzerainty. Hence, he sent a messenger to Bahubali, the King of Taksashila to come to him. He hoped that Bahubali would surrender to him.

But Bahubali was not prepared to see his brother, as a vassal. When Bharat came to know this, he was very much angry. He, therefore, ordered his army to march and invade Taksashila.

A long battle was fought. Many people were killed but there was no decisive outcome. Bharat saw that much of his army was decimated. Hence, he felt very anxious.

After the battle, Bahubali went to see his brother. He wanted to know if Bharat had any trouble.

Then Bharat suggested to Bahubali to stop the war and proposed a duel between the two. Bahubali agreed to this.

They decided to wage five kinds of duels. In four of the duels, Bharat was defeated. There remained only the duel to

be fought by fists. So Bahubali asked his brother to attack him first for he feared that his brother Bharat would not be able to bear the blow of his fist. Realizing his weakness, Bharat struck the first blow. This blow made Bahubali falter on the ground; but, then, he soon got up and regained his poise.

Now was the turn of Bahubali. Bharat became fearful when he saw his brother aiming a blow. So forgetting the canons of war, he threw his lightning disc. But the disc returned to Bharat, for it would not kill a relative. Seeing this unfair play, Bahubali got very angry. So he again aimed at Bharat to give him a blow of his fist.

But lo! A wonder happened. He stopped mid-way and did not give the blow of the fist. He thought, "Why should I kill my brother?"

He began to shed tears. He said, "Take my kingdom of Taksashila. I am not going to gain anything by this kingdom of mine for I am after the kingdom that gives external happiness."

Then Bahubali became a monk and began to practise hard penance. He remained deeply engrossed in meditation for many months. And creepers grew round him and entwined his body. Birds had built their nests in his matted hair and beard.

Lord Rishabhdeo had two daughters named Brahmi and Sundari. They had become nuns many years ago. Once they asked their father, "Where is Bahubali at present? Has he attained Kevalgnana, the highest knowledge?"

Bhagawan Rishabhdeo replied, "No, he has not attained the eternal knowledge. He is still in meditation. An obstacle prevents him from attaining that knowledge."

They asked him what that obstacle was. "Well, shallow pride works as an obstacle in this case. He is required to offer his salutations and obeisance to monks senior to him. And he does not want to do this. Hence, he has still not called on the seniors. The moment this ego goes, he will attain the divine light."

Both the nuns went to the place where their brother Bahubali was meditating. They began to recite hymns before him. They asked their brother to get down from the back of the elephant. They sang this throughout the day. They continued to sing even in the dark night.

Bahubali happened to at last hear that song. His consciousness was slowly returning to him. He then began to think. "Am I riding an elephant? Where is that elephant? The nuns can't be wrong."

The meaning of the whole song became clear to him. He realized that pride was the elephant. One cannot attain eternal bliss without giving up pride.

He then looked within. He rooted out his pride. He now had self- realisation. He regretted the pride that had blurred his vision.

Then, giving up his pride he stepped out to see Lord Rishabhdeo, and all the obstacles blocking the eternal light vanished.

□□□

LORD MUNISUVRAT SWAMI

This is a story which is some eleven lakh years old.

There was a king named Jitashatru who ruled in Bhrigukutch (Broach). He began to perform a horse-sacrifice in which his chief horse was to be sacrificed.

Meanwhile, Lord Munisuvrat Swami came to Pratisthanpur, 480 miles beyond Broach. He heard of the animal sacrifice and therefore, he walked 480 miles at night to reach Broach. People had gathered there to witness the sacrifice. So, the Lord addressed them and told them to be merciful. The unlucky horse, too, was listening to the sermon of the Lord. On hearing the Lord's words, the horse began neighing and then it bowed down and circumambulated the Lord. King Jitashatru asked the Lord about the strange movement of the horse.

Then the Lord said, "There lived a merchant Jinadharm in the city of Padminikhand. He had a Shaivite friend called Sagardutt, who had got a temple of Shiva built. One day both of them went to hear the Sermon of the Lord, who spoke on the merits gained by building a Jain temple.

So Sagardutt got a temple built at great cost and he was lucky to fulfil himself through this endeavour.

One day Sagardutt attended a religious function carried out at the Shiva-temple. Ghee was stored in a place from which ants and insects were swarming. They were being stepped upon and therefore crushed. Sagardutt was indignant at this and told the priests to be more careful. Thereupon, the priests scolded him for being a convert into Jainism. These words touched him to the quick and he died of heart-failure. He was then born as the said sacrificial-horse. The dead merchant was no other than "I" now born and known as Lord Munisuvrat Swami."

Then the Lord told the king about the importance of mercy and compassion. Offering of animals in sacrifice is irreligious. So the king set free the horse and stopped the horse-sacrifice. He also prohibited animal sacrifice forever. The horse then observed fast and died. He was born as a heavenly being in the eighth heaven. This heavenly being then dwelt on the importance of religious life by building a temple to Munisuvrat Swami. A sculpture of a horse was set up in front of the temple, in remembrance of his past life. This place was afterwards known as Ashwabodh Tirth.

After many years, a pregnant kite built a nest on a banyan tree on the banks of the Narmada river. She delivered a young birdie. While the mother-kite was out in search of food, she was shot down by a hunter. When she was breathing her last, she heard Navakara Mahamantra uttered

by a wandering monk. She was then born as a daughter to the Queen of Sinhaldwip (Ceylon). The girl was so beautiful that she was named 'Sudarshana'.

Once Sheth Rishabhdudd went to Ceylon and visited the king's court where he saw the beautiful Sudarshana. Here the merchant began to sneeze and he began to utter "Namo Arihantanam" (I bow to Lord Arihant) at each spell of sneezing. On hearing those words Sudarshana recollected her past life. She remembered the banyan tree and the nest and her young ones and her final death as a result of the hunter's arrow etc. So she swooned and fell down. But she regained consciousness. Afterwards, that royal girl came to Broach. She renovated the Ashwabodh temple and got murals painted depicting her previous life as the kite. This Ashwabodh is known as 'Shakunikavihar.'

Thus Lord Shantinath and Lord Munisuvrat Swami rescued the lives of the kite and the horse.

May both these Lords bring eternal bliss to us all.



PRINCESS MALLI

King Kumbh of Videh had a beautiful daughter. Her name was Malli.

One day king Pratibuddh of Koshal went for serpent-worship (Nag-puja) conducted by his Queen Padmavati. Here he saw a garland of many- coloured-flowers. So he at once exclaimed, "What a lovely garland! I have never seen such a garland before."

The King's minister was with him. He heard the king's words and said, "Sir, excuse me. I saw an exquisite garland on the birthday of Princess Malli. No other garland could be compared with it. It was like a rainbow." Then King Pratibuddh asked "I see. How did you like the Princess?" The minister said, "Oh, she is so beautiful." Now, the king was uneasy. He wanted to marry that Princess Malli. Hence he sent a word to the King of Videh, asking for his daughter in marriage.

Around the same time, a merchant named Arhannak visited the royal court of King Chandrachhaya of Anga. He talked of the matchless beauty of Princess Malli of Videh. He added, "On hearing of the beauty of the Princess, I went

to King Kumbh to present to her the earrings given by gods. The king was pleased with my gift and immediately asked his daughter Malli to put them on. I was wonder-struck to see her adorned with those earrings. How lovely she looked!" Hearing this the King of Anga sent a courier to Videh also asking for Malli in marriage.

Now, the Princess of the Kunal Kingdom went to offer her salutations to her father King Rukmi, after finishing her water sport. Her eyes shone like a spring morning; and soon she left her father's presence. Her father was very pleased with her beautiful form. So he asked one of the courtiers if he had ever seen a girl more beautiful. Truthfully, the courtier said; "I have seen the unique beauty of Princess Malli of Videh. She is even more beautiful than our Princess."

King Rukmi was intensely agitated and longed to have Princess Malli as one of his wives. Hence, a word was sent asking for her hand in marriage.

A goldsmith of Videh sought refuge with King Shankh of Kashi. The goldsmith had been banished from Videh as he could not fix a broken circlet of one of the earrings given by a merchant to Princess Malli. On hearing his trouble, the King sympathised with him and gave him shelter. In the meantime, the king asked the goldsmith about the beauty of the Princess, who had adorned those god-given earrings. When the goldsmith compared her to a rose, he was anxious to get Princess Malli as his wife and so messengers were sent to ask for her hand.

One day, a painter visited King Adinshatru of Kuru and sought refuge with him. The painter was commissioned to make a portrait for the play-hall of the King of Videh. While he was drawing the picture, he heard a sound outside the gate. Hence, he turned towards the gate. But before he could actually see who was passing he could only notice the beautiful feet of a woman. From a mere glimpse of her feet, he drew a beautiful portrait of the girl. The king saw the picture and suspected that Malli must have been with the painter. This led to the painter's dismissal from the court. Hearing this, King Adinshatru asked the painter to make a replica of the original picture. And the portrait was duly drawn and handed over to the King. Soon he was also enamoured of the princess and asked for her hand through a courier.

One day, a maid-in-waiting visited the harem of King Jitashatru of Panchal. She talked of the great beauty of the Princess Malli of Videh. The king at once desired to have her as his wife. So a message was sent asking for her hand.

In this manner, six messengers from six different kings gathered in the court of the King of Videh. When he heard the purpose of their mission, he was angry and dismissed them all.

As their messengers were rebuffed, all the six kings jointly attacked the Kingdom of Videh. But the king was not prepared to fight all the six simultaneously. Hence, he closed the gates of his court.

Hearing of the attack by the enemies, Malli, the king's daughter, went to her father and promised to find a way out of the predicament, with confidence. She asked her father to inform the invading kings, separately and individually, that Malli would be offered to each of them. Hence, each should go inside the fort. King Kumbh was impressed by her suggestion.

When these kings got the message of King Kumbh all the six of them agreed and went to the fort.

There was a golden statue of Princess Malli in the middle of the room. Then addressing them, she said "Don't you like this?" And then she opened its mouth. Soon, there wafted out a bad odour from the statue. Then closing the mouth of that statue, Malli said "Our body will betray us one day."

Why did the bad odour come? Malli used to put a spoonful of food into the mouth of the statue everyday, and hence the odour of decayed food.

A voice from darkness beyond was heard saying, "Outward beauty is deceptive. It veils only flesh, fat, blood and the dirty bones. All these give out bad odour."

All the six kings gathered in the room of the princess remembered their past birth. All of them took to the life of a monk. Now they were within reach of eternal bliss.

□ □ □

KING UDAYI

Udayi was an emperor. He ruled over sixteen countries. He was also a just ruler. Hence, his kingdom was prosperous and his people were happy.

One day, Udayi felt fed up with this world. Attachment to worldly things was a hindrance. Hence, he renounced the world. He gave his kingdom to a distant relative and left for the forest. After travelling a lot, he reached a place where Lord Mahavira was camping with his disciples. He felt happy to accept his shelter.

After many days Udayi expressed his desire to visit his kingdom and asked Lord Mahavira to allow him to do so. He wanted to preach to the people known to him. Hence, Lord Mahavira permitted him to carry out his wish.

When the new king heard of the arrival of Udayi, he was greatly pleased. He wanted to treat him royally. After all, he owed his present kingdom to King Udayi's generosity. The whole town was eager to receive their old King.

Then a wicked person met the new king and began to poison his ears against King Udayi. He professed to be the king's well-wisher also. Hearing this, the king became

anxious. He told the king that Udayi was coming to take back his kingdom." That is why he has left Lord Mahavir's abode. All the ministers and servants of the state are in collusion with Udayi. There is a plot being hatched against you."

So the king proclaimed, "No one should give food or shelter to the visiting king. Any person violating this order shall be severely punished."

Now the royal road was deserted on Udayi's arrival. People began to shut their doors on him. He could get no alms, nor water. However, Udayi walked along the roads with a begging bowl. A familiar face slinked away from the king. The king wondered at this indifference of the people. But he was not troubled by what he experienced.

Udayi then went out of the town. It was mid-day and so it was very hot. He faced all this calmly. To add to his troubles, there was not a single tree in sight, under which he could seek shelter.

A little later he arrived at the house of a potter. His wife was standing at the door and she was touched by the sight of a wandering monk in the extreme heat. Udayi told the woman that he could find no help in the town. So she went into the house to ask her husband. He was aware of the king's proclamation and did not want to invite the king's wrath by sheltering and helping this monk. She began to scold her husband when he was found unwilling to extend hospitality to the monk. On seeing the monk, he could not close the door

on him. The potter's wife was sorry to find that the king of the city was not prepared to help the former King Udayi. In spite of the fear of being punished by the king, the woman wanted to help and so her husband too became willing to welcome the monk. They found Udayi as quiet and serene as before, when he was given hospitality by the potter-couple.

His face reflected full equanimity of mind.

All honour to such a detached soul!

□ □ □

5

KING SHRENIK

King Shrenik of Magadh was a very powerful king. He fought many battles in order to increase the boundaries of his kingdom. He was also destined to go to hell as a result of his fondness for hunting.

He became a good devotee of Lord Mahavir on account of his past merits.

One day after hearing the discourse of the Lord, he asked him the story of his next life. He was shocked to hear of his future. The Lord forecast, "You will go to hell on account of your violent deeds". Therefore he asked the Lord the way out of his evil future. So Lord Mahavir told him to do the following :-

1. Ask your maid-servant Kapila to willingly give alms to the Jain monks.
2. Let Kalsauric, the butcher, observe non-violence mentally, physically and in speech for one day.
3. Let Puniya, the holy Bania give his merit of one samayik to you.

The above three things would stop him from going to hell.

King Shrenik thought that the above conditions could be fulfilled. The next day he asked his maid servant to give alms to the monks willingly. So she began to give alms to the Sadhu while uttering that the alms were being given not by her but by the ladle of the king. The king heard her words and felt that it was an exercise in vain.

Then the king dropped the butcher into an old waterless well so that the latter would refrain from slaughtering animals, like buffaloes for a day. At the end of the day the butcher was hauled out of the well and the king asked him how he had passed his time in the well. The butcher said unwillingly that he went on drawing pictures of buffaloes and slaughtered them by the tip of his fingers. Hearing this account the king was disappointed, though the pitcher of the butcher into the well was handsomely paid for carrying out the appointed task.

In order to get the third condition fulfilled, the king went to Puniya and demanded from him the merit of one samayik. The king was prepared to offer half of his kingdom to the Bania. But then, how can one's merit be transferred to others? One must earn one's own merit. Hence, failure resulted in this attempt also.

But all the three failures opened the King's eyes to the fact that what is destined cannot be undone. He thus learnt to accept this truth. This led him to the way of emancipation in the end.

□ □ □

VAJRASWAMI

Dhanagiri was a brahmin who lived in Tumbivan. He had a wife named Sunanda. She was beautiful and a good woman.

Once her husband saw a Jain monk called Singhgiri. He was so much impressed by the monk's words that Dhanagiri left his pregnant wife and became a Sadhu.

In course of time, Sunanda gave birth to a boy who was very lovely. On seeing the boy, a woman of Sunanda's neighbourhood remarked, "Had Dhangiri been not a monk, he would have celebrated the birth of this child with great enthusiasm." The child heard these remarks. Thereby he was so much agitated that he soon began to remember his past life, and he began to cry. Thereafter he used to cry very often and this gave trouble to his mother.

After some time Arya Singhgiri visited the town with his disciples including Dhanagiri. Dhanagiri went to Sunanda's house to beg for food. The child began to cry then. Hence Sunanda said to her former husband, "Look at this child. I am so much troubled by this child. Why don't you relieve me

by taking him with you?" The Sadhu said, I am prepared to take him away, but you should not ask for him again. And lo! the monk duly accepted the child and took him away with him. His Guru found the child rather heavy and hence he was christened Vajrakumar.

A Shravika (lay woman) agreed to bring up this child. She was a religious-minded woman and would recite religious hymns and songs while lullabying the child. He used to listen to these words very quietly. He was now three years old and would speak words full of wisdom.

Sunanda came to know of the progress of this wonderful child and so she yearned for him. She then decided to take him back from the foster-mother. She demanded him from Arya Singhgiri. Having failed, she went to the king to get custody of her child.

The king was a little puzzled at her claim. So he ordered that the child be placed in a corner and his father Dhanagiri and his mother Sunanda be seated in front of the child. The child was then asked to select either of them and Vajrakumar approached his father, though Sunanda had placed toys and sweets near her to attract the child. The child at once picked up the Rajoharan (broom) of the Sadhu. Hence the king duly handed over the boy to the Sadhu. In course of time, the boy was initiated as a monk by his (former) father at an early age of eight years. The boy began to progress rapidly and began to learn the scriptures. He was also very particular in his conduct as a Sadhu.

Now a friendly angel of this Vajrakumar tried to test this boy- sadhu. One day, the Guru was moving about with his retinue of disciples. All of a sudden the sky was full of clouds and it began to rain. After the rain ceased, a devotee asked the Guruji to accept alms. Hence Vajrakumar (Vajragiri) was asked to receive the alms. But the devotee was not a human being but a god. So the young Sadhu came back without alms.

One day all the monks had been out. In the meantime, Vajramuni spent his time practising giving sermons from a raised seat. His Guru returned and was wonder-struck by the excellent delivery of the speech. So at a very young age, he was made an Acharya.

Once Rukmini, the only daughter of a rich merchant of Patliputra, came to hear of the wonderful power of the young Sadhu and she decided to marry him. Her father came to know of this strange desire of his daughter.

One day, Vajraswami arrived in Patliputra with fellow-monks. The rich merchant asked Vajraswami to marry his daughter. This was of course not possible for a Sadhu. When Rukmini approached the young Sadhu to realise her desire, Vajraswami addressed her on the transitoriness of life. His preaching impressed her very much and she embraced the life of a nun.

Once Vajraswami anticipated that there would be famine. So he carried all the people and Sadhus on a magic carpet to a place of safety-where there was no scarcity or

famine. This place was an abode of Buddhist monks. They did not like Jains and hence did not sell flowers to them required for their worship.

Meanwhile, holy days of Paryusana began for which flowers were necessary for worship. So Vajraswami secured lotus flowers from Mahalaxmi Devi. People felt pleased with this. The king also embraced Jainism as a result of his contact with Vajraswami, who breathed his last on the Rathavart mountain by resorting to fast.

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ARYARAKSHIT

A rich brahmin named Somadeo lived in Dashapur. He married Rudraosoma who was a good wife. They had two children. The elder was called Aryarakshit, while the younger was Aryafalgun. The elder son was very clever. So he was sent to Pataliputra (Patna) at the age of eight years in order to study in a Gurukul. In those days Pataliputra was a famous seat of learning.

Aryarakshit learnt all the four Vedas and the six Angas, and became highly expert in the fourteen lores in twelve years.

Then Aryarakshit left the Gurukul for his native place Dashapur. The king came to know of the arrival of the learned boy. So he made preparations to welcome him warmly.

Now, the parents of Aryarakshit also came to know of their son's home-coming. And they were much pleased with this happy news.

As soon as his father saw Aryarakshit coming on a horse-back, he rushed out to embrace him. But his mother was not to be seen among the crowd.

The king welcomed the learned boy and led him to the town on an elephant. Then reaching home, Aryarakshit asked his younger brother, Falgun, where their mother was. Then he asked his mother why she was not glad at his home-coming. At this the boy was told by his mother. "Well, you have learnt things that help in earning bread. This helps one only in increasing the bonds of this world" Then Aryarakshit asked his mother, "What do you expect me to learn?" Immediately came her response, "Dristivada" and the boy agreed to learn Dristivada.

Aryarakshit, therefore, went to Tosaliputra, a great Jain Acharya living in a nearby town. On the way, this boy was given some sugar-cane by a friend of his father. This friend then delivered the sugar-cane to Aryarakshit's mother. On counting the number of canes, she found them 9 ½ in all. This means that he was sure to learn the nine and a half Purvas (scriptures).

Then Aryarakshit duly saw the Acharya Tosaliputra. The former was introduced, as the boy Aryarakshit, who had recently been honoured by the king. The Acharya asked the boy to become a monk before he could be taught Dristivada. The boy agreed and he was then duly initiated as a Jain monk.

Aryarakshit began to study the Acharang and other sacred scriptures. Then he completed the nine Purvas. In a few years this young Sadhu learnt all that his Guru had known.

Then, Acharya Tosaliputra sent him to Vajraswami, residing in Ujjain, for further study of the scriptures. Here

he was advised by an old monk (Muni) to study the Agamas (Scriptures). He was to live in a separate Upashraya in order to study.

On the night of the arrival of the new disciple, Acharya Vajraswami dreamt that some one had eaten all the porridge kept in a bowl. Only a little was left untouched.

While learning the tenth Purva, Aryarakshit asked his Guru how much had remained unstudied by him. Thereupon, he was told that he had learnt only a drop in the ocean.

Then Aryarakshit left the place to see his former Guru Tosali putra.

Meanwhile, Aryarakshit's parents sent their son Falgun to tell Aryarakshit to visit their home at Dashapur. After initiating his brother Falgun as a monk, Aryarakshit left for Dashapur.

The party was warmly received. After a few days this good monk's parents and others embraced monkhood. But his father Somadeo accepted initiation on certain conditions, like the following:-

- i) Somadeo shall put on a dhoti instead of a cholpatta.
- ii) He would put on shoes and will not move barefoot.
- iii) He would use an umbrella to avoid heat.
- iv) He would not give up the sacred thread worn by the Brahmins.
- v) He would not go out for alms.

And Somadeo was initiated on these conditions with a hope that these conditions would be abandoned gradually by him.

Somadeo accompanied Aryarakshit to the temple. But the former had held an umbrella over his head. On seeing Somadeo with an umbrella, the children in the streets shouted "We don't salute the Sadhu with the umbrella." Seeing this insulting behaviour, Somadeo gave up using the umbrella.

Meanwhile after a few days, an old Sadhu died and he was to be cremated by the other sadhus. Other sadhus expressed the desire to carry the corpse on their shoulders, as this act was considered a source of merit. So Somadeo then expressed his desire to cremate the dead body by carrying it on his shoulders, without placing it down anywhere in the forest.

As Somadeo was carrying the corpse, some street urchins pulled out his dhoti in the forest. Though he thus became naked, Somadeo duly carried out the task of the disposal of the corpse entrusted to him. Aryarakshit then gave him cholpatta instead of dhoti which was already snatched away. In this way, his shoes, the sacred thread etc. were also given up gradually. He now looked like a Jain Sadhu.

Somadeo still did not go out in search of alms and he used to eat food brought by fellow-monks. Now Aryarakshit wanted him to give up this silly attitude of not going for alms.

Hence he asked the fellow sadhus not to offer Somadeo food brought by them during his absence. When Somadeo did not get food, he was angry.

When Aryarakshit returned from his rounds, he was told what had happened during his absence. However, Somadeo went out to beg alms, as hunger drove him to it.

Once Saudharmendra went to Mahavideh to salute Simandharswami and heard the description of Nigod (hell). Indra came to know that Aryarakshit was a very learned monk. So assuming the form of an old brahmin, he approached the Acharya and was pleased by the description of hell given. Then Indra went away after sprinkling scented powder (Vasakshep). The visit of Indra to Aryarakshit impressed the sadhus very much. They soon realised that the Guru was indeed a great personality.

Then Aryarakshit left Mathura with the band of his disciples, and Durbalikapuspamitra was made his chief successor.

It was good of this Acharya Aryarakshit to divide the four Anuyogas into separate parts like Charananuyoga, Dravyanuyoga, Dharmakathanuyoga and Ganitanuyoga in order to simplify the sacred texts.

I salute this great Acharya.

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ARDRAKUMAR

Abhaykumar was the Prince of Magadh. Once upon a time, he received a present from a prince hailing from a non-Aryan country. Hence, the Prince of Magadh sent an image of Lord Rishabhdeo to him in return.

The recipient prince whose name was Ardrakumar began to examine the present. He could not understand what to do with it. He wondered whether it was a kind of ornament to be worn on his body. And, if so, what part of the body could be adorned by it? While thinking thus, he stared at the image and a sudden thought flashed in his mind. He realised that his inner being was in unison with the image, and he felt very happy.

This experience left him agitated, and , therefore, he decided to visit India, the land of the Aryans, and to embrace monkhood. But his visit required permission from the king who was also his father.

It was easy to go to India by the sea-route; but, the sea voyage needed the king's permission. He was, however, not allowed to leave by sea. Hence, he decided to travel by land, even though it was a difficult route.

When Ardrakumar proceeded to travel by road he was prevented from going further by the cavalry of the king. He wondered why he was being obstructed.

Time rolled on. He set out many a times on his horse, but soon came back. The people thought that the Prince was not keen on becoming a monk. So, they became lax in their vigilance. One day, he stealthily set out on his sojourn to India, and succeeded in reaching Vasantpur. Here he found the daughter of the Nagarsheth playing with her friends in the garden.

It was the rainy season. Dark, water-laden clouds had gathered in the sky. Their darkness was reflected in her eyes and the darkness of the girl seemed to match the weather. She and her companions began to play a game of choosing things. Some of them chose a creeper; others chose green vegetation, while the heroine of this story chose Ardrakumar, whereupon Ardrakumar was freed from his dreamworld. He gazed at her mutely, and left the place. But no one prevented him from departing.

The girl gradually grew up and her family approached her with a proposal for marriage. She went to her father and warned him not to betroth her to anyone as she was already married for all intents and purposes. But her father laughed at her assertions. She averred that Aryan girls did not re-marry.

Her father, therefore, was puzzled. "How can I find out that Sadhu?", he wondered. "Would he marry her and accept worldly life again?"

Finding her father deeply anxious, she advised him not to worry, but to open an inn (Serai). She said "I have marked lotus-signs on his soles while choosing him. I shall, therefore, be able to recognise him when he comes here."

Her father then opened an inn. After some time Ardrakumar put up at that inn. She saw the signs and cried out "Well! I have found him now!"

Hearing these words, Ardrakumar was stunned. He had, however, forgotten the girl and her choice. But, soon, the garden-incident flashed in his mind. All his dreams about monkhood evaporated and he yearned for her, and took her as his wife.

After a few years, he found that this world was meaningless for him and yet he could not give up his wife.

When she came to know that her husband was desirous of leaving her, she took to spinning yarn on a spinning-wheel. Seeing his mother spinning, her little son asked her. "Why do you spin, mother?" "Since your father is leaving us, this is the only means of our support", she said. Hearing this, the little boy said, "Mother, don't worry. I shall keep him with this yarn, however weak it may be". And indeed that is what happened.

Ardrakumar could not loosen himself from filial bonds. Hence, he decided to be with the family for twelve years more.

After this period he left the home, as a serpent sloughs off his skins. Now he was on his path of renunciation. As he

reached the city of Rajgirhi he found a band of Sadhus coming towards him. He also saw that an elephant had loosened its chain and was running towards him. Everyone thought that Ardrakumar would be crushed. But lo! The elephant bowed at the feet of this monk and then dashed into the forest.

When king Shrenik heard this news, he left his palace and went to the monk. He wondered why the elephant had spared the monk. Then Ardrakumar narrated with a smile what had happened in the past and said, "Man is free from times immemorial. He is, however, bound in fetters as long as he feels so mentally. This is the bond of tender yarn of this world. The elephant finding me free from this worldly bond, spared me and went into the forest where there is unlimited freedom."

Moral : Think that you are free and there will be no psychological bonds for you.

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SANATKUMAR

Sanatkumar was a very strict ruler. He made many kings his vassals and they had to obey and serve him.

He was very handsome. His beauty was matchless. People were wonder-struck by the beauty of his form. Once, Lord Indra began to praise his handsomeness. Two gods heard this and they were curious to see him. Hence, they descended to the earth.

When they reached the earth, they found Sanatkumar taking his bath. They saw the King's naked body and cried out, "What a beautiful body!" They found it like the golden rays of the Sun at dawn. Hence, they stared at him.

King Sanatkumar realised that the visitors were highly impressed by his beautiful form. So out of vanity he said to them, "You have seen only my naked body. See me sitting on my throne. I will put on a necklace with twenty strings of pearls. Then I would be worth looking at."

Hence, the gods went to his court in order to have a second look at him. The king asked, "How did you like it?" Soon came the reply, "A lotus with many petals blooming in a lake!" He was pleased to hear his praise.

While hearing these words, Sanatkumar found that the gods were somewhat agitated. When he asked them the reason for their uneasiness, they said, "Your Majesty, indeed your beauty is unrivalled. But then, you have an earthly body. It is made of flesh, blood and bones. And a kind of bad odour comes out of it."

The king was surprised to hear of the bad odour. He said, "Well, I don't experience any smell coming out of it."

The gods said, "You don't realise it. It is because you are used to it." Then, the gods retired to their place in heaven.

Now, the king felt uneasy. His pride had been dashed to the ground. He thought now of the worthlessness of his beauty. His beauty was due to his body which was after all made of dirty things like blood, flesh and bones. Not a pence would be paid for this body. The body dissolves and then all its beauty vanishes. Time does not respect it and it gets old and disintegrates. It is true that we do not realise its disintegration but, then, disintegration takes place gradually and steadily. A dry leaf falls down into a pool of water. But it had been getting yellow from the day it came into existence. Our human life and youth are also like this leaf.

Days passed swiftly and the idea of disintegration began to gnaw at his mind. He could pay no attention to the administration of his kingdom. He was ill at ease.

One full moon night, he got up from his bed and went out of his palace. He saw the full moon in the sky and walked on the road that led to the forest and the mountains beyond.

There, he began to practise severe austerities. Fasting reduced his body to a mere skeleton. There was no longer the original charming beauty of his physical frame. But then he did not care for the transient physical beauty. He craved for eternal beauty.

Thus, his days passed in penance. Meanwhile, night followed day. he used to hear music of the running brooks, the rustling sound of dry leaves falling from the nearby banyan-tree and saw the stars as they peered through the leaves of the trees. The dim light of the night covered the earth everywhere.

Then those two angels turned up again to see King Sanatkumar. They were sorry to see his body reduced to a mere skeleton. They said, "We are ready to give you your original beauty."

The ascetic laughed at this. Then he pushed his right thumb into his mouth and when he pulled it out, it showed red lustre. From his thumb, emanated light, unseen before. The beauty that had struck them with wonder had now assumed another beautiful form. A smile was flickering on his lips. He then said gently and gradually, "Beauty! Yes, I had that beautiful form. But now I want formlessness."

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KSHULLAKKUMAR.

King Pundarik ruled in the city of Saket. He was fond of luxuries. He was love-blind and so began to eye Yashobhadra, the wife of his own brother. In order to get her, he got his brother murdered. Yashobhadra was shocked at his sinful conduct and therefore she left the city stealthily at night.

She was pregnant and all alone. Moreover, being a widow it was difficult for her to get nourishment for herself and her child. So she embraced nunhood. In course of time she gave birth to a child who was named Kshullakkumar.

When the child was eight years old, he was initiated as a monk. Now this young monk began to learn at the feet of his preceptors but in course of time his detachment and indifference to the world became weak and loose. He became a victim of sexual uneasiness.

His mother was informed about the slackness of this young monk. So she advised him to continue the discipline for a further period of twelve years. But even after this long period, Kshullak was troubled by sexual desires.

He then told his Guru of his mental uneasiness. So the Guru advised him to continue in monkhood for a period of twelve years more. So he led a life of a monk for another twelve years. But it was of no avail. Again he continued for twelve years. In this way he lived the life of a monk for 48 years in great uneasiness. Being agitated sexually, he gave up monkhood in the end. When he thus gave up his monkhood, his mother presented him with a gem- studded shawl and a royal coin. She also narrated to him the story of his past life.

Kshullak then went to the royal court of Saket. Here he saw the royal courtesan dancing. He was very charmed by the graceful movements of the dancer.

As the dancer had been dancing for long, she felt weary and tired. So her mother warned her not to be slack by quoting a verse. It meant, "You have danced well, sung well and thus a fairly long night is drawing to an end. Then why not continue a little longer! Don't be lazy for just a little longer." On hearing this piece of advice she determinedly overcame her drowsiness and became agile and active again. She now began to sing and dance better and was more lively.

Kshullak heard the verse and was pleased at the last part of the rhyme. He mused over the words, "Don't be lazy for just a little longer!"

He presented his gem studded shawl to the dancer's mother and the pair of diamond earrings to the dancer. Then

followed a diamond ring from the minister for the dancer. In this way, many gifts were showered on her. Seeing this shower of gifts, the king asked why all of them were eager to present the dancer before the king could give any thing.

So Kshullak said, 'O King, I am the son of your younger brother. I became a monk and observed monkhood for sixty years. But having been agitated sexually, I gave it up. I had come to you to ask for your kingdom in order to live luxuriously and to satisfy my carnal instincts. But when I heard the verse uttered by the mother of the courtesan, I became disillusioned. I don't want to be back in luxuries. I consider the courtesan's mother my new teacher. Hence I have presented the gem-studded shawl. I also present you with this diamond-ring."

Hearing this wonderful story. King Pundarik said, "O Kshullak, please forgive me. I was also overpowered by sexual instinct in the past, and killed your father. You have opened my eyes. Take back this kingdom. I entrust it to you. May you be happy."

Then Kshullak said to the king, "Uncle, I don't want the kingdom. I have got the real kingdom that I have had earlier. Our soul's kingdom is better than any other earthly kingdom. I shall rule over the kingdom of the self."

Then the king's son also confessed, "Father, I was trying to murder you out of my lust for kingdom. This verse has also opened my eyes. You are not going to live long. Why should I then strike and kill you?"

The minister then said "Well, I had gone over to your enemies. This verse has also warned me against betrayal. Why would I betray you now, when I have served you long faithfully?"

The woman from the audience said, "My husband is abroad and I have been waiting for him for the last twelve years. I was tired of this long separation from him and wanted to seek another man. I heard the verse and it has warned me. Since I have waited for twelve years, why not then wait for a few years more? Why should I be unchaste?"

The elephant driver confessed, "Sir, I resolved today to get rid of you by throwing you from the elephant's back, having been enticed to do so by your enemies. But this verse saved me from sin. Hence I gave a gift before you could give."

All were surprised to hear the different confessions. Khsullak had really opened their eyes. Thereafter, all of them embraced monkhood together.

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PRASANNACHANDRA

Once when Lord Mahavir was putting up in the Gunashil temple, King Shrenik went to offer his salutations with a royal retinue.

On the way, the king saw King Prasannachandra of Potanpur, meditating under a tree outside the town. King Shrenik was full of devotion when he saw Prasannachandra's benign countenance full of bliss and beatitude. He wondered at that king's deep penance and meditation.

After bowing down to Lord Mahavir, King Shrenik took his seat and asked, "Lord, I saw Prasannachandra in deep meditation on the way. I have hardly seen such deep meditation. Hence, I would like to know something about him." Finding Lord Mahavir listening to him, the king then asked, "Where would he have gone if he had died at the time, I saw him meditating?"

The Lord said, "To the seventh hell." All the persons that were sitting there were aghast at this reply. They wondered how that was possible in case of such a great seeker after truth. But the forecast of the Lord could not be wrong, they thought.

Then King Shrenik asked, "Suppose he dies at this moment?"

"Well, he will go to the sixth hell," replied the Lord. Then the king asked where he would go if he were to die that very moment.

"To the fifth hell," answered Lord Mahavir. Then the king went on asking "this time?" And Mahavir said, "The fourth, the third, the second and finally the first hell". Then he again asked, "If he were to die now?" Immediately came the reply, "The first heaven," Then as the questions were asked, the Lord went on saying, "The second, the third, the fifth and finally the highest paradise."

At that very moment there wafted in a fragrant breeze. Drums were heard beating in the sky. The whole world began to experience a sense of rare bliss and joy. King Shrenik too felt a celestial joy. Hence he could not help uttering, "How strange!" The Lord said: "Prasannachandra has cut down all the bonds of Karma. He is emancipated."

The king thought, "How wonderful! Seventh hell is followed by eternal bliss! All the clouds have vanished, indeed!" He again said, "Lord, this is indeed a mystery". Mahavir then said, "King Prasannachandra was in an agitated state when you saw him for the first time. He was thinking of the trouble that would befall his son. He had heard of the trouble coming from the King of Magadh. He thought that his kingdom of Potanpur was besieged by the enemy and it was difficult to save the kingdom from falling

into the enemy's hands. So Prasannachandra took up arms on behalf of his son. But then, he was only in meditation under that tree." King Shrenik then asked the Lord of this mental agitation of Prasannachandra. So Lord Mahavir said, "We cannot concentrate if our problems remain unsolved. He ought to have embraced monkhood after getting rid of the troubles facing the prince. He was indifferent to the world when he renounced it. But he had created another for himself while in meditation. This disturbed his balance of mind, and he could not concentrate in his meditation."

"What happened next?" asked King Shrenik.

"Well, his sword broke down while fighting. And he could not find another weapon. So he tried to touch his crown to throw it at the enemy. But, as soon as he touched his head, he found that there was no crown. He then realised that there was no enemy before him, but, he was only engrossed in meditation. Everything else was illusion. He was only a monk at that time who was meditating in the garden on the outskirts of the town. He soon realised that the outward abandonment is meaningless, if one has not controlled one's self. After all, this world is also our own creation. This realisation helped him to go to the highest heaven in the end. He had succeeded in cutting off all the bonds that had obstructed eternal light."

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ATIMUKTA

Once Gautam, the disciple of Lord Mahavir, was passing by the royal palace of the city of Polasapur. Prince Atimukta was playing with his friends in the outer garden of the palace. Suddenly, the prince happened to see Gautam. To his wonder, he forgot to play with his playmates. Why? He was so much impressed by the gentle figure of Gautam. So he ran to him and said, 'O Sadhu! Who are you?'

Gautam introduced himself briefly by saying that he was a Shraman - a Sadhu. But Atimukta was not satisfied with this information. He, therefore, began to ask a volley of questions e.g, "Where do you live? What do you do? How do you earn your bread? Where do you come from? And where are you going?"

Gautam smiled a little on hearing these questions and said, "We are sadhus. Meditation on the Self is our aim. As to residence, we live everywhere. To get bread is no problem to us. We eat whatever pure food we get. I have come just now from the garden outside the town. Our Guru is putting up there. I will go back there."

The prince then asked, "Can I see your Guru?"

"Certainly. Anybody is free to see him. His doors are open to all."

Hearing this, Atimukta was much pleased. He followed Gautam in order to see the Guruji. He walked a long way along with Gautam and reached the garden. Here he saw Lord Mahavir giving a sermon to the people gathered there. Atimukta began to listen to what was being said there. He heard words as sweet as nectar. They had great effect on him. He then presented himself to Lord Mahavir at the end of the sermon. The prince said, 'O Lord, I seek your shelter. Please initiate me as your disciple.'

The Lord asked him to get permission from his parents and then he would be accepted.

The prince then went to his parents to get the permission. On hearing the prince's request to renounce the world, the king, the queen and all the members of the king's harem were wonder-struck. It was like a bolt from the blue for them all. They tried to deter him from his resolve, by offering various kinds of temptations. But it is not possible to deter a person who has fixed his goal. Hence, they could not make him change his mind. Finally, getting the necessary permission of his parents, Atimukta approached the Guru, and was accepted.

Days passed by. One day Atimukta was going to the town, along with other fellow disciples, to get alms.

It was now the rainy season. It had rained heavily some time earlier. Water was flowing through the channels in the

corn fields. There was a pleasing gurgling of the running water. This attracted the young sadhu and he stood there.

On hearing the sweet sound, Atimukta was reminded of his childhood days when he had sailed a paper boat in a rivulet. His sister Champa had also sailed a paper boat. His boat had reached the bank, but, unfortunately, Champa's boat had tilted and sank. But Champa had cried "Look, your boat is going down." Atimukta had then got angry at her wiliness and given a slap to his sister saying, "You are lying."

Ofcourse, it was a lie on the part of the girl.

Atimukta was, perhaps, lost in his reveries. He came to the running brook very slowly. And he put his wooden begging bowl into the water. He began to watch the drifting bowl and exclaimed, "It is all a lie. Look here, mine is floating along!"

His fellow disciples were wonder-struck at this. They tried to explain to him his reverie. But he did not pay any heed to what they said.

So, all the monks left him there. The monks were now full of doubt. They began to wonder why the Guruji had initiated such a child into monkhood.

It is only the Lord who knows why. He had accepted this child as his disciple. The Lord did not think or act as a common man. His vision was different from that of a layman. Hence, they thought, "We have no right to ask the Lord in this respect."

They, indeed, did not have this privilege to ask the Guruji.

They found Atimukta coming out of his reverie. He thought, "What have I done? I have sought the Lord's shelter to lead my life- boat to its haven. What is the boat that I am now trying to sail in these waters? How stupid of me! I was engrossed in the play and turned a deaf ear to my fellow monks."

As a result of this repentance, Atimukta got the inner light. He was instantly liberated from this world as he was only thinking of the boat of life.

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VALAKALCHIRI

King Somachandra lived with his wife Dharini in the city of Patanpur. One day while brushing the King's hair, she showed her husband a grey hair and cried out, "Look here. A messenger has come!" The king could not understand this, and, the queen explained that his grey hair was the messenger of death.

Then the King enthroned his son Prasannachandra and became a monk. His wife was pregnant and yet she too became a nun. In course of time she gave birth to a child but she died during the delivery.

The child was wrapped up in the bark of trees and therefore was named Valakalchiri. The child grew up and though he was sixteen years old, he was ignorant of the world and its ways. He passed his life in serving his father in the forest by gathering fruits, etc.

One day King Prasannachandra wanted to see his brother. He asked four courtesans to bring Valakalchiri from the forest to the palace. They assumed the form of nuns and went to the hermitage of Somachandra. Here they found Valakalchiri who welcomed the nuns and offered them fruits.

The nuns disliked the fruits and so presented to the young boy the fruits brought by them. He liked them very much and they won him over by feeding him with many tasty things. He was now completely charmed by their ways. The nuns encouraged the boy's sexual instinct by putting themselves close to the boy's body. They also pointed out to the boy that their beauty and softness was due to the urban breeding, bringing up and nourishment. They also asked him to visit their place.

Valakalchiri became ready to go with them. When they were about to leave the hermitage with the boy, Sage Somachandra was seen coming there. So they disappeared in a chariot but the boy remained behind as he was afraid of his father. He then left on foot for the Ashram of those nuns.

When King Prasannachandra knew that his brother could not be brought to the palace, he was very sorry and, therefore, he prohibited music and dancing in the city.

On the way Valakalchiri saw a charioteer and the latter took pity on the boy who was weary and tired walking on foot. He gave him a lift in his chariot. But on the way the charioteer robbed a thief of all his booty and reached Patanpur.

The charioteer left Valakalchiri there in the market-square. Valakalchiri was puzzled to see the unfamiliar place which was quite different from his forest or sylvan atmosphere. Here he saw a harlot who carried him to her residence. The boy was looked after well and he was then married to her daughter amidst songs and dances.

Now the king heard sounds of rejoicings coming from the courtesan's place. So he was perturbed and then came to know that the courtesan's daughter was married to a boy-monk.

The king found out that the boy who had married the harlot's daughter, was his own brother Valakalchiri. So he brought his brother and his bride to the palace. Here the boy soon got familiar with the sophisticated and royal life.

Nearly twelve years passed away thus, while Valakalchiri lived and enjoyed palace life.

One day Valakalchiri expressed his desire to go to the forest to see his old father. So King Prasannachandra accompanied him also. Somachandra was suffering from poor eye-sight but on seeing the lost boy, he got back his vision.

Then Valakalchiri saw his old begging bowl and other belongings in the hermitage. On seeing the begging bowl, he recollected his past life. He was sorry at what he had done by marrying a courtesan's daughter. On account of his repentance Valakalchiri realised his true self and got Kevalgnana i.e. the highest knowledge. He went to Lord Mahavir and got the final emancipation from this worldly life.

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VANKACHULA

King Vimalayash of Dhinpuri had two children. One of them was a boy called Pushpachala and the other was a girl called Pushpachula. Both the brother and sister loved each other very intensely.

But the boy was rather naughty. He would resort to eve-teasing. Hence he was named Vankachula instead of Pushpachala.

Then the king married him hoping that his son's naughtiness would disappear thereby. But to no avail. Hence, the king had to banish him from the kingdom.

He, therefore, left with his sister and his wife. On the way, he was besieged by a gang of robbers. But Vankachula fought and resisted bravely. Therefore, the chief of the robbers was pleased and invited him to be a member of his band of robbers. He soon became a principal member of the band. He used to get large booties for them.

Meanwhile the chief of the robbers died and Vankachula ruled in his place. He continued to live in the lion's den, originally built for him.

Once a Jain Muni visited Vankachula's place. The monsoon was near, and, the sadhu expressed the desire to live in his residence. Vankachula agreed to the sadhu's request provided the latter undertook to refrain from preaching sermons. He feared that his sermons would convert the members of his gang into the fold of non-robbers. The sadhu, in turn asked him not to resort to violence of any kind in that area.

The monsoon was over and the sadhu prepared to leave the place of the robbers. So, Vankachula with his band of robbers went to give a send off to the sadhu. They were now beyond the boundary of the residence of the robbers. So, the Acharya began to preach a little sermon. He told Vankachula to accept a discipline or a vow. This would help him in life. Then four vows were given to him for observance, namely:-

- i) Not to eat unknown fruits,
- ii) To retrace a few steps before attacking any one.
- iii) Not to have carnal relations with the Queen.
- iv) Not to eat crow's flesh.

Vankachula agreed to observe these vows.

One day Vankachula was returning home with his companions after looting, in a big way. All of them were tired and hungry. Some of them brought some fruits from the forest. But since the fruits were unknown, Vankachula refused to eat them. But his companions satisfied their hunger, by eating these unknown fruits. And all of them

except Vankachula died as the fruits were poisonous. As a result of his survival, Vankachula began to observe his vows more rigidly. He felt grateful to the Acharya.

Once, late at night Vankachula returned home and found his wife sharing her bed with another person. Vankachula was enraged and immediately drew out his sword to kill them. Then, he remembered the vow undertaken. So he retraced a few steps. While doing this, he struck himself against a wall behind him. His sword and shield fell down with a clang. The sound awoke the sleeping couple.

But he saw his sister Pushpachula in the guise of a man. He then realised how wise it was that he had retraced his steps. This saved his sister from being killed. Vankachula's wife and Pushpachula had gone to the neighbouring village to see a drama at night. His sister had dressed herself like a male, lest she should be molested at night.

Then Vankachula narrated the story of the four vows, given by the Acharya, which had been helpful in the miraculous sparing of their lives. All of them went to bed expressing their gratitude to the Acharya.

One day Vankachula went, at night, into the palace of the King of Ujjaini to steal. He entered the harem very stealthily but the Queen happened to see the thief. On seeing the beautiful physical form of Vankachula, she at once felt attracted to him and she expressed her desire to have carnal

relations with him. When he came to know that the woman was the Queen, he addressed her as his mother, and remained firm in his vow not to have any sexual relations with the Queen inspite of her threats of having him killed.

Then the Queen resorted to knavery. She hurt herself by scratching her body with her own nails and teeth and shouted and raised an alarm, "Thief, thief." Soon the guards came in and arrested Vankachula. They tied him and carried him to the King. But Vankachula did not think it fit to narrate the true episode. The King, however, was aware of the encounter of the Queen with the thief and had heard the evil demand made by the Queen, by standing behind a veil.

The King was pleased with the right conduct of the thief, and, therefore, he set him free. He then made him one of his courtiers.

One day an enemy attacked Ujjain. So Vankachula marched with an army to defend the kingdom. He defeated the enemy but was badly wounded in the battle.

The wounded Vankachula was treated by the doctor who prescribed eating of crow's flesh. But he flatly refused to eat it. So the King sent for Jinadas, a friend of Vankachula, hoping that he would persuade Vankachula to partake of the crow's flesh.

When Jinadas set out for Ujjaini two beautiful goddesses were seen sitting across the road, sad at heart.

They hoped to marry Vankachula who would become a god after his death, if he did not touch the flesh. “We fear losing him as our husband if he eats the flesh.”

Jinadas, therefore, assured them that their fear was unfounded and that he would ask him to stick to his vow. .

Jinadas reached the king’s palace and found Vankachula in great agony. Here the king appraised Jinadas of his mission but he refused to do what he was told. He advised his friend Vankachula to be firm in his vow. Then Vankachula died with the words “Jineswar” in his mouth and was born in the twelfth heaven.

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CHILATIPUTRA

Dhandutta was a famous rich merchant who lived in Rajgrihi of ancient times. He was respected everywhere in the kingdom. He employed a maid-servant named Chilati. She was very gentle and sincere in her work. Hence she endeared herself to all in the town. She had a son, but, people used to call him Chilatiputra instead of by his original name.

This child was brought up along with Dhandutta's daughter, Sushama. After some time Chilati, the maid-serant died, but, her son continued to live as a member of the family of the rich man.

Sushama came in close contact with this boy and, therefore, began to have a soft corner for him. In short, she was love-lorn and pining for him. inspite of his being low-born for love knows no frontiers of caste or class.

Of course, Chilatiputra, too, loved her but he was rather fickle minded. Hence, he could not appreciate her. He used to pass most of his time in the company of his friends. Often, he would not go to the house, even to take his meals. He would, also, return home very late at night and poor Sushama waited for his return late in the night.

One hot summer afternoon Sushama was waiting for her beloved's return for the mid-day meal. Chilatiputra came home and asked her for water. Sushama was moody, so she said tauntingly, "Haven't you friends to give you water?"

Dhandutta was in the house. He asked his daughter to close the doors on that day. It was meaningless to entertain an impolite person, thought Dhandutta.

The poor girl cried because of her father's harshness but her tears did not soothe the angry boy. He left her place without a drop of water and threatened to carry her away.

Then, one day, he returned to her place with an army of his supporters and friends. Thereupon everyone residing in the street was aghast at this sudden attack. They plundered her house and abducted her before the police could arrive to rescue the girl.

When Dhandutta came to know as to what had happened and realised that his daughter had been carried off by Chilatiputra to the forest, he at once followed him on horse-back with armed soldiers.

However, a storm arose and it began to rain. Lightning flashed. It was difficult to trace the absconders. Again, there were flashes of lightning and Chilatiputra found that he was being followed closely by a party of soldiers, led by Sushama's father.

Sushama fainted out of fear of being caught. Yet, her lover went on and on with her, through the dark forest. Finding the followers close on his heels, he killed Sushama with his sword out of desperation. Blood came out from her

neck and spilt on the ground. He took her head and ran away with it, leaving the trunk behind.

Dhandutta arrived but was stunned to see his murdered daughter. So he stopped his chase and returned home full of sorrow.

Then Chilatiputra saw a Sadhu, under a tree who was in meditation on that dark night. He asked the Sadhu what religion was and threatened to kill him if he did not reply to his query. The Sadhu opened his eyes and found a terrible person with a head in his hand. But the Sadhu was not at all frightened at this. He looked serene and composed.

It continued to rain and the forest roared with the storm. But, the Sadhu heard the sweet musical strains coming from a flute. He only wanted to be liberated, like the birds flying from their nests in the night.

Chilatiputra was immediately freed from agitation, when the Sadhu's eyes met his glance and he heard the sadhu's words which soothed him. He threw away his sword and the dripping head also fell from his hand and rolled on the ground.

Amazingly Chilatiputra found that the Sadhu had disappeared. He was now full of remorse and repentance. He was freed from anger, revenge and agitation. On the contrary, he was experiencing divine beatitude. But his body was smeared with blood. Hence, ants and insects began to attack and devour his body. His body soon displayed only the bare bones, which were consumed by wild animals. But Chilatiputra was no longer in this physical world.

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KAPIL

There lived a young boy called Kapil in the city of Koshambi. One day he saw his mother shedding tears on seeing the royal purohit (priest) riding in a palanquin on the main road. Seeing his mother crying, Kapil asked why she was unhappy. His mother then said, "My son, you would have been riding in this palanquin but you did not study and you remained an ignorant fool. Hence, this learned priest has the good luck to ride in a palanquin."

Hearing his mother's words, Kapil felt ashamed. So he decided to go to school. He then went to the city of Shrivashi and enrolled himself as a pupil of Acharya Indradatt. While at school, he used to board and lodge in the house of Shalibhadra who was a rich person of the town.

Kapil began to make good progress in his studies in the beginning. But, afterwards, his progress gradually deteriorated. Unfortunately, he fell in love with a girl living in the harem of Shalibhadra. So whenever he pored over the *Mugdhabodh* (a book on grammar), he could not concentrate on what was being taught. It was monsoon and Kapil used to think of the beautiful eyes of his beloved,

whenever he saw birds sitting on the branches of a nearby tree. His teacher soon realised the flagging attention of his pupil. So Indradatta asked him, "Why are you so inattentive?"

The teacher got angry and scolded him. The boy resented this and did not return to his teacher for further lessons. He eloped with the girl he loved. After some time, there was an ebb in his love affair. He no longer regarded her as a paragon of beauty.

The girl expected Kapil to present her with a golden necklace, anklets and a silken saree. But Kapil was weary of her and felt disgusted by her selfish love.

Poor Kapil used to go out and work hard to earn a living, but he could not earn enough to buy the gifts she wanted.

Then Kapil came to know that there was a rich man in the town, and he used to give, in charity, two grams of gold to the person who went to him for alms early in the morning. He was pleased at the prospect of getting some gold. He began to dream of the necklace that would adorn the girl's neck and the anklets tinkling round her feet. But this wishful thinking disturbed his sleep at night. Hence, he went out in the dark of the night. He hoped to be the first beggar at the door of the rich man early next morning.

He was the only traveller on the dark road. Finding Kapil alone, loitering on the road, the city guardsman arrested him and took him to the King's court.

Kapil told the king the reason for his going out at night. The king was convinced of his innocence. He asked him what he wanted.

At first Kapil wanted to ask for a necklace, anklets etc. Then he changed his mind and wished to ask for the kingdom so that he would no longer be in want.

Then the king asked him again, "What do you want?" He was about to ask for the kingdom, but then all of a sudden, the scales fell from his greedy eyes and he thought, "Desires are a source of all our unhappiness. Then why not give up desires? Desirelessness brings eternal bliss."

Seeing him absent-minded, the king again asked him to express his desire. Kapil stared at the king blankly and said "Your Majesty, I want nothing!"

Kapil did not return to his house and the girl. He took the road that led to the forest passing by the mountain range.

Oh, what a transformation!

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STHULABHADRA

When the monsoon months were about to begin, sadhus, who were new to the order, went to their Acharya to bid farewell.

One sadhu said, "I shall undergo penance by sitting on the wooden lid of a dry well."

The second one said, "I shall meditate at the mouth of the dark cave where a lion lives."

Then another said, "Sir, I shall do penance at the mountain- chasm where a python lives."

The youngest of them was Sthulabhadra who said, "Sir, I shall carry out my discipline in the dancing hall of Kosha, a courtesan."

Hearing this resolve, all the young Sadhus laughed sarcastically. This was the courtesan whose love had attracted Sthulabhadra and made him live at her place for twelve years, in the past. Well, he had not yet forgotten her, though he was a monk.

The Acharya agreed to the request of the youngest disciple. So, Sthulabhadra went to Kosha's house. On seeing

this Sadhu, all the maid-servants of Kosha came out and saluting him said, "Maharaj, this is a harlot's place." Then they went in to inform their mistress of the arrival of the monk. Kosha was astonished to see a monk before her. She wondered if she had seen him somewhere but she could not recollect. The monk's eyes revealed no carnal passions. There was blissful peace instead.

Then Sthulabhadra said, "Kosha, I have come to you to pass the rainy period." Immediately she recognised him and exclaimed. "You are Sthulabhadra!" "Have you forgotten me, dear?" responded the monk. Kosha was stunned to hear these words. How could she forget a man she had loved in the past? In fact, she used to dream of him, day in and day out. She then began to shed tears and soon fell down on the ground in a swoon.

When she regained her consciousness, she wondered whether she was in a dream. Then Sthulabhadra asked her permission again. She was gazing at the sky, but she could not concentrate, nor enjoy the splendidity of the variegated sky. She thought him to be away from her, though he was near her at that time.

She asked, "Are you going to put up in the dancing-hall?" "Please don't be particular about my stay. I now lead a monk's life." "I know you. Have you not been here for twelve years?" asked Kosha, with sarcasm.

To this Sthulabhadra said, "I was then deeply enamoured by you and had lost all sense of discretion."

"If it is so, then what brings you here? It seems you still love me. But don't expect flowers. Here there will be thorns also," retorted Kosha.

"Don't worry. I am on the right path now", said Sthulabhadra and added, "I will also carry you along that path."

"I see," retorted Kosha in a challenging tone. But Sthulabhadra only laughed. Then Kosha herself waited on the monk at the dinner-table. Her dancing-hall now resounded to the sweet sound of her anklets and bangles. She looked so charming.

But Sthulabhadra was not taken in by her charming ways. He refused to eat from the dish prepared for him, because sadhus don't eat food prepared for them. He would gather food by begging at different houses.

But Kosha did not like his begging. Her eyes swelled with tears.

It was raining out there. Kosha tried to sleep on her bed but she couldn't. Instead, she remembered the days when this son of the King's minister visited her. She had given up loving other youths of the town. She craved for no one other than Sthulabhadra, who left for an unknown place.

Kosha was confident that her lover would not fail to return. Then on the night of Sthulabhadra's arrival, Kosha

went to him. She demanded to share the bed with him. But she did not succeed in her effort.

Then one full-moon night, she began her charming dance in front of this monk. But he seemed not to be agitated. Even the musical strains created no disturbance in Sthulabhadra.

But Kosha was not deterred. She wanted to win him back.

One night, Kosha was playing on her Veena (lute). And Sthulabhadra went to her. He, however, found her pale and sullen. So he asked her to give up her sullenness. He promised her divine bliss. This touched the inner being of Kosha. She confessed being a fallen creature and asked to be redeemed.

After the monsoon was over, all the other sadhus returned to the Acharya. And after a few days Sthulabhadra, too, came back. His face bore signs of severe penance. When the Acharya received him with love and respect, the other sadhus felt jealous of him. They wondered why a man visiting a harlot should be considered pure and worthy. But they could not express their feelings before their Acharya.

At the time of the next monsoon, the sadhu who had dwelt in the mouth of the cave inhabited by the lion, wanted to go and live with Kosha. He was, therefore, permitted.

But when this proud monk went there he found Kosha so simple and pure. There was no bewitchment in her. But, gradually, his penance began to decrease. Kosha found him

absent-minded. She was on her guard now and avoided him. This made this new sadhu yearn for her, more and more. One night, he visited her bedroom and began to gaze at Kosha's beauty. He demanded her love. But she was not prepared to grant him her favours unless he brought for her a gem-studded shawl offered in charity to the sadhus by the King of Nepal.

The monk left and returned with the shawl, brought from Nepal with great difficulty. Kosha at first took the shawl but soon tore it into pieces and threw it out. At this, the sadhu was displeased. He began to scold her for her folly.

Kosha soon retorted, "Why do you give up your monkhood which can be resorted to only after giving up this world and its attachments?"

The sadhu realised his folly as she uttered these words. The scales of amour fell from his eyes. He began to regret his fall. "My character", he wondered, "was not tested in the cave of Parashuram, but it has been tested in the house of a harlot and it has been found wanting."

He was sorry for his downfall. He asked for Kosha's pardon and sought the compassion of his Acharya. He saluted Sthulabhadra and left the monastery.

Our salutations to Sthulabhadra, the conqueror of carnal lust and desires !

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METARYA

Metarya was born to an untouchable woman. He was sold to a rich man at his very birth. The rich man's wife had given birth to many children. But they were all still-born.

Now this adopted son grew up into a youth. Preparations were made for his marriage and he was about to go round the fire, to take his matrimonial vows.

All of a sudden, his real mother burst upon the scene. She began to demand that her son be returned to her. All the people gathered at the marriage ceremony were aghast at this. A great hubbub was created. Hearing the disturbance, the rich man rushed out. He noticed an untouchable woman at his door. He got angry and asked her to go out. But she was adamant and said, "Please don't be so angry. This is my son. I had sold him to you at the time of his birth."

The rich man was a little perplexed at his disgrace but he soon got over the difficult situation and said, "Don't be stupid, you have gone mad."

To this she affirmed vehemently, "No, I am not mad. I am perfectly sane. Ask your wife and you will know the truth."

So Metarya was taken away by his mother. Their house was a hut built of small pieces of wood. Many birds had built nests inside it. In the rear of the house there was a wide space where pigs were found grazing or seeking rubbish to eat.

His mother was happy to get back her son. She passed the whole night gazing at him.

In the morning he came out of the hut and gazed at an unknown creeper laden with flowers. The flowers were as blue as the sky above.

Then all of a sudden he left the hut. Evening drew near and yet Metarya did not return home. His mother was waiting eagerly for her son's return. And, she was sorry for bringing him back from the marriage hall.

Many days passed but there was no news of the boy, who spent three years in practising penance in the forest. He wanted to get rid of his untouchability.

Then one day Metarya went to the king. It was dusk. He introduced himself to the King as Metarya and demanded the king's daughter. The king got angry at this but he controlled himself at the silly demand of an untouchable boy. He asked him, "What would you give to get my daughter?"

Metarya said that he was prepared to give anything demanded of him.

The king said, "Can you build a wall round my city of Rajgrihi before the night ends? If you fail I will behead you."

But Metarya was able to fulfil the condition and won the king's daughter. The marriage took place and people who had left the marriage hall a few years back at the earlier nuptials of Metarya gladly flocked to the hall with their daughters. Metarya was married to all their daughters in due course.

Metarya began to enjoy his new life. There was no untouchability to hinder him. And yet after a few days he realised that all this was meaningless. His changed life seemed to him meaningless. He dreamt of another world. He wanted the joy of the eternal self.

He again left his house not to seek respect of the people but to get eternal bliss. He embraced monkhood.

One day Metarya was seen on the royal road of the city with a begging bowl in his hand. A certain goldsmith was making golden beads. But as soon as he saw the Sadhu, he left his work and went into the house to get alms for Metarya.

Unfortunately, a bird came hopping and flew away with the beads in its beak to the nearby wall. The goldsmith returned with the alms.

He saw his beads gone and then he looked at the Sadhu standing there. The goldsmith asked, "Has anybody come here?" The bird was still sitting on the old wall. But Metarya kept mum and said nothing. He feared that the bird would be killed in order to recover the lost beads. So he remained silent, when asked again about the beads.

The goldsmith thought that Metarya had stolen his beads. So he decided to punish him. He took a strip of hide, dipped

it into water and tied it tight round the forehead of the monk and said "Take this reward for stealing my beads!"

Metarya thought, "If any one is to be punished, then, why should I not suffer punishment for his sake?"

Now, it was noon and the sun was overhead. The hide strip got dry and consequently it got smaller and smaller. This caused unbearable pain. His very eye-balls bulged out, but Metarya's face did not show any sign of pain. He suffered it all silently without a murmur.

Passers-by saw Metarya standing outside the veranda of the goldsmith. They remarked sarcastically. "A Sadhu and that too a thief!" But Metarya was deaf to this.

After some time, his eye-balls came out and he dropped down dead on the ground. The thud of his fall frightened the bird sitting near and he vomitted out the golden beads.

The goldsmith looked at the beads and then at the monk. He wondered at the compassion for the bird shown by the monk. He wondered at the pain suffered by him for the sake of the bird.

Then the goldsmith could not remain at home. He picked up the begging bowl lying near the corpse of Metarya and went to the place whence the Sadhu had come for begging alms. The goldsmith now embraced monkhood. One lamp kindles another lamp!

MUNI NANDISENA

Once there was a Brahmin. His name was Yagnapriya. He lived in Shripur. One day he asked his servant to do some work. He agreed to do so if he would receive the offerings given in the sacrifice.

This servant now began to give to the monks (as charity) what he thus received. As a result of this charity, he was re-born as a son of King Shrenik, bearing the name of Nandisena.

His master was born as a lion in a forest. In the forest lived a king of the elephants, who used to kill new born elephants. He did this lest the elephants born should usurp his lordship in course of time.

Now, the she-elephant who was pregnant thought. "He will certainly kill my young one when born. Hence it would be advisable to hide it elsewhere as soon as it is born." So she began to walk with a limp and followed the king of the elephants.

Thinking that the time of her delivery was near, she went to a hermitage in the forest. Here she was given shelter, and, in due course, she gave birth to a good baby. Then she used to visit that king of the elephants and would feed the young

one secretly. The baby grew up gradually and he began to water the trees of the hermitage. This baby, who was named Sechanak, destroyed the hermitage that had sheltered his mother; for, he thought that, it was not proper for her to give him a secret shelter.

So the hermits complained to King Shrenik against this naughty elephant. But it was difficult to overpower him. Then the king's son Nandisena succeeded in overpowering him, because when he saw the prince coming towards him, he remembered that in his past life he was a servant of this prince. The elephant was then duly kept in the king's contingent of elephants and the prince was rewarded by the king.

In the meantime Lord Mahavir visited the town. Prince Nandisena went to hear the Lord's sermon. Here he asked why the captured elephant was so gentle with him. Thereupon, the Lord narrated to him the prince's previous birth. On hearing the account of his previous life, the prince desired to be initiated by the Lord. The Lord was not prepared to accept him, as the prince had yet to destroy his 'Karmas.' Nevertheless, Nandisen insisted on becoming a monk and embraced monkhood. He then began to practise hard penances in order to get free from the bonds of the 'Karmas.'

One day, Muni Nandisen found that a certain celestial being (God) was trying to lead him to evil ways of life. So he decided to commit suicide, by plunging down from a high hill.

Then he jumped down the hill but was soon saved by that god, who advised the monk that it was meaningless to end life abruptly. He must undergo the full cycle of birth and death.

Muni Nandisen practised hard penances; including going to a harlot's house to beg food. She asked for money and not the empty blessings of a monk. So this Muni pulled out a blade of grass as an act of vanity. As a result of his good merits, there soon began to fall, from the air, no less than twelve crores of gems.

As he prepared to leave her place, she asked, "Have you conquered lust? If not, you must fulfil your lust through me. I shall die if you don't grant me this request."

Realising that he had to shatter the bonds of 'Karmas,' he agreed to accept her. But he pledged to himself that he would reform ten dissolute persons everyday and convert them into monks while living with her. He would give up food on the day when no convert was found. He carried on this mission of conversion for a long period of twelve years.

Once the Muni was, however, not able to convert the tenth person to monkhood, though his dinner time was well nigh over. So the harlot told the Muni to regard himself as the required person for conversion. Thereupon, he immediately left her and did not pay heed to all her entreaties not to abandon her. He went straight to his Guru and again embraced monkhood. He got liberation after practising hard penance in the end.

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NANDISEN (II)

Nandisen was an orphan. His mother died after giving him birth. And after some time his father died, too. Hence he was brought up by his uncle.

Here, also, Nandisen was not happy. He had to work hard all day. And yet his uncle used to nag and scold the boy.

Unfortunately, Nandisen on his part was himself a little dull. He was sent to school, but he ran away from it. He was also insulted by the daughters of his uncle-by his cousins-and this was unbearable. He was considered good for nothing by them.

After the day's hard work, Nandisen was found asleep under the tree in front of the house. His sleep was soon disturbed, as he seemed to hear his cousins remark, "No one would marry such a black lad." These words touched him to the quick. He, therefore, felt sorry and unlucky.

So, Nandisen left his uncle's house. In the night he would sleep under a way-side tree. He had a dream one night. He felt as if there was sun-rise everywhere. Soon he awoke and saw the star, Venus, twinkling. It was about to be dawn.

He got up and went into the forest. Suddenly he heard some one calling him. He was so pleased at this. He saw a sadhu before him. He fell at his feet and asked for refuge. The sadhu welcomed him and said, "Don't be afraid. I think, you will do good things. I shall help you. Do as I bid you." Saying this, the sadhu disappeared. But Nandisen resolved to do what was demanded of him.

He crossed the forest and reached a village, where he saw a monastery. Here he was greeted with a welcome. He was given shelter here.

Soon he endeared himself to all the monks. He served them faithfully. He also began to serve the way-side sadhus, too. His fame spread far and wide. Service of others interested him.

After some time, an epidemic spread in the village. People died on account of cholera. Nandisen, therefore, began to nurse and serve the sick, day-in-and-day-out. He carried on his mission of mercy without feeling weary.

One day, Nandisen came to know of a monk lying on the road and suffering from diarrhoea. Hence, he left his meal and went to care for him. He cleaned the sick monk, whom he asked to walk to the monastery, leaning on Nandisen's shoulders. At this suggestion, the sick sadhu got impatient and began to scold Nandisen. He was not at all deterred by the harsh words said to him by the sadhu. Instead, he offered to carry the ailing sadhu in his arms. Nandisen found the

sadhu rather heavy, and it was quite a task to carry him to the monastery, though it was not far off. His legs began to falter under the heavy load. Moreover, the sadhu was getting impatient at the delay in reaching the monastery. He was groaning all the way. This made Nandisen uneasy. On the way, the sadhu had another bout of stools. But Nandisen remained undisturbed and went on with his dirty load.

While trudging on to the monastery, Nandisen experienced a fragrance coming in his direction. There was no longer the foul odour emanating from the sadhu's body. He reached the monastery. He heard the sadhu, that gave him shelter, express joy at the sense of missionary service shown by Nandisen. Soon he found that his load had totally lightened.

And Nandisen's words, "Sir, I seek shelter!" echoed in the air.

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THAVACCHAPUTRA

It was dusk and Thavacchaputra began to gaze at the setting sun. Flocks of birds were returning to their nests. And then slowly darkness covered the earth. Soon the moon peeped out from the darkness. A gentle wind was blowing through the neem (margosa) tree.

Then he heard sweet strains of music. He heard a chorus being sung and was charmed with its sweetness. On hearing it, he ran to his mother. He asked who were singing and why they were singing.

His mother said, "You know, Sushma lives in the next street. A child is born to her and they are celebrating the event." The boy was pleased to hear this and exclaimed, "Oh, people are singing when a child is born." He then asked her, "Was a song sung at the time of my birth also?" "Yes", replied his mother and added, "Far better songs were sung. There was great merriment, too."

Then, after some time, Thavacchaputra went up to the terrace of his house and heard a song that was tragic and sad. He saw that the moon was pale in the sky and the wafting song seemed to suffocate him. He could not quite make out the change in the musical strains.

He went down and said to his mother, who was also full of tears, "Why are you crying?" His mother wanted to avoid a reply to his question but in the end she had to explain, "Well, Sushma's son is dead. Death has snatched him from his mother. He won't come back." Thavacchaputra was bewildered and sad to hear this news. Then he asked with tears in his eyes. "Do all people die?" He again asked; "Am I also to die?" She was much perplexed at this query. She replied hesitatingly. "Yes, my son. All have to die. I, too, won't be here for ever."

When the boy heard of death and the transitoriness of life, he began to think that the world was meaningless. He was eager to know; "Is there no means by which man may remain immortal?"

Thereafter, Thavacchaputra began to remain uneasy and indifferent to the world. He happened to learn of the road to eternity from Lord Aristanemi and he took to the forest. He left the world to become a monk to seek freedom from death.

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MEGHAKUMAR

In ancient times King Shrenik ruled in Rajagrihi. He had a son named Abhayakumar. The Prince was very clever and a good politician.

King Shrenik had a wife called Dharini. She was chaste and faithful to her husband. One day, the Queen was fortunate to give birth to a son. Being born in the monsoon, he was named Meghakumar.

In course of time, the Prince was imparted good education and skills in arts. As he grew up he was married to eight beautiful and worthy girls.

One day Lord Mahavir visited Rajagrihi where King Shrenik ruled. Prince Meghakumar also went to hear the discourse of the Lord. He was impressed by the words of the preceptor, and, therefore, he asked his parents to allow him to become a monk. Though they were unwilling, they allowed the Prince to accept monkhood. Lord Mahavir duly initiated him.

The Prince then began to pass his days with other fellow-monks. At night he had to sleep on a mat spread by the door of the monastery. During the night some monks

passed by the place where Meghakumar lay asleep. Consequently, dust from their feet used to trouble the sleeping monk. Hence, he thought, "How bad!. These Sadhus don't allow me to have an undisturbed sleep!" He, therefore, thought of giving up his initiated life. So he went to the Lord to narrate his troubles. But the Lord had known before- hand what was in Meghakumar's mind and told him that in his previous birth he had suffered for the sake of the happiness of others.

The Lord began to narrate the story of the past birth of Meghakumar and said; "You were an elephant in the past life. In summer, a fire broke out in the forest where you were living with other she-elephants. Many animals were burnt in the forest fire. You also ran away to save yourself from the encircling flames of fire and then fell into a pond full of slush due to the smog. Here another elephant rushed at you and wounded you by the thrusts of his sharp tusks. You suffered from the wounds for seven days and died in the end. You were then reborn as an elephant in the Vindhya mountains. Again a fire broke out in the forest. So a large area was cleared of the trees, by your fellow elephants. But again another fire broke out in the forest. So, many small animals took shelter in the clearing. A frightened rabbit also arrived there to seek protection from the fire. Meanwhile, your skin was itching and you raised your foot to scratch the itching part. And that rabbit esconsced itself in the vacant space under your foot. Seeing the poor animal, you did not put down your foot but kept it raised out of pity for it. The fire lasted for more than two days. Consequently, your foot got

swollen and you collapsed and died on the spot. After death, you were born as the son of King Shrenik and now you are here as a monk."

The narration of the story of his past birth opened his eyes and he regretted the idea of giving up his monkhood. Now, he decided to serve his fellow-monks more devotedly. He then began to lead a life of an ideal Sadhu. He devoted his time in securing sacred knowledge and practising austerities.

He practised very hard penances and gave up his life after observing a fast for a month. He was then born as Ahamendra god. He would be emancipated in course of time.

Compassion towards all is a great force. This is exemplified in the life of Meghakumar.

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VASURAJA

A learned pandit (teacher) named Kshirkadambak conducted a school. Many students came to him to learn. Among them were Parvat, the son of a Pandit, Prince Vasu, and Narad, the son of a brahmin.

When these pupils were lying on the terrace of the house of their preceptor, they heard two charan munis (monks) saying that among these pupils one would go to heaven while the other two would go to hell. Pandit Kshirkadambak heard this and his curiosity was aroused.

Hence, he prepared three cocks out of flour and gave each a cock asking them to kill it in an unknown, deserted place.

Now, those pupils went out with the cocks to be sacrificed. Vasu and Parvat killed their cocks. But Narad, the Brahmin boy did not kill it. He thought : "After all, God does see what we do."

The Preceptor asked the brahmin boy why he disobeyed him. The boy then replied that "There is no place unknown

to God”. Therefore, the teacher was pleased by the reply. He concluded that there was heaven for this brahmin boy.

In course of time, Parvat succeeded Kshirkadambak as a teacher while prince Vasu inherited the throne of King Abhichandra.

One day, a hunter shot an arrow at a deer but it did not hit its target. It struck a transparent slab hiding the deer. It was a crystal slab. The king heard of this and so the king got the slab placed secretly under his throne. Hence, it looked as if the throne did not touch the ground. People, therefore, believed that due to the king’s sattvik powers the throne floated above the ground. They also believed that the king was ever truthful.

Once Narad went to the school in order to see his former colleague Parvat. Parvat was teaching that “a goat” is sacrificed in a yagna or fire sacrifice. So Narad told him the true meaning of the word “aja” was old paddy and not “a goat”. A thing which does not grow is “aja.”

When Parvat saw that his prestige was being lowered in the presence of his pupils, he bet that either of them would get his tongue cut, if he be declared wrong by King Vasu, When Parvat’s mother came to know of the bet, she felt uneasy and full of dismay. She feared that her son Parvat would be declared wrong and so she approached the king to spare his son as she was sure of the wrong meaning given by

her son. The king then agreed to declare her son Parvat correct. He asserted that “aja” means a goat.

Now, a miracle happened. A big noise was heard before Narad could refute the king’s decision. An unknown god had wrought that miracle. The crystal slab and the throne had broken with a great outburst. The king was hurt and he died, and reaped the fruits of his untruthfulness.

We should not resort to untruth but be truthful in all events.

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SHETH SUDARSHAN

Here is a story that takes us back to the times of Lord Mahavir. There lived a good couple in the city of Champa. A child named Sudarshan was born to them. He was well nourished and nurtured in a religious and cultured atmosphere. He grew up into a worthy youth.

He was then married to a good girl named Manorama. Both of them led an ideal life of good householders.

Sudarshan had a brahmin friend. Both these friends passed their time in religious discussions or in good company. The brahmin used to speak well of his friend to his own wife. Hence she felt inclined to love Sudarshan.

One day when her husband was out, the brahmin's wife visited Sudarshan and said to him, "Your friend is ill and he wants you." Hearing this Sudarshan immediately went to the place of his brahmin friend. As soon as Sudarshan entered the house, she closed the room and demanded of him that he should share the bed with her.

Poor Sudarshan was astonished at her demand. He then said to her, "Look here. I am impotent and, therefore, I am

not able to carry out your wish." Wasn't Sudarshan impotent for other women? The woman then regretted her action and Sudarshan left her house thanking his stars for saving him from an unholy deed.

After sometime, spring came. Both the friends had a stroll with the king in the royal garden. They saw the Queen and the brahmin's wife sitting together in that place. Meanwhile Sudarshan's wife arrived there with her beautiful children. The brahmin's wife wanted to know who the new comers were. The Queen, thereupon, introduced Sudarshan's wife to her. She also revealed to the king how Sudarshan had refused her offer of sexual enjoyment with her. She then asked the Queen to test the chastity of Sudarshan.

Queen Abhaya was a proud woman and, therefore, she decided to test Sudarshan. She vowed that she would die if she failed to pollute him.

On a certain day, the King held festivities in the royal garden. Sudarshan did not attend this festivity as it was a holy day. Queen Abhaya, too refrained from going there under the pretext of suffering from a severe headache and stayed back in the palace.

Knowing that Sudarshan was at home, the Queen caused Sudarshan to be brought to her in a palanquin. She then began to make amorous overtures to him but Sudarshan remained indifferent to all those like a statue.

Finding herself unsuccessful, she scratched her body and tore her clothes and appeared disturbed and dishevelled. Then she shouted out, "Save me, save me". The palace guards rushed into the palace and reported to the King that Sudarshan had been found in the Queen's room.

The Queen also accused Sudarshan of an evil intention to rape her. When the King asked Sudarshan whether the accusations against him were true, Sudarshan preferred to keep silent. So the King thought him guilty and ordered him to be executed on the gallows.

Sudarshan's wife Manorama came to know of the order of her husband's execution and she bore the news with equanimity. She considered that her past deeds or sins were responsible for her husband's evil fate.

But then a miracle happened. The gallows turned into a throne. Gods bowed down their heads to Sudarshan. When the King knew of this miracle, he asked Sudarshan's forgiveness and got angry with his faithless Queen. Sudarshan then placated the angry King and requested him to spare the Queen's life.

The King honoured Sudarshan and allowed him to go home unscathed.

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MAMMAN SHETH

Let us go back some twenty-five hundred years. King Shrenik was ruling over the city of Rajagrihi in Bihar.

One day King Shrenik was sitting with his wife, Queen Chelana, at night on the Veranda of his palace. It was raining and lightning was flashing about in the sky.

The river in the neighbourhood of the royal palace was in spate. Logs of wood were adrift and a man was pulling them out of water. This was seen by Queen Chelana. She was surprised at this sight; for, it was believed that King Shrenik's subjects were happy.

The Queen spoke to the King about what she had seen and asked, "How ignorant are you of your people? A poor man lives in our city and you are unaware of this! How is it that he is indigent and poor, inspite of your able administration?"

Meanwhile, lightning flashed again. And the king saw a poor man clad in loin-cloth carrying a heavy load of fire-wood. So the king called for the poor man and asked, "Who are you? Why do you work so hard when the whole city is at rest?"

The man then replied, "Sir, I am a poor Bania. My name is Mamman. I have a pair of bullocks at my place. Now one of the horns of a bullock remains to be made. So I want to construct it. Hence this labour."

The king wondered what kind of bullocks he had! "Look, how he shivers on account of the wet breeze and cold," he thought! The king wished to get the horn constructed for the Bania. So he asked him, "How much does it cost to construct a horn?"

The man replied, "Well, I can't have the correct estimate of the expenses involved. Better come and see it. I want the fourth one to be made exactly as the remaining three horns are."

The king then went to the house of Mamman the next day. He entered the house and after crossing many rooms came to a dark room. When this room was opened, it soon brightened. There were a pair of bullocks made of gold and studded with precious gems. The horns, hoofs, front, nasal parts etc. were studded with precious gems. The eyes, too, looked real, though made of gems.

The King wondered at the beautiful images of the bullock. He said to the Queen, "Well, our royal treasury does not contain such precious gems. How can I pay for what he wants to be made? I can't afford it!"

Then the King asked Mamman, "How will you get the horn made?" Mamman replied, "Sir, my sons go abroad to earn money for this horn. We don't waste money. Neither do

we waste time. We eat food made from one particular cereal and that, too, prepared in very little cooking oil. And yet we relish the food. Moreover, I don't carry on any business. That requires investment. And perhaps there would be loss in place of gain. So I sell fire-wood pulled from the drift of the river. Sometimes I gain a lot of wood. I hope to make the horn out of what I thus earn. Anyhow, I want to get the remaining horn made."

The king wondered at the stinginess of the man who lived a hard life to save money. In a few years the man died without fulfilling his desire. He was born in hell as a result of his stinginess and possessive instinct.

Possessiveness or Parigrah leads one to eternal damnation.

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NAMIRAJARSHI

In the city of Sudarshan of Malva, there lived a King called Manirath. His brother Yugabahu was the heir-apparent.

Prince Yugabahu's wife was Madanrekha who was very beautiful. King Manirath desired his younger brother's wife. But Madanrekha considered her husband's elder brother as her father. The King, however, craved for her and so began to send messages of love. She was shocked at these advances of the King. Since she did not yield to the King's desire, King Manirath wanted to kill his younger brother to get Madanrekha.

One night, both Yugabahu and his wife Madanrekha were sleeping in a garden. King Manirath went there in disguise. He killed the sleeping brother with a rapid blow of his sword and ran away. But Madanrekha noticed him running away. Yugabahu was born as one of the gods in the fifth heaven after his death.

Madanrekha feared her molestation at the hands of King Manirath. So, she left the city all alone at night and entered a forest. There she gave birth to a child. She wrapped the baby in a shawl and put it on the bank of a lake which she

entered to bathe. She was dragged into the water by an elephant, who then tossed her high up in the sky. Fortunately, a Vidyadhar (god) passing by that place, rescued her and took her to Nandiswar Island. Here she met Manichud, a monk of Vidyadhar and embraced the life of a nun. Her dead husband in the form of a god also appeared there. He bowed down to Madanrekha at first and then to the monk Manichud.

The child was rescued by King Padmarath of Mathura and named Namikumar.

We know that Yugababu was murdered by King Manirath. The wicked Manirath died of a snake-bite and was born in hell.

Since King Manirath died childless, Yugabahu's son Chandrayasha was made the king.

One day King Namirath's chief elephant became wild and it entered the kingdom of Chandrayasha, who refused to hand over the elephant to Namiratha. Hence Namiratha attacked King Chandrayasha, who closed the gates of the town. The nun Madanrekha was in the town and she advised King Nami not to fight back. When Nami knew that the nun was his mother, he gave up fighting. Then he went to see his elder brother Chandrayasha and both the brothers went to bow down to their mother Madanrekha. Chandrayasha then became a monk.

Now we see King Nami enjoying life with his numerous queens. One day he became ill with fever. He felt a burning

sensation, so sandal-wood paste was applied to his body by his queens. The king's illness lasted long - more than six months. He was troubled by the tinkling sound of their bangles. So they took off their bangles and began making the paste by rubbing the sandal- wood. When the king did not hear the tinkling of their bangles, he wondered why it was so. A single bangle on each hand made no sound. The king concluded that possessiveness creates trouble. Hence he considered singleness more welcome. He then resolved to become a monk on recovery from illness. After taking this decision he got deep sleep and began to dream. In his dream he remembered his being a monk in the past life, and consequently a god in the Purusottam Viman (heaven).

Namiraja then embraced monkhood. Then Lord Indra appeared before Namiraja in the form of a brahmin to test him. He said, "O king! why are you so weak? Don't you see your city of Mithila is on fire? You have no pity for the people. Hence turn back and save them." Indra had created an illusion of a burning city.

The king replied, "I don't feel any uneasiness. Nothing belongs to me. The burning city does not grieve me."

Indra then said, "People will die. Palaces and treasures will be reduced to ash. Why don't you go and rescue them?"

King Nami replied, "No amount of worldly possessions give happiness. Desire is immortal." Finding him firm, Indra bowed down to Namirajarshi.

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ROHINIYA - THE THIEF

Lokhur was a very knavish robber who lived, with his wife Rohini and a son, in the foothills of the Vaibhavgiri situated near Rajgrihi.

Lokhur named his son Rohiniya after his wife's name. He wished that Rohiniya would be an able robber like him. So he was systematically trained in the art of robbery.

Once Lokhur said to his son, "Son, please listen to me. A yogi (sage) named Mahavir has come to Rajgrihi at present. He is a magician. People are charmed by his words. Kings and pandits have been influenced by him. Don't go to listen to what he says."

Lokhur feared that his son Rohiniya would stop robbing. And Rohiniya pledged not to listen to Lord Mahavir's sermons.

Then Lokhur died in course of time and his son carried on in life, robbing and looting people.

Now, Lord Mahavir visited Rajgrihi. Many people gathered to hear his words of wisdom. Meanwhile Rohiniya passed by the place where Lord Mahavir was preaching. When he knew that it was Lord Mahavir who was preaching,

he put his fingers into both the ears to plug his ears and walked on along his way.

After going over a little distance, a thorn pricked his foot. So he removed his fingers from his ears and he heard Lord Mahavir say, "Gods don't wink. Their garlands do not wither. They remain some four inches above the ground and they do not perspire."

Meanwhile, he pulled out the thorn but the words began to disturb him.

One day Rohiniya was caught by the Kotwal (Police-Officer) while stealing at night. He was brought to the king who ordered him to be punished severely.

Then Abhayakumar, the king's chief minister, intervened and asked the thief to give correct facts. But Rohiniya was clever and so he identified himself as Durgachand living in Shaligram and he said he was arrested while he was asleep in a temple.

On inquiry it was found that the robber's statement was correct. Now, in order to ascertain what the correct facts were, Abhayakumar put this robber in a palace where courtesans sang and tried to tempt him. The palace looked like the residence of gods. Here he was intoxicated by alcoholic drinks. He was pleased to be among the courtesans. They said that Rohiniya was born there, as a god, and he was requested to enjoy himself with them.

Meanwhile, a servant stopped them from accepting him as a god. He told them to find out from the newcomer the story of his past life.

At this development, Rohiniya wondered if all this was not a plan to trap him as a robber. He then recollected the description of gods given by Lord Mahavir in his sermon. He found the courtesans quite human, for their eyes were found winking and their garlands too were withered.

So Rohiniya thought it fit not to reveal his past. But he professed before them to be a good citizen and said that he had indulged himself in no sinful activities. Then Rohiniya sought refuge with Lord Mahavir, and expressed a desire to become a monk.

When Abhayakumar knew that it was difficult to identify the real robber, he went to Lord Mahavir and asked him about the captured man. Abhayakumar was told that Rohiniya was a thief but he had become a monk now.

So instead of punishing Rohiniya, he was set free by King Shrenik before whom Rohiniya revealed his past history and agreed to return the stolen goods.

A few words heard from Lord Mahavir saved the robber from being killed. Hence Rohiniya duly embraced monkhood.



WISDOM OF ROHINI

There lived a merchant in Rajagrihi long, long ago. His name was Dhanna Sarthawah, He had four sons who had their respective wives. The wives were known by the names of Ujjika, Bhogavati, Raxita and Rohini.

One night Dhanna began to think of the future of his family after his death. He wondered whether his family would continue to enjoy its past glory and prosperity.

He gave five grains of paddy to each of his daughters-in-law in order to test their efficiency and ability as good householders.

Next day, Dhanna gave a dinner party to all his friends and relatives. After the dinner he asked his senior most daughter-in-law Ujjika to keep the five grains with her and to return them to him when asked for. Similarly each of the remaining daughters-in-law was also given grains of paddy.

The first daughter-in-law threw away the grains thinking that she would easily return them from her granary when demanded.

The second, Bhogavati, ate up the grains after dehusking them. The third, Raxita, kept them well stored in a box. The youngest Rohini sowed them in the field. Then

reaping the grown crop, she again sowed them. As a result, after four years the stock of paddy grains grew into a big quantity.

During the fifth year, the merchant asked all his daughters-in-law to return to him the grains. So Ujjika gave five grains of paddy from her granary. Dhanna was displeased with what she had done with the grains. Then he asked her to look after the sweeping, cleaning and other manual work in the household.

The second, Bhogavati, who had eaten up the grains was asked to dehusk paddy grains, to cook food and wash dishes after the meals were eaten by the family.

The third, Raxita, returned the grains from the box. Seeing her carefulness in storing, Dhanna asked her to work as a cashier of the house. She was to be in charge of the treasury.

The last, Rohini, returned the grains by cartloads as they had multiplied a great deal by farming. The merchant was pleased with her and began to praise her fore-sight. She was to be the guiding, supervising and controlling member of the family.

Lord Mahavir explained the moral of this story. He asked his pupils to observe the five-fold disciplines in a way that would strengthen them. They were not to follow the ways of other three daughters-in-law, who merely wasted them or put them to no better use.

READY WITTED ROHAK

Bharat was an acrobat who lived in a small village near the city of Avanti. He married a woman who died after giving birth to a son named Rohak. Then he married another woman, who showed a step-motherly attitude to the little boy and did not even feed him properly. The boy had a ready wit. Once he told his step-mother, "You don't look after me. So I shall teach you a lesson in the future."

One night, Rohak got up suddenly from his bed and shouted, "Look there, some person is running away from our house." These words poisoned his father's mind and he concluded that his wife was faithless. And Bharat, therefore, ceased to love her.

The woman realised that her step-son must be at the root of her husband's indifference to her. So she begged of her son Rohak to pardon her and so the boy wished his father not to be devoid of affection for his mother.

One night when there was moonlight, he cried out, pointing to his shadow "Father, look here. Some person is going out."

Hearing these words, Bharat said to the boy, raising a sword in his mind, "Where is it?" The boy then pointed out to the shadow and said, "I have caught him here."

Seeing the shadow, the acrobat got wild and concluded that there was no real man going out of his house on the previous occasion also; and he was sorry for believing that his wife was faithless. So, he began to be kind and caring to her again.

One day, Rohak went to the city of Ujjain with his father. After moving about in the city, Bharat went back leaving his son on the banks of the river. The boy lived there. He drew a picture of the city in the sands of the river-bank with his fingers. The king saw the picture drawn by the boy. He was highly impressed by this skill of the boy. The king then wanted to test the boy as he wanted a clever minister.

He, therefore, called for all the acrobats of his kingdom and said, "There is a big slab of stone outside your village. I want you to convert it into a throne for me without displacing it."

All the acrobats were puzzled at this difficult task. Rohak heard of the king's order and so he asked the people to dig under the slab and plant pillars under the slab to support it. The king was pleased to note that Rohak's ingenuity was responsible for creating that wonderful throne.

Then he asked the people to see that a goat given to them should neither increase nor decrease in its weight after a fortnight.

So Rohak caused the goat to be tied to a tree near a wolf and the goat was fed daily and at the end of the fortnight the goat was found to be exactly of the same weight as previously.

Then the king asked people to conduct a fight between a cock sent by him with another imaginary cock. So at Rohak's instance they placed a mirror in front of the cock and the cock began to peck at its own reflection very violently.

The king then asked them to make ropes from the sands of the river. So at the suggestion of Rohak the king was asked to send old models as specimens to them for making ropes. Hearing this message, the king acknowledged defeat.

Then the king sent an old elephant on the brink of death to the people and told them to inform him of the state of the elephant without using words such as, "The elephant is dead". When the elephant died Rohak sent a message saying; "Your elephant neither sits, nor gets up, nor eats, nor moves!"

The king asked the acrobats to send the well of their village to the court, as its water was very sweet and potable. Thereupon the people asked the king to send them a well of his city so that the rural well could accompany it.

Then the king asked them to cook porridge without the aid of fire. So they put the rice in a pot full of water and milk and kept it in the sun. It was noon and the porridge was ready.

Rohak told the king many secrets of nature.

He told the king why a goat gave out round pills of excreta. It was due to the wind known as 'Samwartak' in the bowels of the goat.

He also told the king that the tail of a squirrel was as long as its main body.

One day, the king asked Rohak how many sires had been responsible for his birth. The boy then said that the king was sired by five persons; viz., (1) Kuber from whom the king knew generosity (2) An untouchable or 'Chandal', as the king was full of anger at his enemies (3) A Dhobi (Washerman), as he knew how to wring people dry of their wealth (4) A scorpion, as he troubled a sleeping child (5) and, finally, his own father who had sired him.

The king then appointed Rohak as his chief minister.

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MAHAMANTRI PETHADSHAH

Let us go back in the past. It was the first half of the fourteenth century of the Vikram Era. There was not a single Jain temple in the capital city of Devagiri in the south. Hence Pethadshah wanted to erect a Jain temple there. It was necessary to get permission of King Ramadeo and his minister Hemadri for this purpose.

In order to be in the good books of the royal minister, Pethadshah opened a free boarding centre in the city of Omkarpur. Visitors from far-off places were given free food at this centre. The centre was named after the royal minister.

Hemadri heard of this centre and so one day he visited it. He learned that the centre had been started some three years back by Pethadshah, who had already spent large sums of money over its maintenance.

Hemadri wondered why his name was associated with the centre. He was, therefore, eager to see the man who was so generous. He went to see that minister of Malva and called upon him. Pethadshah asked the visitor to grant him land in order to build a temple in the city of Devagiri.

But the brahmins of the city did not want a Jain temple to be built there. When the foundation stone was being laid, a stream of drinking water sprang up. There was scarcity of drinking water in that area. Hence, the brahmins requested the king to confiscate the given land.

When the king inquired into the matter, he found that the water was not potable. He wondered why this strange phenomenon had occurred.

But being far-sighted, Pethadshah had got many salt-bags thrown into the stream. The water was found brackish by the king and the evil desire of the brahmins did not succeed. Thus they were disheartened.

Pethadshah's generosity was acclaimed everywhere and so was the glory of Jainism.

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AN IDEAL COUPLE

Arhadas was a merchant who lived in Bhadreshwar of Kutch district of Gujarat. His wife, Arthadasi was a worthy lady. They had a son called Vijay.

One day, the boy heard of the importance of chastity or continence. This discipline prohibits one from sexual intercourse in the bright half of the Hindu month.

Now, a very rich merchant by the name of Dhanavah lived in the same city. His wife was beautiful and religious-minded. She had a daughter named Vijaya. She was married to a good man. It was a perpetual honey-moon for them. The couple had a lovely talk of love. But the husband told Vijaya that he had undertaken a vow not to co-habit in the bright half of the month.

Hearing this Vijaya became dismal and uneasy. Then she told him that she was under the vow of observing chastity in the dark half of the month. Hearing this, her husband stared at her blankly. So Vijaya told her husband, "Well, you can marry another woman. I don't object to it."

Vijay, the husband, thereupon said, "Well, I wanted to be a monk. But I am uneasy for your sake." He also said there is no meaning in carnal enjoyment. Even birds and animals indulge in it, easily. Let us then observe celibacy without any

hitch. Of course, we shall not let anyone know of our vow. And we shall renounce the world and take to monkhood as soon as our secret vow comes out in the open."

Though they shared the same bed, they were not sexually excited nor did they yearn for conjugal bliss. Here was platonic love exemplified by this unique and ideal couple.

Meanwhile, a Kevati Muni named Vimalsen visited their town. After the discourse, a merchant named Jinadas said, "Sir, I want to feed 84000 Sadhus. When shall I realise my aim?"

The Muni said, "It is next to impossible to have so many Sadhus at one time at your place. And how can so many monks be fed at your place?"

Then the learned Muni Vimalsen told him of the ideal couple living in Kutch. He told him to feed that couple for a day with great respect and sincerity. Feeding them would be equivalent to feeding 84000 Sadhus.

Learning this, Jinadas went to Bhadreswar to request the couple to be his guests. The couple then partook of food at his place.

When Jinadas' parents came to know of the wonderful vow (discipline) observed by the couple, they were struck with wonder. And this couple renounced the world to embrace monkhood as their vow came to be known by Jinadas and his parents. Both of them got emancipation in the end.

SULASA

During the reign of King Shrenik of Magadha, there lived Nagarasarthi with his wife Sulasa in Rajagrihi. They had unfortunately no children and so he felt very unhappy.

One day Lord Indra happened to hear from the people high praises of Sulasa. But the Commander-in-Chief of Lord Indra, named Harinaigamesi doubted her character. So he descended on the earth, assuming the form of two monks. They stood before Sulasa's house. They asked for medicinal oil that had been boiled a hundred times, for massaging one of their fellow-monks. But as she was about to offer the bottle of this oil, it slipped from her hands and fell down, spilling all the oil. Hence she went to fetch another bottle and that too broke down. In this way all the seven bottles that she brought dropped and broke. So she was very sorry.

The gods revealed to her their real identity and blessed her with children if she swallowed thirty-two pills. These pills would help give birth to thirty-two children. But she took all the pills together and she gave birth to 32 children at the same time. These children grew up and began to serve King Shrenik as his body guards.

Now during that period King Chetak (Cheda) ruled over Vishala. He had seven daughters among whom Sujestha was the seniormost. She was very beautiful. King Shrenik came to know of her beauty and wanted to marry her. Realizing that King Chetak was not prepared to marry his daughter with him, Shrenik's minister Abhayakumar undertook to bring her for the King. He assumed the form of a merchant and placed King Shrenik's photo in his shop. He used to garland it everyday. Maids of the Princess Sujestha saw the picture and they took the picture to their Princess who felt enamoured by him.

Then an underground tunnel was dug and Princess Sujestha, alongwith her sister Chelana, left the palace to meet King Shrenik.

Meanwhile, hearing this, soldiers of King Cheda rushed into the tunnel. In the scuffle all the 32 sons, (serving as guards of King Shrenik) were killed. Sulasa was shocked to hear of the death of all her sons.

Once Ambad (a monk) went to Champapuri to pay his obeisance to Lord Mahavir. Then he took leave of the Lord for Rajgrihi where Sulasa lived. He was asked to give her the greetings of the Lord. So he wondered and wanted to test that woman. Hence he created an illusion of being Lord Brahma. All the people went to see Lord Brahma but Sulasa abstained from going to see him.

The next day he assumed the form of Lord Shankar but Sulasa was not attracted by the illusion. Then Ambad

assumed the form of Lord Vishnu; but to no purpose. For, Sulasa was not cheated by this. Hence he assumed the form of Tirthankar. This also did not attract or allure Sulasa.

Then Ambad appreciated her firm faith in God. He soon went to Sulasa to convey greetings of Lord Mahavir. She was very happy to hear the message of greetings. She began to bow down in the direction where the Lord Mahavir was.

Sulasa breathed her last and was emancipated from the cycle of birth and death. She will be born as the 15th Tirthankar Nirmam in the coming series of twenty-four tirthankars.

What a great devotee Sulasa was!



NAGILA

Long ago there lived two brothers. One of them was Bhavadev, while the other was called Bhavadutta. The latter had become a monk while the former remained at home.

Bhavadev married a beautiful woman. Her name was Nagila. Bhavadev loved her ardently. He was in fact besotted by her. He used to pamper her. He would touch her chin and say, "My dear, you are my Indrani" - (the wife of the Lord of gods).

Nagila, too, loved her husband deeply. She would also reply, "Well, you are everything to me."

It was the month of Falgun, i.e. March, and flowers bloomed profusely. She sat before her husband. Her locks of hair shone in the sun. Her sari was fluttering in the breeze and petals of a fallen flower lay spreading before her.

At this time, she heard the sound of some one knocking on her door. Bhavadev got up to answer the call. And there came his elder brother clad in the apparels of a monk. This brother of his had embraced monkhood in his early age. But then both the brothers had deep love for each other. Hence, Bhavadev was pleased to see his brother after so many years.

Both of them sat there talking for a long time.

Then, the monk got up to take leave of his brother. So Bhavadev went to see him off. He took up the monk's begging bowl and accompanied him for some distance. They crossed the outskirts of their village and were on the brink of a forest. But the monk did not ask to return the begging bowl. Nor did Bhavadev seek premission to leave him, though he was eager to go back to his wife. He thought, perhaps, his wife might be waiting for his arrival.

Now, the other monks of the monastery saw Bhavadev with a bowl coming with Bhavadutta. They were very glad at this. Their Acharya began to think of the day of initiation of the new comer. Here Bhavadev thought it proper not to express his unwillingness to accept the life of a monk, for that would be taken as an insult by his younger brother. Yet, there was Nagila, whom he could not forsake.

Inspite of this dilemma, Bhavadev accepted monkhood. He thought he would remain in the monastery as long as his brother was alive, and then, he would go back to his wife.

After a period of twelve years Bhavadutta breathed his last and so the new monk took the homeward route all alone at night. He reached home before dawn.

Then Bhavadev saw two women, standing at an old well situated on the road leading to his home. This route passed through a mango grove. These women had a basket of flowers in their hands.

Bhavadev feared that his house might be broken or perhaps there would be no Nagila there. If so, he would find his house without Nagila most distressing. Hence, he wanted to ask those women about her. He would go back to the monastery, if she were not at his house.

Then he asked one of the women about Nagila. But he had inadvertently asked the question of his own Nagila, who said, "Don't you know me?"

He noticed her disarming smile.

Bhavadev left many years ago on a day of spring. It was also spring on his arrival. He immediately said to her, "Well, my darling, I am ever yours."

Then Nagila asked with a smile whether, she looked her former self. But he could not make out the true meaning of her words. Hence, he continued "Well, I have thought of no other woman all these twelve years."

Nagila then felt ashamed. She wondered if she was worthy of his love. But Bhavadev told her, "Let us go home." She then replied, "There is no place which can accommodate both of us."

It was dawn and Bhavadev was absorbed in watching the first rays of the rising sun over the blue mountain.

He asked her with a misgiving, "Is there really no place?" Nagila asked him, "How can we live together? Do

you expect me to see you violating your sacred vow of monkhood? Of course, I still love you." He was deeply moved at what she said. She forgot her pain of long separation. He began to stare at her face. He found her so perfect and so grave. Her true love was no longer selfish. She wanted to see her husband going to the path of emancipation. Bhavadev realised that his Nagila was above the earthly standards of love. She was above the plane of physical love.

So, once again, he set out for the monastery.

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JINARAKSHIT AND JINAPAL

King Konik, the son of King Shrenik ruled in Champapuri, some twenty five centuries ago.

Here also lived a rich merchant named Makandiya. His wife Bhadra had two sons : Jinarakshit and Jinapal. Both the sons were very adventurous. They went overseas and earned a lot of money.

One day, both the sons asked their father to allow them to go abroad again. But their father Makandiya did not approve of their plan. He talked to them about the difficulties and troubles to be faced in a sea-voyage. But the sons persisted in their decision and sailed away.

On the way, their ships met with a disaster. They were caught in a sea-storm. The ships were wrecked and cargo worth many thousands of rupees was lost. Both the brothers also began to sink into the sea. But fortunately, they got hold of a broken plank and reached the shore of Ratnadwip.

Now, there was a place in the middle of this island. A witch (evil spirit) named Ratna lived in that place. There were four gardens in the four corners of it. Ratna saw the two men in a sad and forlorn state. She thought that she was lucky

to get good victims for her evil designs. Hence raising her sword in the air, she asked them to enjoy sexual life with her. She also threatened to kill them if they declined. Being afraid of her, they agreed to obey and carry out her wish. Then they lived happily with her.

One day, Indra, the Lord of the Gods ordered Ratna to clear all the refuge round about the island. Then she asked both the brothers to move in the eastern garden but told them not to visit the southern one as it was inhabited by a poisonous snake.

Ratna, then, disappeared and the two men were curious to visit the prohibited part. As they approached it, they found foul smell coming from dead bodies. As they proceeded further, they saw a gallows, on which a man was hanging, crying and weeping.

The two brothers asked him the cause of his trouble. So he said, "I am a citizen of the city of Kakandi situated in Bharatkshetra. I am a merchant trading in horses. I was shipwrecked and came floating here. The witch of this place took me to her palace and enjoyed herself with me. As soon as she got you two brothers as her source of enjoyment, she hanged me on the gallows. Perhaps, you will also meet with the same fate that I have."

Then the man told them to get out of trouble. A Yaksha (demi- god) lived in the eastern garden. He would rescue them if they prayed for help. They did as advised. The Yaksha assumed the form of a horse and flying in the sky, took them to their city of Champapuri.

When Ratna (the witch) returned, she did not find her recent victims. So she searched for them everywhere on the island. She found them out, riding on horse-back driven by the Yaksha. So she rushed with a sword at them. She threatened to kill them if they did not return to her. Finding them undeterred, she began to entreat them not to forsake her. At this, Jinarakshit was softened. So she told him that she loved him more than his brother. She also pointed out to him that she would drown herself in the sea. Finding Jinarakshit more love-lorn, the Yaksha dropped him into the sea and proceeded with Jinapal.

When Jinarakshit fell into the water, the witch rescued him and tossed him in the sky for disregarding her. So he died.

Then Ratna tried to allure Jinapal but he was adamant. Hence she returned to her abode.

Yaksha then duly put Jinapal in the city of Champapuri. He told his parents the story of how he returned safely and how his brother had lost his life.

While moralising on this parable, Lord Mahavir said, "Jinarakshit became unhappy by easily getting tempted into worldly, carnal desires. Hence you should keep away from worldly temptation. Then you will be able to get emancipation."

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DHANNA AND SHALIBHADRA

One day a certain merchant visited the court of King Shrenik of Magadh. He was dealing in costly shawls studded with gems. The king examined them and found them as light as feathers. Therefore, he exclaimed, "How wonderful!" Hearing this, the merchant added, "Your Majesty, these are wonderful shawls. They protect one both from cold and heat."

Then the king sent one of them into his harem. Here it was examined by his chief Queen, Chelana. She asked one of her maid-servants to tell the king that she would be glad to have it.

But as the king found the shawls costly, he did not buy them. In fact he had not the necessary amount of money in his royal treasury. He, therefore, told the merchant, "I am sorry, I can't buy your goods."

Then the merchant walked up and down the royal road to sell them. At last, he stopped at the house of Shalibhadra, a rich citizen of Rajgrihi. The vendor exclaimed in despair, "What a grand palace I saw! But then it is strange that there is nobody to buy my goods."

Hearing these words, the mother of Shalibhadra came down. Her name was Bhadra. She said, "Why are you so sad? Well, I will buy all your shawls."

The merchant thought that the old woman was under some illusion. So he said, "Mother, these are worth not less than twenty lakh gold coins!"

But Bhadra said, "Do not worry about it." Yes, cost was no consideration for her. She, however, was found worrying as there were only sixteen shawls. She wanted thirty-two; for she had thirty-two daughters-in-law. Therefore, she divided them into thirty-two pieces and distributed them to each of the daughters-in-law.

When the king went home at night, he found that no lamps had been lit in the harem. Nor did the Queen comfort and greet the king with welcome. She was very displeased.

The king asked her, "What is the matter?" Chelana then retorted, "Please build a hut for me and I shall go away to live there". When the king insisted on her being more precise, she turned her back to the king. He soon realised the root of the trouble and therefore said, "Well, I am asking the merchant to bring his shawls. After all, I will have to buy them, no matter how empty my treasury is! Only, then, I can have peace of mind."

On inquiry, the merchant was not found. It was known that all his goods had been sold to Shalibhadra. This news staggered the king. He exclaimed, "Is Shalibhadra so rich?"

The next day the king sent word to Shalibhadra to send one shawl and also the cost to be paid for it.

On getting the king's message, Bhadra said, "The shawls are not in my house. They have been cast away. My daughters-in-law are not used to use an article more than once."

Hearing this from the messenger, the king decided to call on Shalibhadra who was so rich.

The next day King Shrenik went to Shalibhadra's house with all his retinue. Bhadra welcomed them all royally. Then she accompanied the king to the harem.

But Shalibhadra's palace had seven storeys. The first floor was supported on golden pillars with a golden ceiling above them. Here lived his servants and maid-servants. The king ascended the different storeys and reached the fifth floor. It had walls made of gold and birds of gems were placed there. There were also fruits of pearls and leaves of sapphire.

The king was tired and expressed his inability to climb up the remaining storeys. Hence Bhadra went up to fetch her son. But, strange to say, her son had never gone down stairs. And his business was looked after by his mother. He did not like to see people other than his household servants. Hence he was astonished to see his mother at this odd hour, who said, "Son, the king has come." Thereupon Shalibhadra said, "Why has he come?" Then the mother replied, "Well the king wants nothing; he has come to see you, hearing your fame spreading far and wide." The son then asked if there

was any harm if he refused to see him. His mother then explained to him. "After all, he is the king who rules over us and protects all. His order cannot be disobeyed." Then Shalibhadra asked whether the king also lorded over him. When the son came to know that the king was the master of all, he got grave and said, "Then I am not all-in-all. I have also a master over me!"

The king duly had an audience with Shalibhadra and left for his palace. Shalibhadra felt agitated even after the king had left him. He found that the charm of his life was lost.

Hence he told his mother, "I don't want this limited lordship. I want to be the lord of all." Hearing this, his mother became uneasy. She remembered the day when her husband had left the place.

Then, Bhadra said to her son, "The road to suzerainty is not so easy. It is not possible for you to become a monk. Can you walk bare-footed? There will be trouble at every step. Can you face all this?" Then the mother was overpowered with emotion and said, "Look here son, there is immense prosperity for you. What do you lack in life?"

Shalibhadra replied, "I want only your blessings." His mother then pointed out that it was not possible to renounce the world all of a sudden. He should renounce it step by step. She was sure that past impressions of uneasy life would come in his way before leaving.

One day Shalibhadra's sister Subhadra was attending on her husband. And a tear rolled from her eye and dropped on

her husband, Dhanna. So Dhanna asked her, "Why are you crying?" She said, "My brother Shalibhadra is going to be a monk. He is leaving his wives one by one to take to monkhood."

Dhanna laughed at this news and remarked, "It is silly to act like this. If you feel indifferent to the world, you must give it up immediately."

Hearing this, his wife Subhadra was shocked. She thought her husband was an ordinary person. So she bawled out, "My dear, it is easier said than done. Can you renounce it?"

Immediately, her husband responded with a "Yes" and left the home in no time. Nothing could stop him from his decision.

Subhadra swooned and fell down on the road which Dhanna had taken. All her requests, entreaties, apologies and tears bore no result.

Shalibhadra came to know about the renunciation of his brother-in-law and he too took the way of monkhood.

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DHANNA (SARTHAVAH) AND VIJAY

This is an old story which took place two thousand years ago! In those days the city of Rajagrihi was very famous as the captial of Magadh (in Bihar). King Shrenik ruled there.

There was a beautiful garden named "Gunashil" outside the city. There was a settlement of robbers near this garden.

There lived a Sarthavah (merchant) named Dhanna who lived in that city. He was very prosperous and happy. He had a wife named Bhadra. This couple was very happy but they had no child.

The merchant had a servant known by the name of 'Panthak'. He was good at playing with and fondling children. He enjoyed their company.

A famous robber, named Vijay, lived in the locality of robbers near an old temple, outside the city.

One night Bhadra was sound asleep. But she lost her sleep in the latter half of the night and felt uneasy. In the morning she went to the temple of the Yaksha with a view to be favoured with a child.

In course of time, Bhadra became pregnant. She thought that it was due to the favour of the Yaksha. Then she gave birth to a beautiful child who was named "Devadatt" after the Yaksha. Bhadra used to lovingly fondle the child and felt happy.

One day Bhadra asked her servant Panthak to take her child for an outing. When the child was playing with the other children, Vijay, the robber, arrived there and kidnapped the child stealthily. The child was adorned with costly ornaments. The robber then killed the child and threw its dead body into a well and hid himself in the Maluka locality of the robbers.

Now Panthak began to look for the child but found him nowhere. He then informed his master of the loss of the child.

So the police chief of the town began to look for the kidnapper. He then arrested that robber Vijay and put him into prison.

Once Dhanna was involved in an act of smuggling and therefore he was sent to prison where Vijay had been lodged. Both of them were thus in the same barracks of the prison. Both of them were fettered together also.

One day the robber asked the merchant to give him food brought by Bhadra for her husband which was refused. Then the sheth wanted to ease himself. But the robber refused to go with him as he was not given food. The robber, however, agreed to go with him if the sheth was willing to share his food with him in future.

Next day, when food was brought by Panthak for the sheth, the latter gave a part of it to the robber as agreed to previously. The servant reported this to his mistress.

After some time, the king set free the sheth from the prison. So all the people were pleased. But his own wife Bhadra did not greet her husband on his return home. She got angry at the fact that her husband had shared food with the robber who was cruel enough to kill her child. He, therefore, explained to her why he had to feed the robber. The common fetter had compelled him to be civil to the robber. She was then reconciled to her husband and began to treat him well.

The robber Vijay died in prison as a result of the atrocities practised by the jail authorities.

After his release from the jail, Dhanna embraced monkhood as he got indifferent to the world. He had been influenced by the words of Dharmaghosh heard at the meeting. He practised monkhood for long and then was born in heaven known as Sudharma after his death.

From this story we learn that the soul dwells in our body. Here the sheth should be considered to symbolise our soul while the robber represents our physical body. This body has to be nourished as a means to attain liberation.

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CHITRA AND SAMBHUTI

Long long ago there was a King who ruled over Hastinapur. His name was Sanatkumar. He had a Minister called Namuchi. He fell from the favour of the King as a result of a serious lapse in his character. Hence the King asked the slayers Chitra and Sambhuti to behead Namuchi.

On hearing the sweet song sung by this unfortunate minister, one of the slayers took pity on him. This slayer's name was Chitra. Being moved to pity, he thought it fit to hide the minister in his hut, as an open disregard of the king's order was not possible.

Sometimes Namuchi used to sing at night. All the women-folk of this slayer's household were spell-bound. They were pleased with the music coming from the lute of Namuchi. They forgot that they were the members of an untouchable caste and began to mix with him. This led to some internal trouble. So Namuchi fled from the hut to avoid being embroiled in the trouble. He feared that the slayer would kill him.

After the departure of the minister, Chitra and Sambhuti continued to practise music. And they became very skillful in this art. But the bane of social untouchability had made people unappreciative of music. People were attracted by the magic of their songs, but as soon as they knew

that it was music issuing from an untouchable's hut, they turned away, expressing their dislike and disgust. They did not like to encourage their skill. In fact, they could not bear to hear them singing. One day, their lutes were broken by an orthodox citizen. This enraged these musicians. They wanted to emancipate themselves from the chains of untouchability.

Soon thereafter, there was a cyclonic storm at night outside their hut, and they left it. They were soon walking along the beach that bordered the mountain range. Here they saw a monk whose face beamed with inner peace and light. He sympathised with them and consoled them. He initiated them into his fold, to remedy their sense of aloofness from the people. There was now no untouchability for them.

One day both the newly initiated monks went for alms to the place of Namuchi, who was then the king's minister. Namuchi was enraged at seeing them. He feared they would reveal his downfall at their hut. So he insulted them and cried, "You, untouchables!"

Chitra did not feel slighted at this insult; but, the other monk, Sambhuti, could not bear the ill-treatment. The insult tormented him. He was proud of his penances. So, he wanted to reduce the Minister and his town to ashes.

When king Sanatkumar came to know of the insult meted out to the monks, he at once proceeded to their place and asked for pardon. As a result, Sambhuti had to forgive and forget the ill-treatment. But now he wanted to be born as a king in his next birth. After his death Sambhuti was born as king Brahmadatta of Kampilpura. He did not know where Chitra had been re-born. He yearned to see him.

One day king Brahmadatta was composing a poem. After writing the first line, he could not write the second line in the proper meter. Therefore, he declared to offer half of his kingdom to one, who would rhyme the second line in the proper meter.

Then so many bards and poets came to the king's court and tried their luck, but the king did not approve of what they suggested.

After a few days, the king's gardener offered to write the line. His suggestion was liked by the King, who asked him whether it was his own suggestion. Thereupon, the gardener took the king to the garden where a monk (Sadhu) was found in deep meditation. The King soon recognised the sadhu to be no other than Chitra, his former colleague.

The king asked him "Why are you wasting this body? Why should you be a monk?"

Chitra replied that monkhood was not troublesome and hard for him. But the king wanted Chitra with him. So he offered him half of his kingdom for the poem. But the monk refused to accept it and to give up the life of a monk. He considered worldly happiness a dream. On the contrary, he invited the king to become a monk. But the king did not accept the suggestion. There was no meeting ground between them.

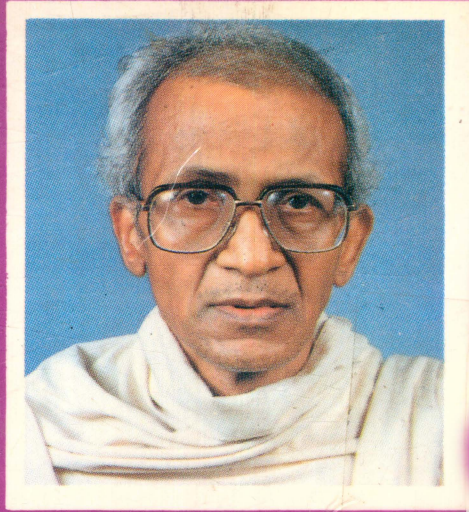
Chitra then got the divine light while Sambhuti wallowed in the mire of transient and mundane happiness and riches.

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■ Born at Navsari on 26th January 1939. Initiated in monkhood in early childhood.

■ Knows Sanskrit, Prakrit, Gujarati, Hindi and English.

■ Edited Shri Mohanlalji Ardha-Shatabdi Granth and Prabandh-Panchashati.

■ Written Bhagvan Mahavir - Jivan Darshan (in Gujarati)

■ He has visited U. K., Belgium, U. S. A. during 1972-1976; East Africa in 1986 and lectured on Jainism.

■ Inspired a Home Jain Temple in London.

■ At present, researching on Jain Yoga under the auspices of Jain Yoga Foundation.