

APPENDIX – B

THE TEXTS

ADI PURANA: The Pancakalyanakas

The most revered of the Digambara Jain canonical texts, the Adipurana holds the same significance for the Digambaras that the Kalpasutra does to the followers of the Svetambara sect. The Adipurana and the Uttarapurana together comprising the more voluminous Maha Purana or Trisastilaksana Mahapurana, describes the life and times of twenty four Tirthankaras, twelve Chakravartins, nine Narayanas, nine Pratinarayanas, and nine Balabhadras.

The Adipurana is composed of forty seven sections out of which the first forty two and three verses of the forty third section have been authored by Acharya Jinasena, a scholar of great repute who lived in the ninth century. The remaining five sections, as well as the Uttarapurana are the works of Jinasena's pupil and a scholar of no mean repute himself, Sri Gunabhadra Acharya.

The Adipurana is multifaceted and multi dimensional in nature, encompassing among other matters, discussions on rites and rituals, details of an ideal form of government, procedures involved in the institution of a legal system and features of architecture and town planning. These reflections on varied issues have been effortlessly incorporated into the main narrative, retaining its lucidity and poetic propensity, thereby qualifying it as *mahakavya*.

The first eleven chapters of the Adipurana are devoted to issues such as the significance of the purana, its historicity, and King Srenika's request to Mahavira's disciple Gautama Ganadhara to unravel the religious epic and the cosmic cycle. It goes on to describe the fourteen *kulakaras*, culminating in the description of the last *kulakara* Nabhiraja. It also narrates at length the evolving of Ahamindra from the royal Vajranabhi after his ascension to heaven. Ahamindra would later become the first Tirthankara Rishabha. The actual narrative of the *pancakalyanakas* or five auspicious events in the life of the Tirthankara, commences from the twelfth chapter, here Gautama Ganadhara relates how Ahamindra descends to the earth as Rishabha, dwelling on the virtues of his parents, the last of the *kulakaras* Nabhiraja and his beloved queen Marudevi and the construction of a magnificent new city for the royal couple on Indra's command. The following chapters deal with various momentous events such as the sixteen dreams of Marudevi, the preparations of Rishabha's birth, his arrival, Indra and the heavenly gods celebrating the joyous event of the birth of Rishabha by lustration of the child on Mount Meru, the spectacular dance of Indra, Rishabha's youthful years and his subsequent marriage to Yashaswati and Sunanda, the fateful dance of Nilanjana and consequently, Rishabha's renunciation of worldly pleasures, the penance and attainment of *kevalajnana*, followed by Rishabha's universal sermon or *samavasarana* and final liberation from life or *moksa*. The *pancakalyanaka* or five key events in Rishabha's life-*garbha* -conception, *janma* -birth, *deeksa*-renunciation from worldly pleasures,

kevalajnana –attainment of highest knowledge and *moksa*- death or liberation from mortal life are lucidly described from the twelfth to the twenty fourth chapters

The first few verses of the twelfth chapter of the Adipurana give a brief description of the Jambudvīpa or the cosmographical form of the universe. This is followed by a number of verses that dwell on the physical and moral attributes of king Nabhiraja and queen Marudevi, the parents of the first Tirthankara Rishabha, particularly lingering on the pristine beauty of the queen. The description then proceeds to how Indra instructed the gods to erect a city befitting the royal couple, one which could be compared favorably to the grandeur of the heavens. In the center was laid out the grand palace, the city being fortified by 'vapra' or walls of mud along with four main gates and sturdy stone fortifications, girdled by a moat. It was named Ayodhya or the invincible city and the gods made human beings congregate here and saw to every possible arrangement for the royal couple's needs. Anticipating the arrival of Rishabha, the gods led by Kubera, following the orders of Indra shower gems on the earth, a happening described in great detail in the text.

One night, as queen Marudevi lay resting on her bed of rich white silks, she had sixteen dreams, wherein she saw an elephant with ichor in his tusks, a brilliant white bull, a roaring lion, goddess Lakṣmī with elephants, a pair of flower garlands, galaxy of moon and stars, the refulgent sun, a pair of *kalasas* or auspicious vessels with lids, fish swimming in a pond, a golden pond, the sea with waves washing over the shore, a golden throne encrusted with jewels, a *vimana* or vehicle of gods, the palace of the *naga* king, a heap of jewels and finally a fire without smoke. At the end of these dreams, Marudevi saw a golden complexioned bull with broad shoulders entering her mouth.

The following verses describe Marudevi waking up from her dreams, and unable to contain her excitement, bathed, dressed up and went to her husband, king Nabhiraja, requesting him to interpret her unusual dreams. The verses further narrate how Nabhiraja explains the significance of each of the sights the queen has seen in her dreams.

The text describes how on the auspicious moment on the second day of the new moon in the month of *āṣāḍha*, the soul of Ahamindra descends from the heavens and is conceived in the form of an embryo in Marudevi's womb, an event which is again celebrated by the gods as they flock to the palace of Nabhiraja. It also describes how Indra, eagerly awaiting the arrival of the child, sends a large retinue of attendants called *dikkakumaris* from the heavens in service of the queen. The *shatakumaris*, Sri, Rhi, Dhriti, Kirti, Buddhi and Lakṣmī at the orders of Indra begin to attend Marudevi and instill in her their respective qualities of beauty, coyness, courage, praiseworthiness, knowledge, and wealth. The other *dikkakumaris* take care of the expectant mother during her period of confinement. The author Jināsena details on how efficiently and lovingly these bustling heavenly attendants look after the needs of the queen. There are references to *dikkakumaris* preparing appetizing food for Marudevi, massaging her feet, anointing her with fragrant garlands, oils and perfumes, or offering her the juicy '*tambul*' or betel leaf. The attendants also humor her by

narrating witty tales and performances of music and dance. Some even stand in attention carrying swords to protect the queen from potential dangers.

Eventually after the completion of the ninth month, queen Marudevi on the ninth day of the new moon, at sunrise, gave birth to Rishabhadeva. The baby was born under the sign of *uttarasadha nakshatra* and *brahma yoga*. His birth was celebrated by mortal and heavenly beings alike, the *kalpavrikas* blossomed, the earth celebrated and the sea waves danced with joy. Certain signals proclaiming the birth went off in the heavens and as Indra's throne quivered, he learnt intuitively that the great one had arrived and proceeded to make plans for celebrating Rishabha's arrival by performing the *janmabhiseka* or ritual bath of Rishabha. Like Indra, all classes of gods realized that Rishabha's birth had taken place and led by Indra, all of them the gods set off from the heavens to fetch baby Rishabha for the lustration ceremony. The *Adipurana* refers to the *dikkakumaris* marching in excitement ahead of Indra carrying auspicious gifts, or *astamangala dravya*, *chattra*, *dhvaja*, *kalasa*, *chamara*, *supratistaka* (*mondra thona*), *harni*, *darpana*, and *pankha* made of palm leaves. Indra led his seven battalion army of elephants, horses, bulls, chariots, *gandharvas*, dancers, and soldiers to the earth for the ceremonial bath.

Indra himself accompanied by his consort Indrani, rode astride his seven trunked elephant Airavata, followed by the gods of the *trayantisa*, *parisada*, *atmaraksa*, and *lokapala* classes, to the sound of bugles and trumpets. The gods made a splendid sight as the *vimanas*, dancers and musicians thronged the sky. Jinasena compares the faces of the *apsaras* with lotuses, while the simile of crocodiles leaping out of water has been employed for the multi trunked elephant.

This is followed by the description of Indrani's entry into queen Marudevi's chamber, as she looks on with a sense of wonder at the queen mother and her new born, and gently takes Rishabha away for the lustration by putting the mother into deep slumber and replacing Rishabha with a similar baby using her magical powers. Indra then stepped out gazing with wonder at the refulgent baby and handed over the child to Indra.

Indra then seated Rishabha on his lap and raising his hands commanded the army to march towards Mount Meru. The gods cried out in praise, extolling the virtues of Rishabha, and begun marching. The *apsaras*, their breasts swaying, danced in merriment in the sky that stood for their stage. *Gandharvas* accompanied them with music. Gem studded *vimanas* of gods adorned the sky, the white clouds and white banners strikingly stood against the black elephants as would snow white storks look against the dark skies. Occasionally, clouds, clashing with advancing *vimanas*, burst forth. The perfume of ichor emanating from the temples of the god's elephants attracted a swarm of bees. Indra's body, as he held Rishabha in his lap, shone brilliantly, eclipsing even the dazzle of the sun. The dancing *apsaras* on Airavata's trunks added to the enthusiasm of the marching gods.

The text elaborates on how different types of Indras derived joy in serving Rishabha-Saudharmendra. Indra carried the child in his lap, Eshanendra protected the baby by holding a white parasol over his head, while Sanatkumara

Indra and Mahendra stood on either side, fanning Rishabha with pure white *chamaras* or fly whisks. The retinue finally arrives on Mount Meru, which is described as a breathtakingly beautiful mountain, it was made up of layers of blue gems or *nilamanis*, measured ninety six *yojanas* in height, and was comprised of four forests encircling the mountain like girdles, the lower one a lush green forest of gigantic trees called the *bhadrashala vana*, the following one being the *nandan vana*, the next *saumasa vana* and the topmost, *panduka vana*. The mountain is also described as '*svarnamaya*' or golden hued, and on all four levels in each of the four directions are placed Jina shrines. The mountain is bequeathed with the same exalted status as the heavenly god Saudharmendra himself and is considered befitting enough to bear the *panduka shila* or ceremonial stone on which the lustration ceremony of the Jinās is performed.

The next few verses go into the details of the *panduka shila*, its virtues, purity and beauty. This stone slab, intended for the ceremonial lustration, is crescent shaped, one hundred *yojanas* in length, fifty *yojanas* in breadth and eight *yojanas* in height. It is pure and pristine, purified by the waters sprinkled by the gods. This is followed by the description of how Indra circumambulates the mountain and gingerly places Rishabha on a throne on the *panduka shila* and the long drawn account of the actual *abhiseka* or lustration, with gods of different classes assuming their respective positions in various directions, the blowing of trumpets and the dance of the *apsaras* with great billows of smoke from a burning incense called '*kalaguru*' simultaneously enveloped the sky. Indra also creates a large decorated *mandapa* or pavilion to facilitate the beings of all the three worlds to witness the grand event.

All preparations complete, the ceremony began, Indra taking the initiative by picking up the first *kalasa* or pot of water to lustrate Rishabha, with the other types of Indras following suit, while Indrani and the other goddesses stood reverently, holding the lustration vessels and other paraphernalia. The gods formed a chain right from the bottom of the mountain to its summit, and gathering water from the *kshirasamudra* below in golden *kalasas* begun passing them one by one upwards with great enthusiasm. The sky, soon filled with the *kalasas*, presented an amazing sight, and Indra, in order to gather them all employed his powers, assuming multiple hands and retrieving the pots, stood triumphantly on the summit. Indra then poured the first *kalasa* of water over Rishabha amidst the chant of the gods, the other gods soon followed pouring *kalasas* over Rishabha in unison. The next few verses deal with the grand spectacle of the flowing of the consecrated water down the Meru mountain and the continued festivities of the jubilant gods, followed by a second lustration ritual of the child with perfumed waters and winding up of the ceremony with ritual offerings.

The following verses concern Indrani circumambulating around Rishabha, dressing him in finery- crown, jewels, rich silks, and then deal with Indra bringing back the child to Ayodhya, the procession commencing its return journey from Meru to the accompaniment of bugles, the hailing of *jayajayakar*

in praise of Rishabha and the marching of elephant Airavata carrying Indra and Rishabha back to Ayodhya

The next few set of verses are devoted to the description of Ayodhya, its grandeur, beauty, and invincibility This is followed by Indra's triumphant arrival in the city and his installing Rishabha on a special throne in king Nabhiraja's palace with his proud parents looking on in wonder Indra then proceeded to perform the ritual worship of king Nabhiraja and queen Marudevi by offering them rich silks, ornaments and garlands, simultaneously singing their praises The text relates how ,with due permission of Indra, the royal couple invites their subjects to share their jubilations Thus another round of celebrations commenced, in which the entire city of Ayodhya participated The spirited, animated atmosphere was so infectious that Indra, unable to contain his excitement, began to dance

The author Jinasena provides an elaborate account of the dance of Indra-The god begun his cosmic dance, beginning with the dramatic form or *natya*, of *ananda* or happiness, to the accompaniment of the musical instruments of the *gandharvas* The personification enacted out by Indra by a repertoire of expressions and gestures was impressive enough to be witnessed by *mahapurushas* or great men The world became the *rangabhumi* or stage, Indra its principal actor, the royalty, his rapt audience and Rishabha, the benefactor for whom the entire event was played out and from whom blessings were sought Indra begun with the enactment of the *garbhavatarana* and the *janmabhiseka* – the conception and birth of Rishabha, the dance beginning with the *purva ranga*, followed by *tandava nritya*, *nandimangala*, and finally, the scenes of acting-the *natyabhinaya* of the *garbha* and *janma* events

As Indra begun his dramatics, he stood in *vaishakhasana*, with feet apart, hands on hips, dressed in elaborate finery, resembling a striking *kalpavriksha* The showering flowers appeared like Indra's sparkling eyes Indra's large eyes looked expressive, and he danced in rhythm, feet moving with such grace as if measuring the earth As Indra begun the *tandava*, gods showered flowers, while music emanated from every corner, the melody of the *veena*, flute and drums mingled in the air The *vina* playing *kinnaras* also sang sweetly with Indra creating different types of *rasas* with his nimble movements of the body and footwork

Indra then fabricated with his magical powers, a thousand arms, the multiple arms appeared as enchanting as a *kalpavriksha* with many boughs As Indra danced in abandon, the row of gems dangling from his crown twisted and turned, producing spectacular effects While dancing Indra continued to change his *rupa*, form, sometimes multiplying in size, at other occasions, becoming diminutive, now appearing at close range, and in a flash, moving far away Sometimes Indra manifested himself making an appearance in the heavens, and in a split second he thundered to terra firma All this went on while the smiling *apsaras* with creeper like eyebrows danced in merriment These *apsaras* resembled creepers dangling on *kalpavrikshas*, with some rotating their navels on Indra's fingers, sharing Indra's dramatics and antics Indra danced away carrying the *devas*, or male gods on one side and the *devanganas* or female

goddesses on the other. Finally after the exalted and elaborate round of celebrations, Indra left Rishabha in the care of his parents and contentedly returned to the heavens.

The next part of the *Adi Purana* deals with the childhood of Rishabha in the royal palace and also dwells on his physical charms and moral attributes. Rishabha plays with the *devakumaras*, the children of the gods. Various types of *balakrida* or childhood antics have been described in the text, including Rishabha participating in playful activities by taking the form of young ones of different animals and birds such as the peacock, swan, elephant and so forth.

The text continues the narration of Rishabha's life as a young adult, when with his consent, king Nabhiraja arranged the marriage of Rishabha with the sisters of Kachha and Mahakachha, named Yashaswati and Sunanda. Nabhiraja also sought the consent of Indra for this matrimonial alliance. The marriage was celebrated by mortals and heavenly beings alike. The subsequent verses deal with the birth of Bharata and ninety nine other sons, and a daughter named Brahmi, to Yashaswati, and a son Bahubali and daughter Sundari to Sunanda. Thus a considerable length of time passed in domestic bliss. As the cycle changed there was once again on earth a phase of misery, the *kalpavriksha* dried up, crops failed, and the subjects sought the king's refuge. Indra arrived again to set things right by erecting Jina shrines in the city of Ayodhya, creating different regions and rivers and aiding the subjects to earn their livelihood by various means. After this the gods performed the coronation of Rishabha and another round of joyous celebrations followed amidst which Nabhiraja placed the crown on his son Rishabha's head. Their task complete, Indra and his retinue returned back to the heavens.

The text narrates how one day, as Rishabha sat in his court attended by courtiers, Indra along with gods and *apsaras* carrying paraphernalia of worship, arrived at the scene and assumed his seat. He commanded the *apsaras* and *gandharvas* to dance in order to distract Rishabha. Indra then contrived a plan to divert Rishabha's attention from worldly life to asceticism. He appointed Nilanjana, a dancer whose life span was running out, to perform before the king. The danseuse began her charming dance, displaying excellent *rasa*, *bhava*, and rhythm, but, as her time on the earth drew to an end, she disappeared in a flash. Indra quickly installed another illusionary figure of Nilanjana to continue the dance, but king Rishabha intuitively realized what had transpired. He pondered over the futility of his own existence and bondage to worldly pleasures, and resolved to renounce the kingdom and depart for the forests.

The gods realizing the state of the king's mind, arrived to perform the *tapakalyanaka*, or rituals of renunciation. They showered flowers on his feet and sang his praises. Indra then lustrated Rishabha, dressing him in silks and ornaments. The king then handed over the reins of his kingdom to his eldest son Bharata and deputed Bahubali as the prince, while all gods watched the preparations with great excitement. Finally, taking leave of his kin, Rishabha sat in the '*Sudarsana*' palanquin especially created for him by the gods, which was borne for a short distance by the royal attendants, the queens Yashaswati and Sunanda along with other family members following it with heavy hearts. The

palanquin was subsequently handed over to the *vidyadharas* who took off into the skies with it. The event was accompanied by the showering of flowers, singing of Rishabha's praises, and blowing of bugles and conches.

Rishabha, thus relinquishing his kingdom, set out for the forest, soon reaching the *siddharthaka vana*, with Indra's army following suit. The gods made Rishabha sit on a stone slab decorated with *chandrakanta* jewels, flowers, and sandalwood marks with Indrani specially adorning it with *ratna churna* or dust of precious jewels. A *mandapa* was erected over the slab and festoons hung everywhere. Indra himself attended to Rishabha, removing one by one all his worldly possessions, clothes and jewelry. Then, seated in *padmasana*, facing east, Rishabha tore off his hair in the grip of his five fingers (*pancamusti*) and became a Digambara precisely on the ninth day of the new moon of the month of *chaitra*. Indra then placed the hair in a bejeweled casket and immersed it in the *ksirasamudra*. Along with Rishabha, four thousand other kings also renounced worldly life, taking *diksa*. Later, Rishabha's son Bharata along with other members of the family paid obeisance to Rishabha and returned to Ayodhya.

The Adi Purana further gives an elaborate description of the *samavasarana* of a Rishabha. The structure for the sermon of the great one was especially erected by the gods, using gold and precious jewels and supervised by Indra himself. Circular in shape, its outer boundaries comprised of fine dust of rubies, with four *manastambhas* or pillars at four cardinal points, festooned with bells and flags and four decorated *toranas* or gateways. There were several concentric rings in the following order- a wood (*latavana*), citadel, two theatres (*natyasala*), another wood (*asokavana*), a railing, a ring of four flags, second citadel, a wood of *kalpavrikas*, a row of *stupas*, buildings, a third citadel made of precious stones, and finally, twelve congregations of celestial beings, monks and mortals. This is followed by a detailed description of several platforms in the innermost circle on which is seated facing east, Arihanta Rishabhanatha. The platforms were made up of gold and precious gems, and decorated with *astamangalas* and banners while *yaksis* stood with *dharmachakras* on their shoulders. On the topmost platform was erected a *gandhakuti* on which was placed the throne constituting of jewels. It was on this that Jina sat to deliver his sermon, attended by gods and *yaksis*.

The concluding part of the *pancakalyanaka* in the Adi Purana deals with the sermons of Rishabha to the gods and mortals and his *moksa*. The gods celebrate Rishabha's *kevaljnana* by offering their salutations. The attainment of *kevaljnana* is accompanied by ten miracles, including the *divya dhvani* or propounding of the sermon in multiple sounds. The text also mentions how Rishabha's son Bharata along with other kin came to pay homage to Rishabha who was surrounded by *astapratiharyas* and after paying homage, requested him to reveal the truth about *dharma*. Rishabha without the movement of the lips, expounded the highest form of knowledge or *jnana* through *divya dhvani* or heavenly sound.

Completing his sermons after an extended period of time, Rishabha attained nirvana. He ascended the Kailasa mountain, also known as the Astapada, and

sat absolutely still, in meditation, until he achieved *moksa* or freedom from worldly bondage on an auspicious date and time. Along with Rishabha one thousand monks also attained *moksa*. The mortal remains left behind Rishabha's soul ascended to the heavens and he was bestowed with the title of *siddha*.

YASHODHARA CARITA

The Yashodhara carita is a highly revered treatise of the Digambara Jains, its origins dating back to the late eighth or early ninth century, to a text penned by Acarya Haribhadra Suri. The original work was considerably temperate in nature, and excluded rituals of violence such as human sacrifice, besides other deviations. The text was considerably modified in the subsequent centuries by a number of *bhattarakas*- Somadvea, Harisena, Pushpadanta, Vadiraja, Dhananjaya and Sakalakirti, to name a few, and was known variously as Yasastilaka campu, Jasaharacariyu and Yashodhara Chandramati katha.

The text of Yashodhara carita authored by *bhattaraka* Sakalakirti, an erudite scholar of the fifteenth century, is one of the most sought after versions and is divided into eight *sargas* or sections, the central contents, dealing with the protagonist, Yashodhara, figure in the fifth and the sixth sections, while the preceding and following sections bein the introductory and concluding ones.

SECTION I

The text begins with Sakalakirti offering salutations to the twenty four Tirthankaras, particularly to Adinatha and Mahavira, as also to Gautama Ganadhara and goddess Saraswati. In the following verses is the description of the city of Rajapur, in the country of Yaudheya, located in Bharatavarsa, in the Jambudvipa. They elaborate upon the grandeur of Rajapur, describing its majestic edifices, temples and palaces, the three classes of followers dwelling here, the genuine followers, the ones who were Jains for namesake, and the atheists. The religious atmosphere of the city has also been described.

In this city ruled king Maridatta, a handsome, valiant and generous personality who unfortunately was lacking in matters of *dharma* (religion) and *viveka* (intellect). Surrounded by sinners and indulgers, the king led a degenerate and excessive life.

One day there came to Rajapur a cruel, evil massive sized sorcerer called Bhairavananda. His hair was matted with a bewildering number of curls, he carried a staff in hand, wore animal skin, bone ornaments and footwear and was anointed with ash. Along with his entourage came blowing bugles and was ill-mannered, presenting a horrifying sight. Drawing attention upon himself with his continual gloats of greatness, Bhairavananda soon attracted attention of king Maridatta, who summoned him to the court, bowed to him deferentially and offered him a seat. The sorcerer begun making tall claims of having supernatural powers, offering to share them with the king, who foolhardy that he was fell for the sorcerer's charms. The sorcerer then asked Maridatta to proceed to the temple of Chandimari to the southern direction of Rajapur and offer the goddess sacrifices of pairs of living creatures from the skies, earth and water, in addition to sacrificing a beautiful human couple at the goddesses' altar. He was told that on completing this he would be granted the wish of transcending the skies and reach wherever he wanted to. The unwise king fell prey to his idea and commanded his men to fetch the different creatures for the ritual of sacrifice.

Maridatta proceeded to the temple of Chandimari with the family members, where the goddess presented a fearsome sight with her terrifying countenance and blood shot eyes. The king bowed to the goddess and in anticipation of acquiring special powers, issued orders to his minister to go searching for the most attractive human couple in town.

At the same time, the honored monk, Acarya Sudatta, along with his vast followers of munis or monks, after traveling and preaching religious dogmas in far flung places, came and camped in the woods outside the city of Rajapur. However realizing soon enough that evils in the form of indulgers and merry makers prevailed there, the monks hastily proceeded to the calm and quiet of the cremation ground nearby. Sudatta and his followers cleared some of the area, purified it and after the Acarya had assumed his seat, a young monk named Abhiruchi, along with a female monk Abhaymati, bowed to the acarya and sought permission to go into the town seeking alms. As the duo set out with their bowls, the king's name encountered them. The acolytes were dressed in simple monk's garments but their faces shone radiantly with a rare kind of intelligence. The king's gentry thought them to be appropriate for sacrifice and seizing them forcefully, begun leading them to the temple of Chandimari.

Though interrupted by this unexpected seizure, Abhayruchi maintained his composure and pacified his companion Abhaymati, saying that no force on earth could harm any monk. Abhaymati, calm and unruffled herself, made a philosophical reply to her companion. Garnering strength by each other's words and already having renounced all worldly pleasures in preference of monkhood, the couple soon arrived at the temple, where they saw king Maridatta, standing with sword in hand. Abhayruchi begun preaching the significance of *dharma* to the ignorant king.

King Maridatta gazed in amazement at the pair of monks. Their personas were so serene and radiant that the king wondered about their identities- were they a *deva* and a *devi* or celestial beings? Were they Kaama and Rati? Were they a pair of *vidyadharas* or were they someone from his family that he felt close ties with them? The king enquired who they were, to which Abhayruchi replied how the king had trodden the path of sins and stating how he himself was of pure character. On hearing his the king immediately threw away his sword and along with his kin, sat before the monks with folded hands to listen to Abhayruchi's discourse about the sins of the previous births, due to which he had to undergo a series of hardships and face innumerable sorrows.

SECTION II

“ In this Bhratavarsa there lay a region called Avanti, a place where both men and women of resided, where there were many Jain shrines, where devotees thronged temples, and where gods and *vidyadharas* paid visits to perform the *jnana kalyanaka* and *nirvana kalyanaka* of the Tirthankaras.

In this region was located the city of Ujjain, where lived a king called Kityordha, a person of refined tastes, kind generous and religious in nature and an able administrator. He and his beautiful wife Chandramati had a son named Yashodhara”, thus spoke Abhayruchi stating that Yashodhara was none else but the monk Abhayruchi himself, in his previous births.

The king celebrated Yashodhara's birth with great pomp and show. The child, under the vigilance of his adoring parents soon grew up into handsome youth, whence he was sent by the king to acquire among other things, the knowledge of the shastras or religious books. After Yashodhara's education was complete, the king considered marriage proposals for his son and approved of Amrutmati, the daughter of king Vimalvahana and queen Sheela of the kingdom of Varata. The bride's father arrived with his huge retinue of relatives and the subjects of Ujjaini, along with the people from both the bride's and the groom's side, participated in the worship of Jina, including distributing alms to the poor and needy. The wedding ceremony was performed amidst much celebrations, accompanied by music and dance. Thus began Yashodhara's blissful married life with the beautiful Amrutmati.

One day king Kirtiyordha, while glancing in the mirror noticed a few strands of gray hair and sensing the approaching of old age thought it best to hand over the kingdom to his son Yashodhara. The rajyabhiseka or coronation of the new king was held, Yashodhara ascended the throne while his father renounced all worldly pleasures to lead a life of ascetism.

King Yashodhara ruled with great success over his kingdom and in due course his wife Amrutmati gave birth to a bonny young son named Yashomati, who grew up to be a handsome young prince, who was wedded to a hundred princesses and lived a life of contentment and happiness.

SECTION III

Abhayruchi continued the tale further – One day he, that is Yashodhara, while holding court was seized by a wild desire of his wife, queen Amrutmati. The thoughts of her beauty and charm became so uncontrollable that the king resolved at that very instant that he would hand over his kingdom to his son and spend the rest of his life in bliss with Amrutmati. This carnal desire led him to rush to the palace chamber of the queen, straight into the arms of Amrutmati. Later the king lay on the bed after making love to her, gratified and happy at the thought of his wonderful companion, so excited that he could scarcely obliterate her from his mind, and lay silently with his eyes shut.

The queen, mistaking her reclining husband to be fast asleep, rose stealthily from the bed chamber as would a female snake sneak out of its hole. Dressing up in finery, she opened the doors of the chamber and tiptoed out.

Yashodhara, who was actually awake when she crept out of the chamber, wondered as to where the queen had gone in the dead of night. Angry with her mysterious movements, he pounced upon his sword and covering himself in a black cloak, stalked her quietly. Yashodhara stood silently at the entrance of the palace chamber where to his immense rage, he saw the queen seated at the feet of the lowly mahout, an ugly man with a deformed body afflicted with leprosy, matted hair and a hideous countenance. He was in addition, an immoral man, a person prone to committing sins. The foolish queen slowly began pressing the mahout's feet, as a result of which the ugly man was aroused and he violently pulled the queen towards himself by tugging at her hair. Yashodhara was enraged at the sight, wondering what had got into the queen to form a liaison with such a man who was fit to be her slave. Angrily, Yashodhara raised his

sword to kill both of them. Glancing at the sharp sword, Yashodhara's mind raced speedily. He reconsidered his decision thinking that it would hardly be befitting to slay sinners with a sword that had earlier been used for noble causes, besides the fact that it would be a great sin to kill a woman. Putting the sword away, he retreated his steps, and, walking back to his bedchamber dejectedly, lay down on the bed, with disturbing thoughts clouding his mind. He felt immense anger towards the female race, blaming them to be the most unfaithful, corrupt and sinful, blessed with outward beauty, but possessing a dark and dubious character. Disillusioned with Amrutmati, he thought about giving up worldly pleasures and lead a monk's life. After a while Amrutmati returned and nestled into the arms of Yashodhara without any sense of guilt, while he king lay silently, amazed at her audacity, strengthening his resolve to renounce the kingdom.

The day rose, and as the sound of bugles amidst the hailing of the king's name reached Yashodhara's ears, his resolve to devote the rest of his life in service of religion and the Jinas strengthened.

SECTION IV

Yashodhara, with a heavy heart, got up, bathed, and despite have lost all inclination for rich silks and ornaments, forced himself to be dressed in the finery, lest Amrutmati suspected something amiss if he declined to present himself in any other manner than his usual self and kill herself or the king to save face.

The king arrived at the royal court, assuming his throne and continued with the proceedings despite his frame of mind, as the courtiers and ministers sat in their seats and religious scholars recited the Jain *shastras*.

There arrived in the court the mother of king Yashodhara, queen Chandramati, inquiring about the well being of her beloved son. Bowing before her, Yashodhara replied that all was well in the kingdom but explained that he had been greatly disturbed by a nightmare seen the previous night in which a horrendous looking demon had asked Yashodhara to renounce his kingdom and hand it over to his son or else his entire clan would be wiped out. Shaking with fear on hearing about the dream, the queen mother asked Yashodhara to perform the coronation of Yashomati as the new king. She also directed her son to perform the ritual sacrifice in the temple of the family goddess Katyayani by offering a pair of aquatic as well as terrestrial creatures. Yashodhara was appalled to hear this and condemned the rituals of violence, refusing to commit the sin of killing living creatures for the purpose of sacrifice. The foolish queen, blind in her faith and love for her family, again tried to explain how sacrifices of animals was permissible in the *ved shastras* but Yashodhara stuck to his resolve and vehemently advocated the principle of non violence central to the teachings of the Jina, even rising up from his throne, sword in hand and offering to behead himself to protect other innocent creatures.

Sensing her son's firm resolve the queen mother fell at his feet and shaking with fear offered a solution to the problem by procuring a cock made of flour for the sacrifice. Helping the queen stand up on her feet, Yashodhara agreed to her decision. The queen mother soon summoned an artist to create an artificial bird.

befitting for the king to sacrifice. The artist returned with a robust, good looking cock, after

The queen placed the bird before the feet of the goddess and prayed for the well being of her dear ones. Yashodhara, blinded by *moha* or darkness of desires, beheaded the cock and ate it as *prasada* after it was cooked in the royal kitchens. Later in the presence of the ministers, he crowned Yashomati as the king and surrendered all worldly wealth to him. The wily queen Amrutmati, on seeing that king Yashodhara was determined to renounce the kingdom and accept *diksa*, fell to her husband's feet, beseeching him to reconsider his decision. She suggested that the king wait for a day and meet all his near and dear ones. The queen offered to take *diksa* herself along with the king the next day and retire to the forests. Yashodhara though amused at her utterances and knowing fully well about her cunning nature, accepted her invitation to have lunch in the queen's private chamber along with the other family members.

The next day they all reached her chamber and ate to their heart's content. The wicked Amrutmati's mind raced with evil plans. She thought that as Yashodhara had handed over the kingdom to their son Yashomati, he obviously knew about her promiscuous nature and now posed a threat to her. Amrutmati connived to kill both the king and the queen mother by poisoning them so that she could spend the rest of her life with the ugly mahout. In a sweet tone she asked him and the queen mother to savor the sweets she laid before them. The queen mother and Yashodhara both ate the sweets and the poison soon spread through their bodies making them unconscious. The king's attendants rushed about in panic to help the king, who was sweating profusely, his body having become limp and lifeless. The palace physician was summoned.

The queen realizing that her husband, if saved would jinx all her plans, quickly feigned unconsciousness, and fell upon the king and strangled him with the force of both her hands. At the sight of the king's dead body, the other queens, princes and the kith and kin gathered and begun lamenting. Some of the queens renounced worldly pleasures, taking *diksa*. Even Yashomati, the heir, little realizing the deceit, performed the funerary rites by giving generous alms to one thousand Brahmins. Owing to the sins they had committed, Yashodhara and his mother had to undergo various hardships in their subsequent births.

SECTION V

* The Tale of the Peacock and the Dog

Abhayaruchi continued with the tales of his previous births- In the Aryanyakanda of the Jambudvīpa lies a mountain called the Vindhya infested with carnivorous birds and man eating lions and tigers. Due to his earlier sins Yashodhara was sent to the womb of a peahen living on this mountain and took birth as a feeble, weak young one. Immediately after his birth the mother was killed by the arrow of a hunter passing by through the forest. The hunter lifted the dead peahen on his shoulders and cradling the new born bird under his arm went to Makshikagram, a place near Ayodhya. Dumping the now hungry bird in a hole, the hunter went away with his prize catch of the peahen to the minister and handed it over to him. On returning home his disappointed wife complained

that there was no food at home, on which the hunter was compelled to sell the little new born bird to the minister for a handful of money

The minister, thinking that he would gift the bird to king Yashomati, reared him with care, feeding him well. Soon the peacock grew into a healthy young bird with an attractive plume and regular feeds of insects and caterpillars. The minister took the bird to the city of Ujjaini and showed it to king Yashomati who was immensely pleased to the peacock, little realizing that it was none else but his dead father.

Meanwhile Yashodhara's mother, after being killed by her daughter in law Amrutmati had been reborn as an ugly and ferocious dog in the city of Karhataka. King Yashomati happened to come across the dog and he sent it to the royal menagerie to be looked after by the dog keeper Chandamati. In the meantime the peacock was also entrusted to yet another old keeper. One day, the peacock, on seeing the wily Amrutmati in the arms of ugly and dwarfed mahout on the terrace of the palace, recalled his previous birth and in a fit of intense rage attacked the couple, tearing at their heads with its sharp claws. The queen and her lover retaliated, hitting out at the peacock with the necklace and other ornaments, as the attendants also rushed to their rescue, striking the bird wildly, flinging blows at it with their legs and fists as well as staffs, resulting in the peacock falling unconscious, grievously injured. After this everyone ran away leaving the bird to its fate. The foolish Yashomati who was immersed in a game of dice, ignorantly ordered the dog to rush to the peacock's help, wherein the cruel dog broke open his chains and dug his sharp teeth into the bird's neck. Yashomati, incensed at this, hit the dog hard, resulting in its death. Thus the brainless king facilitated the death of his father and grandmother, but being shackled with many senseless beliefs and having a blind faith in rituals, he requested his own mother Amrutmati to perform the funerary rites in a manner befitting great men, giving away alms to his ministers and priests and immersing the ashes of the dead in the sacred rivers to enable them to ascend to the heavens.

***The Tale of the Porcupine and the Serpent**

In the forest called Bhimavana on the banks of the river Suvela, infested with animals and thorny trees, Yashodhara was now born as a porcupine. As he had sinned in his previous lives, the birth process proved to be extremely difficult and the mother could not feed her young one as her milk dried up, as a result of which the new born had to go hungry and fend for his own food. It ate creatures like snakes as an alternative but had to go hungry most of the time and remained weak and undernourished.

The dog who had been killed by Yashomati was reborn as a poisonous snake. As it roamed about in the forest the porcupine spotted it and in an act of revenge, sunk its teeth deep into the snake's tail as the dog had done to him when he was a hapless bird. The snake tried to attack the porcupine but fearing its spikes, hastily retreated. At that instant, a leopard pounced upon the porcupine, rung its neck and chewed up its bones.

***The Tale of the Fish and the Sisumara**

On the banks of the serene river Shipra was situated the city of Vishala. The gushing river waters, flowing near the edge of the citadel, presented a

breathtaking sight Yashodhara was now born as a giant sized fish '*Rohit matsya*' in the waters of this river, losing his mother at birth Yashodhara's mother was reborn as a ferocious aquatic creature called Sisumara

The Sisumara, recounting its previous birth, pounced upon the tail of the fish and started devouring it At the same time a group of dwarfs along with a deformed woman came to bathe in the river The woman accidentally fell on the Sisumara's head who quickly let go of the fish and caught hold of the woman instead She began to scream loudly, resulting in all bathers rushing out of the river

As Yashodhara listened to the happening recounted by the deformed woman in the court the next day, he was furious "If I can sacrifice innocent animals like deer everyday, how can I spare a creature who assaults humans and eats other living creatures?" said he, swiftly rising up from his throne and reaching the banks of the Sipra river Overcome with fear, the fish quickly dived deep into the recesses of the waters The king then ordered the fisherman to catch the Sisumara and the men spread a huge net into the waters and finally caught the gigantic creature, dragged him to the banks and at the king's orders killed him with blows of sticks and spears

When the fishermen had left for their homes after killing the Sisumara, the fish came out of hiding and continued swimming in the waters, till one day the fisherfolk, back with their nets, caught a large fish, happy at their prize catch As they started snuffing out the life from the wriggling fish by stoning it, one elderly fisherman realizing that the fish was an unusual one asked the others not to kill it but to take it to the palace to enable the king to relish it the next day The plans changed, the fish was taken to the city and kept on a haystack in the fisherman's hut The fish suffered great pains without its natural habitat At daybreak, the fishermen, in the hope of a substantial reward, took the fish to the king who handing it over to his mother, remarked that the fish was a special one and according to the scholars of the Vedas, ideal for the funerary rites of the departed members of the family He asked his mother to perform the *shraddha* ceremony of his departed father and grandmother Amrutmati stamped on the fish's head and chopping off its tail, marinated it in spices and fried it in the royal kitchens Yashodhara's wife, along with the other family members, partook the meal of the fish and thus Yashodhara's existence as a fish came to an end

The Tale of the He goat and the She goat

Near the city of Ujjain was located a slaughter house, a squalid, filthy place crammed with remains of bones, flesh and skin The Sisumara was born as a goat in this hateful place and Yashodhara had the misfortune to be born into the womb of this very goat, growing up despite a life of hardships into a young goat, who due to lack of wisdom had carnal relations with his own mother One day, the head goat of the herd, encountering the strange physical relationship between them, attacked the he goat violently and tore open his intestines, but as the goat had already impregnated its mother, he was born again in her womb as a healthy young kid

One day Yashomati chancing upon the head goat and the mother goat, shot arrows at both killing both of them. The king's eyes fell on the beautiful baby goat in the she goat's womb and he took it away to the palace to be tended to. The baby goat grew up into a healthy animal. One day the king expressed a wish to sacrifice twenty sturdy buffaloes to goddess Katyayani if he achieved success in hunting and his desires fulfilled, he returned to the temple and mercilessly sacrificed the beasts, its meat distributed as *bhog* to the family members including the king and his mother Amrutmati. The foolhardy cook suggested that the meat which was contaminated by crows, cats, or dogs could be purified if a he goat smelt it. Thus Yashodhara, or the goat, was summoned to purify the flesh and was hung in the royal kitchens without food or water.

The grand feast over, the guests including the learned Brahmins and priests, left for their homes, while the host Yashomati along with his wives, sat to enjoy the meals. The goat Yashodhara however not noticing his erstwhile wife among them wondered where could she have gone. At that moment a female attendant complained of the foul smell emanating in the atmosphere to another saying she could scarcely bear the odor of the slain buffalo meat. Her companion confided that the odor came not from the meat that was being eaten but from the body of queen Amrutmati as she suffered from leprosy and consumed a great deal of fish. Amrutmati defended herself that she had caught the disease due to consumption of excessive fish but the attendant stated that in reality, it was a consequence of her evil deeds, as she had killed her husband, king Yashodhara and was being punished for the same, and sent to hell.

The shameless queen seated herself beside her son despite hearing the attendants' utterances. She presented a horrific sight with her disfigured body, crooked fingers, and cracked feet and nails, rotted nose and eyes sunk deep inside her blemished face and became an object of ridicule to all present. The goat Yashodhara thought that once upon a time when evil thoughts had not invaded her mind this very same queen had been extremely beautiful, but as her soul became tainted so did her body. He arrived at the conclusion that come whatever, a person should refrain from committing sins as it was the root of all sorrows.

Amrutmati insisted on having goat meat in her meals, wherein the cook was summoned and goat Yashodhara was slaughtered, a part of the meat being offered to the priests while Amrutmati ate the rest of it.

***The Tale of the Dog and the Buffalo**

The she goat which Yashomati had once killed in his hunting expedition was now born as a sturdy buffalo in the kingdom of Kalinga, and who arrived one day in the city of Vishala laden with goodies on its back. Taking off the burden, the thirsty buffalo, exhausted by the heat and long journey, dipped into the cool waters of the Sipra river. The king's horses arrived at the river around that time and the excited buffalo attacked them and tore open their bodies with his horns. The king, on hearing about this was enraged and ordered the cook to bring the buffalo to the palace. The cook, obeying the king's orders, tied the massive buffalo upside down by its four legs, to a rod and placed him at a distance over a hunting stove holding a vessel full of boiling water and spices. The buffalo

forcibly drank the boiling water, resulting in the flushing out of impurities from his body. The buffalo bellowed and snorted in intense pain but was compelled to bear it all for his misdeeds of the previous births. Then king Yashomati ordered the buffalo to be slaughtered and its meat cooked and served to the family members.

Yashodhara, born a goat again, could scarcely bare to see the gruesome sight as he stood in a corner, but he was also not spared as next, orders were issued to behead him. Roasted alive in the fire, he died a painful death.

SECTION VI

In the next birth, both Yashodhara and his mother Chandramati were conceived inside a hen in the same filthy slaughter house in the city of Ujjain. As the mother hen was about to lay eggs a cat spotted it and attacked it, but fortunately, both the embryos were saved as the eggs fell in a heap of garbage at a distance, where they hatched, but the chicks suffered great hardships as no one noticed them lying in that state.

One day a *chandala* woman dumped garbage on the chicks' heads due to which they started screaming out in agony. The woman whose attention was drawn towards the pretty chicks under the pile of garbage, took them home. The *chandakarma* (gatekeeper) came across the chicks as they roamed about here and there for food and thinking they were ideal for his amusement, took them to king Yashomati, who was overjoyed to see the birds but all the same handed them over to the *chandakarma* for safekeeping. The chicks were now kept in a cage and fed well.

The next day Yashomati and his wives and ministers went to the forest for an outing and the *chandakarma*, along with the cage containing the two birds followed suit. He soon came across a beautiful garden in the heart of the forest. In the garden under an *asoka* tree sat monks deeply immersed in meditation. They had relinquished all worldly pleasures and their faces were serene, though due to severe penances, their bodies were reduced to skin and bones. They were in every sense, the embodiment of virtues. The *chandakarma* thought that the presence of these naked monks spoilt the beauty of the garden and took upon himself the responsibility of driving them out of the place.

Going close to the meditating monk and seating himself at his feet, the *chandakarma* asked him as to what was he was meditating on. The monk realized the true reason of his arrival but calmly answered the *chandakarma's* question regarding his puzzles of birth and death, the significance of Jain *dharma* and the necessity of renunciation or taking *diksha*. The *chandakarma* inquired about the differences between the body and the soul and the monk answered all his queries with great wisdom, pointing out the subtleties between *jada* and *chetana*. After a long discussion the *chandakarma* was convinced about the significance of *dharma* and abstaining from deeds of violence.

The monk gave an elaborate description of the kind of life a *sravaka* or lay person should follow and concluded the discourse emphasizing upon the dogma that if one subscribed to rituals that demanded the killing of a living creature, the person would be subjected to a life of misery in the subsequent births. He

recounted the story of Yashodhara and Chandramati to the *chandakarma*, who finally realizing his misdeeds, resolved to give up senseless killings and other acts of violence and become a true follower of Jina

Abhayruchi thus narrated the tale of many births and hardships, adding that the pair of cocks in the cage had listened to this discourse and had had a change of heart. Soon after the wise monk left the place and wandered away to another destination

The cocks in the cage expressed their delight at discovering their true identity by croaking loudly which was heard by king Yashomati who was in the company of queen Kusumavali in her bedchamber. The king aimed the bow and arrow at the birds which soon died, this time being transferred to the womb of the queen. As the two had been exposed to the right path of knowledge, the queen in her pregnancy, displayed an aversion to meat. Instead, she expressed a desire to perform *abhayadana* or an alms giving ceremony throughout the kingdom. Finally the queen gave birth to two children, a son named Abhayruchi and a daughter named Abhaymati. The children soon grew up, assimilating knowledge in various fields. The royal parents wished their daughter to be married to the prince of the kingdom of Ahichhatra and announce Abhayruchi as the heir to the throne

SECTION VII

One day Yashomati went to the forest to hunt for animals for the royal feast on the occasion of his son's coronation, with five hundred dogs. On the outskirts of the *asokavana*, he came across the monk Sudatta deeply immersed in meditation, legs folded in *padmasana*, his body lean and emaciated. The king, enraged at the sight of the monk, loudly declared that the monk had caused a hindrance in his hunting expedition. He angrily let his pack of dogs on the meditating monk to kill him but to his surprise the attacking canines would not touch Sudatta, instead, they sat down at his feet in reverence. Luckily at the moment the king's dear friend Kalyanamitra arrived. A wealthy man of virtuous, religious nature, Kalyanamitra wished to seek the blessings of the monk. After he had met the king, Kalyanamitra requested Yashomati to accompany him and pay obeisance to the great monk but Yashomati refused saying that the very person had been responsible for spoiling his hunt. Kalyanamitra explained the greatness of Sudatta and the virtues of monkhood to the king, defending their state of nudity as a sign of absolute victory over the self and complete abandonment of worldly shackles. Kalyanamitra convinced him that killing of such a person would be sinning and narrated the tale of Sudatta.

It so happened that Sudatta was in reality the king of Kalinga, a valiant, able and wise ruler. One day a gatekeeper of the city caught a thief with a hoard of stolen goods and brought him before the king, saying that the thief had killed the owner of the goods and deserved punishment. The Brahmin priests suggested that the thief be beheaded but the saintly king revolted at the idea and thought that instead of committing the crime of making such decisions he would rather give up his kingdom. Thus the king renounced the throne and retired to the forests, becoming the monk Sudatta.

Yaashomati, impressed at the humility of monk Sudatta, went with his friend to seek the monk's blessings. Both circumambulated Sudatta and sat down at his feet. The monk in turn completed his meditation and blessed them both. He preached to them the greatness of the Jain *dharma* and related how his grandfather Kirtyordha had ascended to heaven on account of his god deeds, while his mother Amrutmati, because of her various sins, was sent to hell. He also narrated how his father Yashodhara and grandmother Chandramati had suffered through successive rebirths because of their ignorance and blind faith in mindless sacrifices, and concluded how later they had been born to queen Kusumavali.

The king on hearing this repented his actions and immediately wished to renounce his kingdom. His son Abhayruchi himself had no desire for the throne and wished to perform penance along with his sister Abhaymati to escape from the cycle of rebirths. According to tradition, after placing his son on the throne, Yashomati, having completed all his parental duties, renounced the kingdom and left for the forests.

SECTION VIII

Abhayruchi, on the other hand, handed over the kingdom to his younger brother and sought refuge in Sudatta's company along with his younger sister. The monk Sudatta suggested that they were too young to practice monkhood but could be included in the fold as *ksullakas*, or acolytes, initially. It was in this manner that the two had entered the city when the king's men spotted them and forcibly brought them to the king. Hearing all this even the goddess who had earlier accepted animal sacrifice underwent a change of heart and gave it all up, altering her earlier ferocious form for a more benign one. She fell at the feet of the *ksullaka* couple who gave the goddess an elaborate discourse on the loftiness of the Jain *dharma*.

The king, on hearing this tale, felt highly ashamed of his own misdeeds and misdirected thoughts, but the chief monk Sudatta enlightened him on the virtues of dharma and the unending process of rebirths based on one's karma or deeds. The king felt great remorse and resolved to renounce his kingdom, wherein the monk advised him to first perform the coronation of his son and then proceed ahead with his resolve. Subsequently, king Yashomati renounced his kingdom and along with his friend Kalyanamitra and others took *diksa*.

Abhayruchi having completed the tale of his past, everyone right from king Maridatta to his family fell at the feet of the *ksullaka*, undergoing a change of heart, seeking Abhayruchi's advice on redeeming their sins. Abhayruchi thus guided them on the right path of dharma and repeated the tale of Yashodhara's eight successive births. After this both Yashomati and Maridatta renounced worldly pleasures by taking *diksa*.

SUGANDHADASAMI KATHA

The Sugandhadasami katha is a Digambara Jain text authored by Jinasagara, disciple of *bhattaraka* Devendrakirti who was he *bhattaraka* of the sea of Karanja from 1699 to 1729 CE. The text in Marathi is composed in several *chhandas* or metres, and incorporates several characters and episodes. It begins with an obeisance to the twenty four Tirthankaras and the request of the king called Srenika to Mahavira, who relates the Sugandhadasami vrata katha.

There lived, once upon a time in the splendid city of Varanasi in the Kashi region of Bharata desa, in the Jambudvīpa, a king Padmaprabha and his wily queen Srimati. One day on the onset of spring, the king set out in his chariot with the queen for sporting in the forest but on the way, the royal couple met the pious monk Sudarsana. The king paid homage to the monk and asked the queen to return to the palace and personally supervise the monk's meal so that he could break his month long fast.

The queen, smoldering with anger returned to the palace, quietly cursing the monk Sudarsana for interrupting their pastoral outing. She cooked a meal of bitter gourd and fed the monk with the unappetizing repast. The monk having eaten the unpalatable food, instantly started feeling dizzy. He staggered to the Jina temple and as the news reached his followers, they all began to condemn the queen for her actions.

The queen having finished with the monk's meal returned to the forest, but the king somehow felt something amiss. After getting back to the place, and having learnt about the unfortunate incident, King Padmanabha snatched all the queen's jewels and banished her into the forest, where the queen, having been affected by leprosy died in dire state.

The queen took several rebirths- first as a she buffalo, then as a sow, deer, and finally was born in the womb of an untouchable Chandalaṇi, who died soon after. The queen, now an untouchable's orphaned daughter emanated a foul odor which could be smelled for miles. She lived in the forest and ate fruits of the wild trees when hungry.

One day, some monks came by the side of the forest where she lived. One of them asked his teacher why such foul smell was present and the guru subsequently related the tale of how the queen had insulted the pious Jain monk and had now to undergo a life of intense suffering. The chandala girl raptly listened to this tale, she now began to show faith for the Jain 'dharma' and died, to be born again in a family of poor Brahmin in the city of Ujjain, as an ugly girl.

A sinner doesn't get redemption easily. In this birth, her foul smell emanated for an area of about just one *kosa*. She made a living by selling fruits, leaves, etc. One day, the great monk Sudarsana arrived on the edge of the forest near Ujjain and all the people led by the king flocked to visit him. The foul smelling Brahmin girl was curious, hence she also rushed to meet the monk who was answering to the peoples' queries. As soon as Sudarsana saw the girl, she fainted, whence the monk brought her back to her senses by sprinkling water on her. The girl then related her story to the monk, who advised her to follow a

strenuous *vrata* , the offensive smelling girl was born again, the tale of the birth goes thus -

In the city called Ratanpur there lived a king named Kanakprabha with his queen Kanakmala. In the same place lived a merchant couple, Jinadasa and Jinadatta. After the birth of his beautiful daughter Tilakmati, her mother passed away. The little girl was the apple of her father's eye. However after his wife's death, the merchant remarried and his second wife too bore him a fine daughter, Tejamati. The merchant's wife meted out harsh treatment to her stepdaughter and showered all her love on her own child.

Once the king Kanakprabha summoned Jinadasa and ordered him to go to a distant country to buy precious stones and gems. The merchant set out for his long journey at the king's command, advising his wife to marry off their two eligible daughters to suitors in his long absence. The merchant's cunning wife would hide her beautiful stepdaughter Tilakmati and insist on showing her own daughter to eligible suitors, declaring that her stepdaughter was ugly. Finally she found a match for her own child and the wedding date was fixed and the marriage pavilion erected. Both the girls were bathed and dressed in finery but on the eve of the wedding night the stepmother tricked Tilakmati to accompany her to the funeral ground on the outskirts of the city and left her there, assuring her that her bridegroom would come there to marry her. She told her stepdaughter that she would visit her later and crept away to supervise her daughter's marriage celebrations.

It so happened that as the bedecked Tilakmati innocently sat in the cremation ground awaiting her groom King Kanakprabha was surveying the splendors of the city from the high terrace of his palace. He sighted the breathtakingly beautiful girl in the cremation ground and wondered who she was. Was she a *yaksi*? Or was she a *gandharvini*? The king, confused, went to the funeral ground and asked her who she was. The beautiful Tilakmati replied that she was waiting for her groom to whom she was to wed that very day according to her stepmother's plans. She explained that her father, a merchant had been sent to distant lands to buy gems as per the king's orders, and that her stepmother had arranged for the wedding of hers, while her stepsister was to be married off from home. The king realizing what was on, married the maiden then and there. After spending the night with his new bride, the king started to leave for the forest at the break of dawn. He promised her that he would return each evening at nightfall. When the maiden asked him who he was, the king hid his identity, merely declaring that he was a cowherd.

The stepmother married her daughter off and shed crocodile tears for her stepdaughter saying she could not find her anywhere. Pretending to go searching for her she reached the cremation ground, where she found Tilakmati dressed in finery, a coy, blushing bride, who told her stepmother that a cowherd had married her. The stepmother pretended to be annoyed and reprimanded Tilakmati, telling her to ask her husband to come and stay with her.

The king longing to see his beloved came to the merchant's dwelling clandestinely with rich clothes and jewelry. After he had left, the wicked stepmother came and checked out her daughter who had been showered with

expensive gifts. She demanded of her daughter the source of all the finery, accusing her of wearing royal jewels stolen from the palace by her cowerd husband. Stripping Tilakmati of all her ornaments, she stormed away, leaving the girl shaken and all alone to mourn her fate.

At this time the merchant Jinadasa returned home and was surprised to find everything unusually quiet. His wife met him, but she feigned to be extremely shaken and told her husband how his dearest daughter had brought shame to them by secretly marrying a mere cowerd who was a thief to boot. Saying this, she procured all the jewels, which the clever merchant instantly recognized as belonging to royalty. He took back the booty to the king and apologized on his daughter's behalf.

The king however, smiled at the merchant instead of reprimanding him. He further added that he was read to forgive the merchant provided his daughter Tilakmati revealed the secret of her thief of a husband to the king. The merchant went home and requested his daughter to reveal the name of her husband, who in turn replied that as she was accustomed to touching her beloved husband's feet she would be able to recognize him instantly even without seeing him, but instead by touching his feet. When the merchant reported this to the king, the latter ordered Jinadasa to organize a feast at his home on the king's behalf, so that the real husband could be identified from among the invited men and the marriage ceremonies could be held formally.

The merchant made elaborate preparations for the feast. A large number of guests, including the king, arrived. The king then asked the merchant's daughter to be blindfolded, and wash the guest's feet turn by turn and recognize those belonging to her husband. Tilakmati began washing their feet, and finally when it was the king's turn, she touched his feet, instantly recognizing them to be of her husband's and declared to her father that he this was the person who had married her. Everyone was happy and the king wed Tilakmati in a grand ceremony, after which the newly wed couple went to a Jina temple. Meeting a monk there the bride asked him as to why she had fallen in love with the king at the first sight. The monk narrated her whole life story, at the same time a god arrived and paid homage to the monk, as well as the new queen, declaring that he too had attained divinity by performing the Sugandhasami vrata, like her.

Thus the queen after spending many blissful years, attained *moksa* after her death and joined the ranks of the celestial beings in heaven. In the concluding part Tirthankara Mahavira tells king Srenika that everyone rarely gets a chance to observe such a tough vrata and when they follow it rightly, as did the queen, one attains fulfillment, as Durgandha, the cursed queen did, and became Sugandha, the blessed one.

ADITYAVARA VRATA KATHA

There lived in the city of Banaras in the country of Kashi a king called Mahipal who was a just and kind ruler. In the same city lived a merchant named Matisagara and his wife Gunasundari. The couple had seven sons, of which six were wedded while the seventh, the youngest son called Gunadhara, was unmarried. One day when Gunadhara was roaming in the forest he encountered the monk Gunasagara. A large number of people had gathered in the forest to listen to the monk's sermons. The merchant's spouse, Gunasundari requested the monk that she wished to maintain some vrata, to which the monk replied that she may resort to the adityavara vrata which performed in the month of *asadha* in monsoon, entailed certain rituals that included fasting and abstaining from certain activities, and paying homage to Tirthankara Parsvanatha, as also donation of new paraphernalia required for worship to temples, copying of manuscripts and other practices.

The merchant's wife returned home and extolled the virtues of the vrata to the family members only to be met with a reaction of contempt. The result was that from that very day the family's fortunes began to slide, the seven sons left their parents in Banaras and went to Ayodhya to earn a living.

After some time a group of monks came to Banaras and were visited by a large gathering of devotees which also included the impoverished merchant and his wife. They asked the learned monks the reasons of their misfortunes and were told that they had fallen on bad days as the sons had ridiculed the adityavara vrata. They were asked to perform the ritual once again to get back their wealth, which they did and subsequently their fortunes were restored to them.

Their seven sons were however going through trying times. One day the youngest son went to the forest to get grass, and set out for home with the stack of grass, forgetting to bring in wooden sticks for brushing teeth(*datoon*), and requested his sister in law for a meal, at which she asked him to get back to the forest to fetch the sticks as they could scarcely afford to buy them. So, Gunabhadra went back to the forest and sought the stack of wooden sticks but was taken aback to find a huge snake coiled around it. He was in a dilemma and humbly invoked the blessings of the Great One, as a consequence of which Dharanendra, the yaksa of Parsvanatha became aware that a devotee was in distress. He ordered the yaksi Padmavati to help Gunadhara, at which the latter soon reached the forest and handed him a golden stick, a garland and an image of Tirthankara Parsvanatha made of precious stones and assuring Gunadhara that all would be well, asked him to return home with them. Thus Gunadhara came back home and soon absolved the initial fear of his brothers at the turn of events by narrating what had occurred in the forest, who then praised him.

From that very day onwards all their miseries were over and soon they were restored their fortunes. The brothers displayed their gratitude by erecting a Jina shrine, performing installation of an image, and giving *dana* to monks. When

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the king came to know about these events, he in pleasure offered his daughter's hand to the youngest brother Gunadhara along with a substantial dowry. The jubilant brothers soon came to Banaras to be with their parents and the entire family lived happily ever after, ascending to heavens after their deaths.

SANTINATHA CARITA

There lived in the city of Hastinapur a king named Visvasena. He was married to queen Era, daughter of Ajitanjaya, king of Gandhara. The queen witnessed sixteen auspicious dreams on the ninth day of the new moon of the month of *bhadrapada*, at the end of which she saw a dazzling white elephant entering her mouth. At this time king Megharatha's soul was conceived in the womb of queen Era, who rose up from sleep in the morning and dressing in finery reported the dreams to the king who told her that it was none else but the Tirthankara whom she had conceived. The queen's confinement was celebrated by the heavenly beings who showered her with gems and flowers till after completing her term a fine young male child was born to her.

Indra, residing in the heavens learnt intuitively about the birth of the great one and he along with the other deities marched on their respective *vahanas* to the earth to initiate the celebrations. Indra's consort, Indrani lovingly took the child in her arms and handed him over tenderly to Indra. The procession of gods and goddesses headed by Indra's Airavata marched to the Sumeru mountain, and placing the infant on a bejeweled stone slab on the summit of the mountain, bathed him and dressed him in finery. The gods celebrated the birth of the great one with songs and dance, and returning to the palace handed the baby to his parents.

King Visvasena's second wife Yashaswati conceived the soul of Dridharatha who was born as a child named Chakrayudha.

Santinatha grew up into a fine young man and was subsequently married to many beautiful princesses and ascended the throne, soon acquiring the fourteen *ratnas* and nine *nidhis* and becoming a *chakravartin*.

One day, as Santinatha stood getting dressed in the private quarters of his palace, he saw two reflections in the mirror. Pondering upon this he recollected his past and grew aware of the futility of mortal life and worldly pleasures. Coincidentally, the heavenly gods descended on the earth and urged him to renounce the kingdom and depart for the forests. Santinatha installed his son Narayana on the throne and renounced worldly pleasures, with Indra performing all the necessary rituals of the *diksa* or renunciation ceremony. Santinatha left for the forests in the palanquin called *sarvarthasiddhi* created by the gods, and reaching the *sahasrabhra vana* sat under a tree and performed *mustilocana* or tonsuring of his hair, which Indra collected in a vessel. One thousand kings, including his half brother Chakrayudha, took *diksa* along with Santinatha. After celebrating the *diksa* ceremony Indra and the other gods returned to their abode. Santinatha and the others performed severe penances and broke their fast in the town of Mandirpur, where king Sumitra performed the *annadana* or offering of food to the ascetics.

After sixteen years of rigorous penance, Santinatha again arriving in the *sahasramra vana* sat under the *nandivarta* tree and attained *kevalajnana*. The gods headed by Indra again arrived to celebrate the momentous event and create the *samavasarana* for the Tirthankara's sermon, where Santinatha addressed the divinities and the mortals, including everyone down to the lowliest creature. His

half brother Chakrayudha, and the other kings were a part of his vast entourage of followers and Santinatha thus preached the path of faith for years together and finally reaching the Sammedasikhara, attained *moksa*, along with nine thousand other kings. This event was also celebrated by the heavenly deities.

THE PREVIOUS BIRTHS OF SANTINATHA

Tirthankara Santinatha prior to his birth as the prospective Jina , had been through a series of births and rebirths in royal households in different places and time

In the kingdom of Suramya, in the capital at Podnapur lived a king named Prajapati along with his two wives, Jayavati and Mrigavati, who begot two sons named Vijay and Triprustha respectively

On the northern side of the Vijayardha mountain , in the city of Alkapur, ruled a king Mayurgriva His queen was Nilanjana and they had a son called Asvagriva(Vishakhananada reborn)

On the eastern side of the Vijayardha mountain , in the city of Rathnupur, lived a king by the name of Jwalanajati, along with his queen Vayuevga They had a son called Arkakirti and a beautiful daughter named Svayamprabha The king consulted the court astrologer regarding the marriage of his daughter and the latter predicted that none else but the prince of Podnapur shall be her groom King Jwalanajati immediately summoned a minister named Indra and sent him with a letter and a gift to Podnapur When Indra reached his destination he was informed that king Prajapati had proceeded to the forest for an outing He met him there and handed over Jwalanajati's letter and gifts The king gladly accepted Jwalanajati's proposal for his son Triprushtha and subsequently the prince and princess were united in holy matrimony Jwalanajati also bestowed upon his son in law Triprushtha two *vidyas* (knowledge) named Simhavahini and Garudavahini

When Asvagriva learnt of this wedding he was filled with intense jealousy , he assembled a large army and marched upon Triprushtha, who himself well prepared for the combat, defeated and beheaded his enemy after a long drawn battle Triprustha thus became the lord of the three zones of *Bharata desa* and along with his brother Vijay and father in law Jwalanajati and ruled with excellence for a long time

The next part of the narrative deals with Triprushtha's son king Srivijaya and his wife Sutara, sister of Amitatej, king of Rathnupur, who in turn was wedded to Srivijaya's sister Jyotiprabha

One day a foreteller arrived at the court and predicted that calamity would befall upon the person seated on the royal throne on the seventh day thereafter, though he refrained from mentioning the king's name directly The king's advisors requested him to keep a statue of a *yaksa* on the throne for the stipulated period, and the king acted accordingly As predicted the *yaksa* statue was struck by a deadly weapon on the seventh day but the king's life was saved He then proceeded to the forest for an excursion along with his beautiful wife Sutara Prince Asnighosa, in the form of a *vidyadhara*, while flying, passed through the forest and was besotted by the beauty of Sutara He assumed the form of a beautiful deer and luring king Srivijaya away from Sutara, disguised himself as Srivijaya and approached Sutara , asking her to accompany him back to the palace. As Sutara and the Asnighosa boarded the *vimana*, the latter revealed his true form as a result of which Sutara begun screaming with fear and trepidation

A *vidyadhara* who chanced to pass Asnighosa's *vimana* saw Sutara and reported the matter of abduction to king Srivijaya, who immediately proceeded to Rathnupur and sought help of his brother in law Amitateja

A fierce battle ensued between Amitateja and Srivijaya on one side and Asnighosa on the other, with the latter finally being defeated. Asnighosa to save himself, ran towards the *samavasarana* of Tirthankara Vijay on the Nabheyasima mountain, with Amitateja and Srivijaya following close at heels. Due to the miraculous effect of the *samavasarana*, Asnighosa's fear dissolved and so did the antagonism of Amitateja and Srivijaya. Soon Asnighosa's mother Asuri brought back Sutara and handed her back to Srivijaya and Amitateja and begged pardon on her son's behalf. All of them followed the righteous paths in their future lives and finally ascended to the heavens.

The narrative next shifts first sarga of the life of Santinatha, to king Srisena, ruler of Ratnapur and his two attractive and dutiful wives Srinmdita and Shikharinmdita, who begot two sons, named Indusena and Bindusena. The boys grew up and soon became proficient in various arts.

In Magadhadesa, in the town of Achalgram, there lived a Brahmin named Dharanijata, whose wife Yashobhadra begot two sons, Nandibhuti and Sribhuti. Dharanijata, from his other wife, Kapila got another son named Kapil. Dharanijata taught his sons various arts, which Kapil particularly picked up fast. Later as Kapil traveled to different places away from home he reached Rathnupur and entered the ashram of a Brahmin named Satyaki, and posing himself as a high class Brahmin, impressed the latter with his supreme knowledge and ease with the students. Satyaki believed that Kapil belonged to a Brahmin family and he and his wife Jambu, decided to give their daughter Sayabhama's hand in marriage to Kapil. The marriage was subsequently solemnized and the couple lived happily for some time. However, some time later, Satyabhama suspected the Brahmin origins of her husband owing to certain ways of his behavior. Coincidentally, Kapil's father Dharanijata, who had heard of his son's prosperity, arrived to ask him for some money. Kapil asked Satyabhama to cater to her father in law in a way befitting a Brahmin. The suspecting Satyabhama, who had begun doubting her husband's real identity got out the information from Dharanijata as to who he exactly Kapil was and was extremely hurt and sorrowful at the deception. She went to the court of king Srisena and requested him to free her from the marital ties with Kapil as he belonged to a lower caste. The king summoned Kapil and asked him to let Satyabhama out of the marital relationship, however Kapil who loved his wife dearly, refused to agree to the suggestion. Satyabhama took a stand that as her husband was not ready to let her free, she would end her life by jumping into the fire or drowning in a lake. King Srisena therefore came up with a solution requesting Kapil to let his wife Satyabhama remain in the royal household and attend to the queen. Satyabhama began residing in the palace away from her husband and performing various kinds of penances.

The narrative moves on to next sequence of births, Amitateja being born as prince Aparajit to king Stimitsagara and queen Vasundhara, while Srivijaya is born as prince Anantavirya to the same king and his other wife Anumati. Both the half

brothers shared as great rapport and duly were married to two princesses, the elder son ascended the throne while the younger one became the heir designate. One day the two brothers were watching the performances of two young, extremely talented danseuses named Barbari and Chitalika in their court when Narada arrived. He was highly annoyed and offended when the king and the prince, engrossed in the dance performance, neglected him and stormed out of the palace and went to the court of king Damitari the ruler of Sivamandirnagar, who hastened to welcome Narada. The latter informed the king about the two dancers and added how they would be a befitting addition to Damitari's court. The king therefore sent his messenger to the court of Aparajit with a message to send the dancers to the former's court. King Aparajit and Anantvirya, after consultation with their ministers decided to disguise themselves as the danseuses and accordingly arrived at Damitari's court, impressing the king with their graceful dance performance. The king asked them to teach his daughter princess Kanakashri to dance. The disguised brothers began giving the princess dancing lessons during the course of which Kanakashri and Anantaviya fell in love. When the brothers fled with the princess in a *vimana* they were spotted by an attendant of Damitari, who reported the matter to the king, who flew into a rage and chased the brothers. A fierce battle ensued between them, with Aparajit facing Damitari's army and Anantavirya taking on Damitari himself. King Damitari was finally killed in the encounter and the brothers lived happily thereafter and ascended to the heavens after their death, Aparajit becoming the Indra and Anantavirya, the Pratindra of *achyuta* heavens.

Aparajit was reborn as the son named Vajrayudha of king Ksemankara and queen Kanakachitra of the city of Ratnasanchayapur. Vajrayudha ascended the throne on attaining youth and had two queens Rajyalaksmi and Laksmimati, who begot him a son named Sahastrayudha. Vajrayudha was a wise and religious man. One day he proceeded to the forest along with his queens, and as he was busy enjoying water sports with them in a lake a wicked *vidyadhara* arrived and covered the lake with a huge boulder, thus trapping the king inside. But the king, undeterred, dealt a strong blow with his hands as a result of which the boulder broke into pieces and the king and his consorts returned to the palace safely. After a while king Vajrayudha came to possess the *nava nidhis* and fourteen *ratnas*, and became a *chakravartin*. One day as Vajrayudha sat in his palace, a god named Vichitra chula, who got jealous of the former's erudition and wisdom came forth and asked him a series of questions, to which Vajrayudha replied accurately. Vichitrachula impressed, admitted his greatness and went away.

Vajrayudha then handed over the kingdom to his son Sahasrayudha and proceeded to the forest to join his father, Ksemankara who had become a Tirthankara. Sahasrayudha too subsequently relinquished the throne and proceeded to the forest to become an ascetic. Both father and son due to their good deeds ascended to the heavens.

In the kingdom of Pushkalavati there lived a king called Dhanaratha. The soul of Vajrayudha descended into the womb of Dhanaratha's queen Manohara and a son was born to her who was named Megharatha. Sahasrayudha's soul was

reborn as prince Dridharatha, son of Dhanaratha's other queen. One day Dhanaratha, wary of worldly pleasures, renounced his kingdom, handing it over to his elder son Megharatha and proceeding to the forest, where he attained *kevalajnana*.

One day Megharatha along with his queens went to the forest. As he was resting on a stone slab of jewels, a *vimana* carrying a *vidyadhara* flew overhead, the *vimana* suddenly stopped, which made the *vidyadhara* angry. He came down to the earth and began lifting the stone slab upon which Megharatha was seated. Megharatha pressed his thumb down and trapped the *vidyadhara* under the slab. Seeing this the *vidyadhara's* wife came and beseeched Megharatha to set her husband free, which the king did. The *vidyadhara* then began to worship the king.

One day as Megharatha was seated in his palace, a frightened pigeon flew and sat down in his lap, followed by a vulture who told Megharatha that he was hungry and the pigeon was his hunt. In reality it was not a vulture but a heavenly being who spoke thus, and Megharatha guessed that he was being tested. He refused to let go of the pigeon who had sought his refuge, the heavenly being finally presented his real form and praising Megharatha went away.

One day Megharatha decided to renounce the world after the visit of his ascetic father Dhanaratha. He asked his younger brother Dridharatha to take over the reins of the kingdom, but as the latter politely declined expressing a wish to renounce the worldly pleasures along with his elder brother, Megharatha handed the kingdom over to his son Meghasen, and both of them along with other royal members renounced the worldly pleasures, attaining elevated positions in the heavens after their deaths.