

SUMITRA

Long ago in the city of Srichandra, King Tarapida had a minister named Sumitra. He was a devoted shravak, and he regularly practiced samayik, pratikraman, and other religious rites. One day, the king asks Sumitra why he had overloaded himself with all these worthless activities. He wanted to know what he achieved out of them, and suggested that he should give up these things so he may have a pleasant life.

Sumitra told the king, " Instead of discouraging me, you should help me in carrying out these activities. You or anyone should know that good deeds help in one's well-being."

One day, the minister finished his duties at the court and went home. This was the fourteenth lunar day, known as chaturdasi. He was fasting that day. He was late to perform pausadha at the temple. So he vowed not to leave his house during the night until sunrise and sat down in pratikraman.

During the night, a messenger came and told Sumitra that the king wanted to see him. The minister told him he could see the king at that time. The king sent another message to tell him that if he did not go to the king at once, he should resign his office and to hand over his royal seal. Sumitra decided to continue his vow. He told the messenger to peak up the royal seal and tell the king that he would not be able to come.

While back to the king, the messenger thought it was not a bad to be the minister himself. So he started uttering, "I am the minister, I am the minister." He started repeating it louder and louder. It so happened that after a few minutes, some armed men jumped on him, and knocked him to the ground, and killed him. They grabbed the minister's seal of the office.

When the king heard of the messenger's death, he grabbed an opened sword, and left to go to the temple. He felt certain that Sumitra had a hand in this murder. On the way, he found his messenger who was lying dead with some armed men around him. He asked the men, "Why did they kill this man?" They said, "We are armed men of King Surasen from Dharavar and came here to kill the minister Sumitra.

The king told them who he was. The man got scared and surrendered to him. He thought, "It is good that Sumitra did not come. His vow saved him."

The king's anger cooled down. He reached Sumitra's house. He told Sumitra, "If you had not been performing your vow today, you would have been killed. This would have been a terrible tragedy for the kingdom. I reinstate you to your office. I am sorry for what I did to you." This event turned the king to be a very religious person. The king met with Acharya Purnachandra, and accepted the vows of a shravak. The court was turned into a spiritual assembly. Sumitra now became even more special to the king, and the king did many good things for his people and his kingdom.