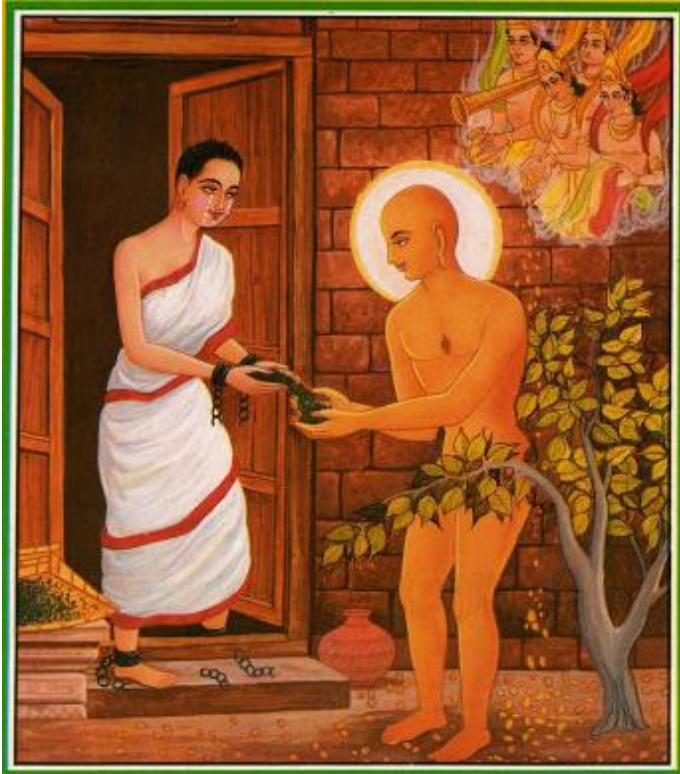


CHANDANBALA AND BHAGWAN MAHAVIR



Chandanbala was the daughter of King Dadhivahan of Champa and queen Dharini and was also known as Vasumati. It was from her mother that she had imbibed the virtues of tolerance, renunciation and religious faith. As a result of such grooming, she desired spiritual growth and she decided not to marry. Knowing her mind and intentions full well, her parents allowed her very willingly to remain firm in her vow. Meanwhile, Shatanik, the king of Kaushambi attacked Champa and Chandanbala was sold as a dasi (a female slave). But Dhanvah Sheth paid adequate money and saved Chandanbala from becoming a courtesan. Dhanvah Sheth had treated her as his own daughter.

Once Dhanvah Sheth happened to return from a tour, and as usual she went to him to wash his feet; meanwhile, in order to save her loose hair from falling into the dirty water, Dhanvah Sheth lifted it up with the good intention. Mula Shethani, Dhanvah Sheth's wife happened to see this sight and she became immensely jealous. Once when Dhanvah Sheth was away from the town, Mula Shethani took the opportunity and cut off Chandanbala's hair; then her feet were chained and she was driven into a cellar. She had to go without food and water for three full days. When Dhanvah Sheth returned he sensed the situation and decided to call a blacksmith. Meanwhile he gave her some boiled unsplit black beans, kept there for the cattle, in a winnowing basket.

Chandana was amazed at how things were going. She started wondering that once she was a princess and could get anything she wanted to, and now she had to settle with whatever she was getting. Chandana then thought of offering lentils to someone else before she started. She got up, and walked to the door, and stood there with one foot out and the other in.

To her surprise she found this young monk (Mahavir) coming near her room. She said, "Oh, respected monk please, accept this food which is suitable for you and please oblige me." Bhagwan Mahavir looked at her and noticed that one of his pre-decided conditions was still missing. So, without accepting food, he

kept on going. [His conditions were, 1) The person who would be offering should be a princess, 2) she should be bald headed, 3) she should be in chains, 4) while offering uncooked lentils, her one foot should be inside the house and other one outside the house, 5) and she should be in tears.] So, you might have realized that she met all conditions except tears in her eyes, and therefore, Lord Mahavir went on. Chandana felt very sad and tears started running down her face. She started thinking that how unfortunate she was that even though she had a chance to offer food to the monk, he would not accept it. She, in her crying voice, once again, requested a monk to accept the food. Lord Mahavir turned back and saw tears in her eyes. Mahavir came back to accept the food knowing that all his conditions were met. She put the lentils in Bhagwan Mahavir's hand and felt satisfied.

Bhagwan Mahavir, thus, accepted alms from Chandanbala after five months and twenty-five days. Everyone realized the truth. Her chains broke miraculously. She regained her beautiful hair. As soon as Bhagwan Mahavir accepted alms from her, there was divine shower of flowers. King Shatanik and Mula Shethani begged to be forgiven for all their misdeeds. Chandanbala became the first disciple of Bhagwan Mahavir and being a torchbearer for the mankind, she ultimately attained divine knowledge (Kevalgyan).

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