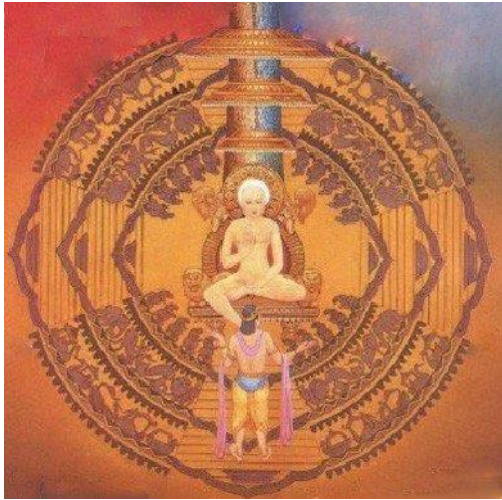


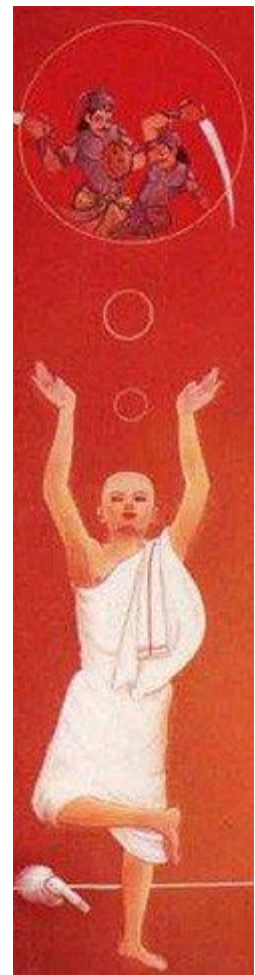
Shri Prasannachandra Rajarshi



Once Lord Mahavir arrived in the city of Rajgruhi. He was accompanied by the royal sage (Rajarshi) Prasannachandra. Rajarshi Muni used to execute severe penance simply by staring at the fire-emitting Sun, with his one leg up and both arms raised straight. Magadha king Shrenik was completely impressed by such severe penance and politely questioned Lord Mahavir, “O Lord, suppose this monk performing severe penance, passes away at this particular moment, what state would he achieve after his death?”

Lord Mahavir said, “He is Prasannachandra Rajarshi. In case he dies at this very moment, he would possess the condition from the seventh hell (narak).” The gathering was shocked to hear this. King Shrenik was puzzled; he thought that a saint’s soul by no means could go to hell. How was it then that Lord Mahavir forecast such a ‘narak’ for Muni Prasannachandra? Thinking that perhaps he had not listened to the Lord’s utterance properly, king Shrenik asked again, “O Lord ! In the event that this sage Prasannachandra dies at this moment, what state his soul would attain?” Lord Mahavir said, “He would attain liberation.” Equally puzzled by these words of Lord Mahavir, king Shrenik said, “Lord, in the first instance you said that he would attain the state of narak and now within just a few seconds you say that he would attain the moksha state – the ultimate liberation. Why such contradictory statements?”

Lord said, “When you asked the first time, the monk had just heard Durmukh saying that king Dadhivahan of Champanagari had attacked and had laid a siege to the city of king Prasannachandra. His ministers had betrayed Prasannachandra and had conspired to deprive him of the kingdom by killing the child-king. On listening this, Monk Prasannachandra’s mind was occupied by the thought of his kingdom and child and soon his mind became a battlefield of violent and aggressive thoughts. As a result, he was entangled in such namkarma (karma that determines destinies and body type) like gati-jati etc. which would have sent him to the seventh hell. Supposedly, he died in such a violent state of mind, he would surely have



gone to hell. Prasannachandra, fighting a battle in his mind, touched his head to ensure that he had his helmet on before making a fatal attack on the enemy king.

As soon as he touched his completely shaven head, he was awakened to the reality. Soon he began to think, "Though I am engaged in saintly penance, I did indulge in violent thoughts. I almost performed cruel sinful deeds. Awakened to such a realization, monk Prasannachandra felt repentant. Having critically reviewed his serious lapse, the monk once again concentrated on quiet meditation. Hence when king Shrenik asked Lord Mahavir the second time, the monk had already become worthy of the state of liberation. By this time divine music surrounded Prasannachandra Muni. Lord Mahavir said, "He has attained 'kevalgyan' – pure and absolute knowledge. Gods rejoice at this moment of attaining pure knowledge."

Monk Prasannachandra's character-sketch acquaints us with a self-vigilant monk. What a wonderfully vigilant soul! One who would be awakened to self-realization by just touching the shaven head! His repentance being that of an awakened soul, he attained pure and absolute knowledge.

Content source: <http://www.tattvagyan.com/>