In the city of Tumbivan, there lived a rich Brahmin named Dhangiri. He had a beautiful wife named Sunanda. Their life was full of joy. When Sunanda was pregnant, she had a beautiful dream. She told her husband, who was a scholar, about the dream. He told her that she would give birth to a bright and charming child. She felt very happy.

One day a Jain acharya named Sinhgiri came to the city. Both Dhangiri and Sunanda went to listen to his sermons regularly. Dhangiri’s soul was awakened by these sermons, and he lost interest in his wealth, family, and worldly affairs. He decided to give up his worldly life and become a monk. He told his wife about his decision. She was shocked. She tried to convince him to stay and enjoy their life together. She also said that since they were going to have a child, so it would be better to stay together to raise the child. Dhangiri did not change his mind. Nonetheless, he made the necessary financial arrangement for his family. Sunanda, who was the daughter of a religious merchant, Dhanpal, had a deep understanding of religion. Therefore, she accepted his decision. Sunanda was consoled that at least she was the wife of a virtuous man.

A few months later, Sunanda gave birth to a very handsome boy. He was lovable because he always had a smile on his face. Everybody who saw him liked him from their very first glance. Sunanda celebrated his birth. She felt happy that she had a son to raise, but her happiness did not last long. One day some ladies from the neighborhood were visiting her and started talking about her husband. One of them said, “If Dhangiri had not taken diksha, then he would have celebrated the birth with more extravagance than Sunanda.” The child, although a baby, heard the word “diksha” and started thinking. He felt as if he had heard the word diksha before. While thinking about it, he suddenly remembered his past life. He realized that he was on the right spiritual path. He decided that he should take advantage of being born as a human again and utilize this life to further uplift his soul. He should become a monk-like his father. He also realized that his mother would not let him go because he was her only hope and joy. He started thinking about what could be done to get her permission.

At last, he came to the decision that since his mother would not let him go willingly, he should create a situation in which she would get tired of him and give him up. He was still a little boy in the crib when he thought, “If I keep crying all the time, she will get tired of me and maybe she will try to get rid of me.” He put his thoughts to work right away. He started crying. His mother came running to comfort him, but he just kept crying. She tried everything but nothing helped to quiet him down. She took him to the doctors and took advice from others, but nothing worked. The child’s trick worked. Even their neighbors, who had liked this child very much, got tired of him. Finally, his
mother was fed up with him, but she did not know what to do with him. The child was now six months old, and monk Dhangiri (the child’s father) and acharya Sinhgiri visited the city again. Sunanda came to know about this and thought of giving the child to his father.

At the usual time for alms, Dhangiri Muni asked permission from the acharya to go for alms. acharya Sinhgiri told him, “Dhangiri, today you may accept even a living thing if it is offered.” The acharya possessed a special power, and he knew what alms monk Dhangiri was going to get, so he gave his permission ahead of time. Although Muni Dhangiri did not understand what his guru meant, he left for alms. On his route to various houses, he arrived at Sunanda’s house. He said, “Dharma Labha” (May you follow the proper religion). Sunanda recognized the voice. She welcomed Muni Dhangiri and expressed happiness in seeing him again. She invited him to enter the house for food.

The young boy also heard Muni Dhangiri’s words: “Dharma Labha”. He thought that this was the best opportunity for his trick, so he started crying. This irritated his mother and she told the monk, “You are lucky to be able to uplift your soul, but I am tired with the burden of your child. He does nothing but cry. He does not let me rest and I am very unhappy. Please accept him so there will be peace in the house.” The child heard these words and became very happy in his mind. He hoped that his father would accept her proposal. Muni Dhangiri remembered the words of his guru spoken right before he left for alms. Now he understood what his guru meant. He said, “Sunanda, if you really want to give this child away, I will accept him, but please think twice. Once you give him away, you will not be able to get him back. You will have no right to this child after that. On hearing this, the child started crying even louder. She said, “I do not want to hear this crying anymore. I am so sick and tired of him that I do not want him around at all. You can take him forever.”

She picked up the child and put him in the muni’s cloth bag. As soon as the boy was handed over to the muni, he stopped crying and started smiling. Sunanda was surprised by this and kept looking at the boy. However, she was determined to give him away. Muni left with the child to go to the upashray. acharya Sinhgiri saw that Muni Dhangiri was carrying something heavy, so he asked him, “Why is your bag so heavy?” When the muni opened his bag, his guru saw the handsome, smiling boy. Since he was so heavy, the acharya named him “Vajrakumar”.

To be continued...