



PRAVARTINI CHANDANBALA (era of Mahavirswami)



Having undertaken certain vows, Bhagvan Mahavir fasted for six months. His fast was finally broken when a beautiful girl, her legs bound by chains, one foot on the threshold and the other outside of the house, with her head shaven, and tears in her eyes, offered him boiled urad dal (a lentil). Indradev in heaven celebrated this by showering gold coins and jewels upon the surrounding lands. This girl was Chandanbala, the princess Vasumati. Her father lost a war and was killed in it, so her mother fled with Vasumati. But when a soldier tried to rape her, she killed herself. The soldier sold Vasumati to Dhanavasheth who accepted her as his daughter. Once when Vasumati was washing the sheth's feet, her long hair fell into the water and the sheth lifted them out. This was seen by Dhanavasheth's wife, Mula, who was so jealous of Vasumati's beauty that when the sheth went out of town, she shaved Vasumati's head, put chains around her feet and imprisoned her in a room. Three days later when the sheth found her, he gave her the boiled urad and set out to find an ironsmith. Chandanbala Sadhvi became the head of 3600 female ascetics and having reached the state of absolute enlightenment, attained moksha in that very life.