

## 1.8 The best Nun (*Sadhvi*) institution of Jainism.

### *Sadhvi Chandanbala*

Even after millennium, the story of *Sadhvi Chandanbala* is a source of inspiration for all of us. In Jainism, we have enumerated 16 'Satis' and among these 16 *Satis* too, the place of *Sadhvi Chandanbala* is unique. *Chandanbala*, indeed, was a person of knowledge, a person of great virtues and 20 persons of great penance. After accepting the order of nun hood on renouncing the worldly life, she has a credit of being FIRST *Sadhvi* (nun), when lord *Mahavir* decided to have a community of nuns (*Sadhvi Sangh*) and she was also a leader of 36,000 nuns in that community during Lord *Mahavir's* period.

*Chandanbala* was daughter of king *Dadhivahan* and Queen *Dharini* of *Champa* state. Her original name was *Vasumati*. She had learnt the lessons of giving up, tolerance and sincerity to religion for her mother *Dharini*. Queen *Dharini* herself was a learned person of very high quality, a great thinker and was devoted to religion. *Vasumati* (*Chandanbala*) decided to remain unmarried due to her good thoughts cultivated since childhood and was eager for self attainment. Having known and convinced of her high ideas, both parents gladly consented her to remain unmarried.

Once the king of *Kasumbi*, king *Shatanik* attacked *Champa*, conquered it, and *Chandanbala* was sold as a slave. The great and virtuous trader *Dhanavah* paid adequate price for her and saved her being sold to a prostitute. *Chandanbala* was so beautiful, so service-oriented and sincere and so modest in her behavior that anybody would have respect for her. However, such respect, being received from men, became for her cause of jealousy and envy. Of course *Dhanavah Sheth* considered her to be her daughter.

Once *Dhanavah Seth* returned from a small trip *Chandanbala* was helping to wash his hand/legs. In this process, her long beautiful hairs came down from her head lest the beautiful long hairs will get dirty falling down on earth, the *Sheth* (*Dhanavah*) very spontaneously, took the hairs in his hand, and put it on the head of *Chandanbala*. His wife *Mula Shethani* saw this. This made her angry with envy. When *Dhanavah Sheth* was out on his business tour, *Mula Shethani* got all her long beautiful hairs removed by a barber, put the cuffs in her legs and imprisoned her in the underground cellar of the house. She did not food and water for all 3 days. *Dhanavah Sheth* returned after 3 days. He came to know of everything. He decided to call for a

black smith to break the cuffs from her legs. At that time he thought of giving some food to this 3 days hungry *Chandanbala*, but nothing came to his sight except the boiled *Urad*, kept aside for the animals feeding.

Lord Mahavir had come to the city of *Kasumbi*. He had taken a distinct vow- *Abhigraha*. It was indeed a distinct vow in many respect with a variety of dimensions.

**Substance Wise :** he had to accept only boiled *Urad*, provided they are kept in a particular kind of *instrument – Supada*.

**Place Wise :** he was to accept it from a person whose both legs are on two different sides of threshold.

**Time Wise :** he was to accept these *Urad* only in afternoon, after lunch hour has passed.

**Person Wise :** he was to accept this from a person who is originally a princess but presently a slave. Her legs should be cuffed. Her head should be shaved. There must be tears in her eyes. She should have a penance of *Attham* – three fasts consecutively.

This was his vow- a great *Abhigraha*. For long 5 months and 25 days, this vow was fulfilled but to-day it was fulfilled and lord Mahavir accepted the food after 5 months and 25 days from *Chandanbala* every present realises the truth. The cuff get broken automatically. The hairs grow automatically there and there only. when held *Mahavir* accepts the *Urad*, flowers are showered from the sky by Gods. *Mula Shethani* repented for her conduct to *Chandanbala*. King *Shatanik* also realised and repented his bad deeds.

*Chandanbala*, however all heaving the sermons from Lord Mahavir, decided to renunciate, and became first *Sadhvi* in newly established nun's institution she was leader of this institution. She achieved divine knowledge in course of time, to show us the path of liberation.

## ***Sadhvi Pushpachula***

The story of *Sadhvi Pushpachula* a distinguished example of service to the seniors. In the city of *Pruthvipury* a twin brother and sister were born to queen *Pushpavati*. The name to a son was given *Pushpachul* and a daughter, *Pushpachula* Both were so much attached to each other that they always moved in each other's company and almost never got separated. When they became youth, the king thought of their marriages, but the question arose as to now they will be able to settle in life, living with somebody, when they do not get separated from each other. At last, the king thought it inevitable to get them married mutually with each other.

But Queen *Pushpavati* was very much perturbed on this issue. Her heart was pained with this incident. She almost hated this world, where the personal love and affection can lead to the marriage of a brother and a sister! She thought of renouncing this world. After becoming a *Sadhvi*, she went through penance and after death, became a goddess in heaven.

In course of event, *Puspchul* became king of *Prithvipur* and *Pushpachula* the queen. The late mother was in heaven as a Goddess. She now with her special knowledge called '*Avadhigyan*' knew how the brother and sister were living like husband and wife. The queen was much pained. She showed the dreams of heaven and hell to *Pushpachula*. Queen *Pushpachula* asked *Acharya Artikpura* the meaning to her in brief that the soul of a person who does good deed is his friend and one who does bad deed his soul is his enemy. Queen *Pushpachula* understood the hidden meaning of what was said and she had a great repentance of her deed. What *Acharya Arhikputra* gave religion sermons, all her passions and ignorance disappeared from her mind. She requested the husband to permit her to renunciate the world and become a nun. She should accept food (*Gochri*) from his palace.

*Acharya Arnikaputra* could see that next year was the year of great famine. He sent his disciples in the far off places; but *Acharya Arnikaputra* himself, due to his very old age could not migrate. *Sadhvi Puspchula* served the *Gurudev* with great devotion. This devoted service brought her '*Kevalgyana*' - the ultimate knowledge. Once she brought the '*Gochri*' (food) during very heavy rains. When *Gurudev* asked her about it, she politely explained that she did nothing strong because she has walked only in the water which had no lives within. (the *Achitta* water.)

Then only, *Gurudev* realised that *Sadhvi Pushpachula* has attained *Kevalgyana*. He asked for her pardon, that her services were deployed despite her being great '*Kevali*' *Sadhvi Pushpachula* was over whelmed with such frankness of *Guru*. Giving pardon is pleasure of life

and spring of penance. The nature becomes so sweet with coming of spring likewise life also becomes sweet with the pardon. The virtues of soul become fragrant; and pardon is born. It springs from broadening of heart. It springs from wealth of virtues. It results in peace of mind.

*Sadhvi Pushpachula* was contemporary of *Lord Mahavir*. Her story of life tells us about good fruits of good deeds and bad fruits of evil deeds. Her bad deeds showed her evil fruits. Mother led her to proper way. On *Pushpachula's* life, we see the significance of command of *Gurudev*, Service to *Gurudev*, Devotion to *Gurudev*. *Sadhvi Pushpachula* attains *Kevalgyana* by her devoted and convicted service to *Guru*. When *Acharya Arnikputra* comes to know that she has attained *Kevalgyana*, he asks for her pardon. *Guru* is senior person but he does not mind apologizing to his junior *Sadhvi*. This 'Laghuta' in Jainism is its distinguished feature. To be small is to be great! When *Guru* realised that he has done something unworthy, he had no objection in apologizing in even a small *Sadhvi*! To give pardon is a deed which can be done by only a bold brave person.

“  $\ddot{y}\phi\}\phi\phi \pm\grave{e}\acute{U}S^2 | \phi\hat{e}^- \ddagger\phi\grave{a}e \phi$  ” only a bold brave man with broadness of heart can ask for pardon or can give it.

### ***Sadhvi Yakini Mahattara***

To forgive is the mine of all good virtues. It requires great strength to forgive somebody, hence it is said that “  $\ddot{y}\phi\}\phi\phi \pm\grave{e}\acute{U}S^2 | \phi\hat{e}^- \ddagger\phi\grave{a}e \phi$  ” (to forgive is the virtue of a brave person. In Jainism, such forgiveness is considered to be responsible for taking away the evil path, responsible for giving trio-jewels and responsible for saving you from the birth and death – and ocean of *Sansar* and therefore, an essence three worlds. *Sadhvi Mahattara* did such an act of awakening the best of forgiveness.

*Hans* and *Paramhans* were two disciples of *Acharya Haribhadra Suri*. They were killed by people of other religion. *Acharya Haribhadra Suri* was greatly perturbed by this incident. Both the disciples were very close to his heart and therefore, the cruel act of their killing provoked uncontrollable feelings of revenge in his heart. The killers were *Buddhist*. *Acharya Haribhadra* thought of killing 1444 students and teachers of the *Buddhist Vihar*, by throwing them in boiled oil. He was furious with anger and feeling of revenge. When a person becomes

angry, he loses the sense of propriety. His root of anger become the tree of great revenge. In order to materialise this ideas, he closed the doors of *Upashray* lighted a very big furnace, put the oil in a vessel and placed it on fire to boil the oil. He, with his spiritual strength summoned all the and teachers (1444 in number and made them stand in the sky. His intention was to call them one by one by his spiritual strength and put them in boiled oil to kill them mercilessly.

*Sadhvi Yakini Mahattara* came to know about *Acharya's* feeling of revenge and his intention to kill 1444 students and teachers of *Buddha Vihar* in boiled oil, to take the revenge of his dearest two disciples. She was shocked to know this how a learned *Jain Acharya* can even, think of such a merciless act. *Sadhvi Yakini Mahattara* hurried speedily to *Upashray*. The doors of *Upashray* were closed. *Acharya Haribhadra* considered *Sadhvi Yakini Mahattara* as his mother. He told her that he was busy with a spiritual activity and that she should come there after sometime.

But *Sadhvi Yakini Mahattara* was very firm. She firmly told the *Acharya* that she needs to talk to him right now and therefore the doors of the *Upashray* may be opened forth with. The doors were opened *Sadhvi Yakini Mahattara* very respectfully offered her *Vandana* to the *Acharya* and then she told him "Oh! *Achayrajee*, I have come to confess my sin and ask for its repentance from you. Please prescribe my repentance."

*Acharya Haribhadra Suri* himself was very learned *Acharya*. He considered *Sadhvi Yakini Mahattara* as his mother. Earlier, when he could not understand the meaning of a stanza recited by *Sadhvi Yakini Mahattara*, his pride of learning was washed away. At that time, because of his inability to understand the verse, he accepted his defeat and had renounced the world and became disciple of *Acharya Jindatta Suri*. Otherwise prior to that, he was a royal Priest and a learned *Pandit*. He considered *Sadhvi Yakini Mahattara* as his mother because she was a person who showed him a right path. Now such a mother figure *Sadhvijee* had come to him for requesting repentance of her confession. What was the matter. *Acharya Haribhadra Suri* was very eager to know the cause.

*Sadhvi Yakini Mahattara* in a painful voice explained that while walking, just out of knowledge, one frog come under her foot and her poor 5 sense frog was killed, thought unknowingly. She said that because of the frog being killed under her feet, the soul is greatly pained. She said that this is her confession of sin and she went to repent as per his prescription,

so that, even if she dies all of a sudden, she will not die without repentance, she wants to repent to compensate the great sin done by her, through unknowingly.

*Acharya Haribhadra Suri* said with a high voice that if she could not take care of such a five sense being (a frog) she must take the repentance.

*Sadhvi Yakini Mahattara* accepted her repentance (as prescribed by *Acharya*) very respectfully, but then added; “Oh I got a repentance for my sinful act of killing one five sense being (a frog) and I will do it accordingly, but what will be repentance for you, oh, *Acharya!* When you have determined to kill 1444 students and their Teachers knowingly and intentially?”

Hearing these words from *Sadhvi Yakini Mahattara*, the anger of *Acharya Haribhadra* vanished. He had summoned the students and teachers with the help of his spiritual strength. They all were now went back to their *Buddha Vihar*.

And as a repentance of his intention to kill 1444 persons mercilessly, he composed 1444 great religious scriptures/ works that highlight pardon/forgiveness as against anger. The anger was now turned into forgiveness and the revenge was replaced by knowledgeable works.

### ***Sadhvi Pahinimata***

The great mother, who gave birth to great son was none else but *Sadhvi Pahini*. She was wife of *Seth Sacho (Sachig)* of *Dhandhuka*, of *Modh* caste. She was a sister of well known *Seth Neminag*. Once during night, she saw a *Chintamani jewel*. Somebody held it in two hands and was offering it to *Pahini*. In her dream, *Pahini* accepted it and then handed over to the *Guru*. She was overwhelmed in her dream for such happening and she woke up from her sleep.

*Pahini* thought that since *Acharya Devchandra Surijee* is in the town, why not ask him only the meaning of this dream. *Acharya Devchandra Surijee* told her that she will give a birth to a jewel of human and in course of time he will become a jewel of *Jain* order, and will be a great *Acharya* of Jainism. on hearing this from *Guru*, *Pahini* was very much pleased. She had great faith in the *Guru*. Every mother would wish that her son achieves the greatest goal of his life, and *Pahini* believed that monk hood is the topmost peak of human life. So, she was extremely pleased. She was most happy and her heart was of full of joy because her son was to become a great *Acharya*.

She gave birth to a bright son of 15<sup>th</sup> day- full moon day of month of *Kartik* of the V.S. 1145. The Parents gave him the name of *Changdev* (*Chang* mean best.). The child *Changdev*. Once sat on the *Pat* of *Gurudev*. At last parents agree for his renunciation of the world. Now as a monk, his name was *Muni Somchandra*. He was a great learned person. In V. S. 1166 of third dark day of *Vaishakh* he was given the position of the *Acharya* and his name was given *Acharya Hemchandra Suri*. The great mother *Pahini Devi* was also present on this auspicious occasion. She was so much overwhelmed with joy that on the occasion of *Acharya* position of the son, the mother also joined the order of Jain nun. She was now *Sadhvi Pahini* and she was given the position of *Pravartini*. *Sadhvi Pahini* had taken a very hard vow to total giving up of food. A number of devotees used to visit and pay their respect to her, and mere appreciating her great thoughts. They all respectfully bowed down to her who had given up her beloved young son to the *Jain* religion. *Acharya Hemchandra Surijee* composed a number of religious and literary works in a number of subjects. He provided best guidance to king of *Gujarat*, great *Siddharaj Jaysinh* and king *Kumarpal*. He took the fame of Jainism to its best height of golden peak. His impressive personality appealed to a small citizen to the greatest of emperors. One finds in him life the love for own religion, as well as tolerance respect for others religion too. He was strict follower of five great vows, and his control on senses was illustrious to others. He was full of compassion for other. The great mother of such a great son also followed his path. *Sadhvi Pahini* was engrossed and her own devotion and meditation. She was pleased to see his specie and distinguished achievement of *Yoga* and his giving and getting big nave for the religion. Son *Acharya Hemchandra Surijee* was also taking utmost care of the mother. He had great devotion for the mother. Once she was unwell. The nuns around her were taking care of her last moments. *Acharya Kalikal Sarvagna Hemchandra Surijee* along with a group of his disciples came to see her. *Pravartini Pahinijee* died and the household followers spent Rs. Three crores after her Mother? He himself is without love and affection and without money also. But, *Kalikal Sarvagna Acharya Hemchandra Surijee* offered three lakh verses behind her.

We all remember *Acharya Kalikal Sarvagna Hemchandra Surijee* M. S. for his profound learning and his great contribution to greatness of Jainism. likewise here also simultanously remember his mother *Pravartini Sadhvi Pahini Devi* for her great feelings and her best devotion of Jainism.

## *Sadhvi Sunanda (Rupsen)*

Jain Philosophy has given a deep thought as *Karma*. Whatever happens in this world, whatever happens in this world, happens due to *Karmas* only. We cannot avoid *Karmas*. Such happening of *Karma* appeared in the lives of *Sunanda* and *Rupsen* only. *Sunanda* had become a *Sadhvi* and she was indifferent to worldly happiness. Due to her server penance, she had attained a distinct knowledge called '*Avadhi Gyana*' and she was engrossed in her nun's life. Due to this *Avadhi Gyana*, she had known he previous life also. Once she told her senior *Guruni* that *Rupsen* is undergoing great unhappiness and he is in the unfortunate circle of birth and rebirth and now that she knows all these things, she wants to help him come out of it, wants to explain him the entire situation. Telling all these, she requested the *Guruni* to permit her to go to *Vidya Dwip*, where the soul of *Rupsen* is leading a life in the *Yoni* of an elephant. She said she wants to help the poor soul.

The respected *Guruni*, listening to all these things, gladly granted her the leave to go to *Vidya Dwip*. She said that when it is a matter of helping any soul, she should not come in her way.

Obtaining thus the permission from *Guruni*, *Sadhvi Sunanda* took 4 more *Sadhviji*s with her, come to *Sugram* and stayed there for monsoon stay (*Chaturmas*).

*Sadhvi Sunanda* came to know that *Rupsen* is born as an elephant and that he has become a terror to the people of the city. He used to crush everybody that comes across him, under his legs mercilessly. People were terrified by him and were running away for and for from him. Due to the fear, people were even afraid going out of the house.

*Sadhvi Sunanda* fearlessly went to him to give him proper preaching. The citizens tried to prevent her telling that to go to him is to invite the death, but *Sadhvi Sunanda* fearlessly moved ahead. At that time the elephant came there with great cry, but seeing the *Sadhvi Sunanda*, due to his affection for her in past life, he became totally quiet. *Sadhvi Sunanda* asked him, "How long you would like to be unhappy just because of your affection? How many trouble you have undergone just because of your love for me. Your six lives have been wasted in this feelings of love, and now this is your seventh life, and you want to waste this too? Please listen? Please understand?"

Then *Sadhvi Sunanda* told him about all his previous lives thus " *Rupsen*, when you were in human life, you were attracted to me, but you could not get me. You died accidentally

under the falling wall. Your golden dreams could not be realised and you died. But because of your affection for me, you came in my womb. But at that time, I was unmarried woman, so that was aborted some how. There after you were born as a child of a *Sapan* (wife of the snake) in the garden of king *Prithvi Vallabh* of *Kshit Pratishtit* city. I was at that time queen of king *Prithvi Vallabh* and you as a *Sapan* (wife of the snake) came to bite me, and therefore the king got you killed. In forth life you were a crow. I was enjoying a musical concert with king *Prithvi Vallabh* and you came there with your disturbing voice. Therefore the king got you killed. Then in fifth life you were born as a swam I was sitting in the shade of a big tree. And you were also enjoying my company as a swam and were singing sweet song. At that time a crow came and putting its excreta on the king, fled away. You were simply looking at me, but because the clothes of the king became dirty by the crow, the king became angry and got the swam killed at once. In the sixth life you were a deer, and the king was reading eating deer's meat. At that time a *Muni* came. He possessed four knowledge he explained all these previous lives to us and I decided to become a nun. And I came to know about such a situation due to *Karmas*, I rennuciated the world to remove my *Karmas*.

Hearing the story of six previous lives from *Sadhvi Sunanda* , the elephant became quiet, even as an animal it accepted the best of religion. It performed the penance and died quietly and become a god in eighth Dev Loka. In Course of time he attained *Kevalgyana* – the ultimate knowledge and thus attained the unbroken position.