

King Udayan



Udayan was the king of Sindhu Sauveer province, and sixteen counties and three hundred and sixty-three towns were under him. Ten small rulers accepted his authority. He was married daughter of King Chetak of Vaishali, and they had a Son, Abheech Kumar.



After her death, Udayan's wife became an angel, appeared before the king, and told him that worldly life is meaningless and sensual pleasures end in misery. So, Udayan decided to reduce his attachment to worldly pleasures.



While wandering, Tirthankara Mahavira came to the king's province, where the king devotedly listened to the lecture of Bhagwan Mahavir. He decided to become a monk because he thought bad acts were done when one was a king and innocent persons were punished. He decided not to declare his son as his successor so he would not go to hell in his next life.



He made Keshi his nephew, the next successor, but his son took this wrongly and went to the forest. King Udayan became a monk, observed severe austerities, and spent most of his time reciting scriptures and meditating.



He kept long fasts and became very weak and ill. When the illness took a turn for the worst, the doctor advised him to take curd daily. Udayan knew there were many cows in Veetbhay town, so curd is prepared in almost every family. He could get curd in his wanderings for begging and could spend the remaining time studying the Holy books.



Udayan decided to go to Veetbhay, where his worldly successor Keshi was the king. The ministers of King Keshi instigated the king against him and told the king that Udayan had become greedy for the kingdom. King Keshi ordered that Udayan could not enter Veetbhay.



Udayan was so weak he could not go to another town, and no one was sheltering him. Suddenly, a potter allowed him to stay in his small place. King Keshi did not like this and ordered the potter to give the food to Udayan, which he would send.



King Keshi sent him the food, but it was mixed with poison. Queen Prabhavati, Udayan's late wife, who had become an angel, learned food out and removed the poison. Now, King Keshi became more alert and started getting the poison mixed in his presence. He was sending food through his trusted servant, but Prabhavati would always remove it from the food.



One day in the absence of the angel, the poisonous food was given to Udayan. He felt the poison spreading in his body and knew that King Keshi was responsible for it, but he did not have any bad thoughts against the king. He knew that his end was near and undertook fasting until his death. This is known as Sanllekhana or Santhara in Jainism.



He absorbed himself in deep meditation. He was thinking that Keshi sufficiently repaid him by giving him the kingdom of Freedom. He had no hatred against the potter or the servant who had brought the food.



He got perfect knowledge, Kevalgnan. Udayan died in peace, and his soul was liberated from the cycle of birth and death.

