

JAIN FESTIVAL VARSHITAP



Khub Khub
Anumodna to
those
undertaking
Varshitap.
"Shatama Rasho"

Varshitap is a special and arduous Tap (austerity), lasting around thirteen months and thirteen days. Varshitap is done to commemorate Adinath Bhagwan's 13 months long fast completed after taking diska – the first person to do so in the current half of the time cycle. According to our scriptures, in one of his previous lives, he suggested to a farmer to tie a cloth over the cows' mouths to stop them eating the grass grains recently ploughed. The farmer did not untie the cloth resulting in the cows starving for 13 ghadi (approx. over five hours). Due to this incident, Adinath Bhagwan acquired karma that resulted in a lengthy fast in his next future life.

When Adinath Bhagwan took diksha, asceticism was new to the people. When he went for gochari (alms), they offered him gold, jewellery, gemstones, elephants, horses, and expensive clothes but not food. He had to fast for 13 months and 13 days until finally he came across a sugar cane farm near the town of Hastinapur, owned by his great grandson – Shreyanskumar, who offered him sugarcane juice, thus breaking his fast. The day of this parna is known as Akshaya Trithya.

Those who participate in the Varshitap austerity, alternate between completing an Upvas (day long fast) and Biyashana (two meals during the day) for approximately 400 days. During this period, due to certain Tithis in the Jain Calendar, those undertaking this Tap, sometimes complete Chhat (two consecutive days fast) and Attam (three consecutive days fast).

In keeping with the tradition, those who complete the Varishitap break their fast with sugarcane juice on the day of Akshaya Trithya.

