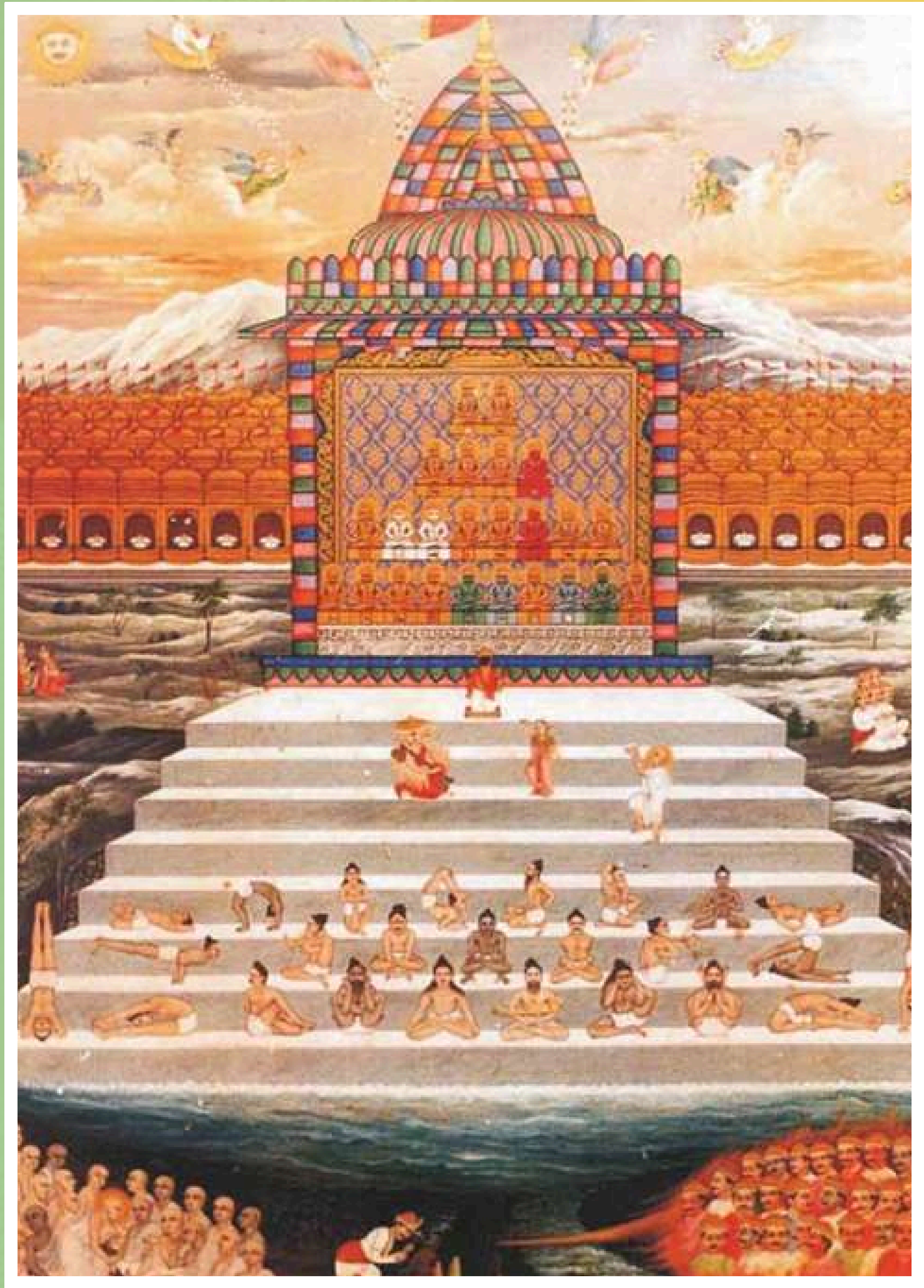


Page 01

# ASHTAPAD TIRTH



The Place Where Bhagwan Adinath Attained Nirvan (Liberation)



# ASHTAPAD TIRTH

There are five main Tirth where all twenty-four Tirthankaras attained salvation as per following sutra from scripture given below: -

**Ädinäth Bhagawän attained Nirvana at Ashtäpad,  
Mahäviri Swami at Päpäuri,  
Väsupujya Swami at Champäpuri and,  
Neminäth Bhagawän attained Nirvana at Girnar.**

**The other 20 Tirthankars attained Nirvana at Samet Shikhar. I  
always bow down with reverence to all the twenty-four  
Tirthankars, which brings eternal happiness to us.**

Inn terms of places of Jain pilgrimages, Sammet Shikhar, Girnar, Pavapuri and Champapuri are frequented by many Jain pilgrims every year. Ashtapad Tirth is considered the most outstanding and auspicious Tirth of Jain religion. Unfortunately, the exact location of Ashtapad Tirth remains unknown. It is believed that Ashtapad Tirth is somewhere among the snow - clad Himalayan peaks, about 168 miles North from Badrinath on the way to Mount Kailash, It is about seven miles from Mansarovar. The technology used at that time to construct this Tirth also remains unknown to mankind.

Ashtapad derives its name from the fact that it has eight steps to go up the mountain ("Ashta" means eight and "pad" means steps in Sanskrit). Some texts state Ashtapad refers to a chain of eight mountain peaks.

Pujya Chitrabhanu has suggested that "there is a symbolic meaning behind these eight steps. Eight steps represent eight karmas that cover the nature of the consciousness."

The four harming karmas (ghätiyä karmas) directly affect the soul powers by impeding its perception, knowledge and energy, and also brings about delusion. These harming karmas are: jñānavārana (knowledge-obscuring karma), darśanāvarana (perception-obscuring karma), antarāya (obstacle-creating karma) and mohaniya (deluding karma). The four non-harming category (aghätiyä karmas) is responsible for the soul's physical and mental circumstances, longevity, spiritual potential and experience of pleasant and unpleasant sensations. These non-harming karmas are: nāma (body-determining karma), āyu (lifespan-determining karma), gotra (statusdetermining karma) and vedaniya (feeling-producing karma), respectively.

Bhagwan Rushabhdev step by step overcame his eight karmas and attained omniscience and moksha.

Realising the symbolic meaning of this Ashtapad, Pujya Chitrabhanu said "each one of us must try to overcome the eight karmas and attain moksha. We must all make effort to maintain the sanctity and purity of this Tirth."



# ASHTAPAD TIRTH

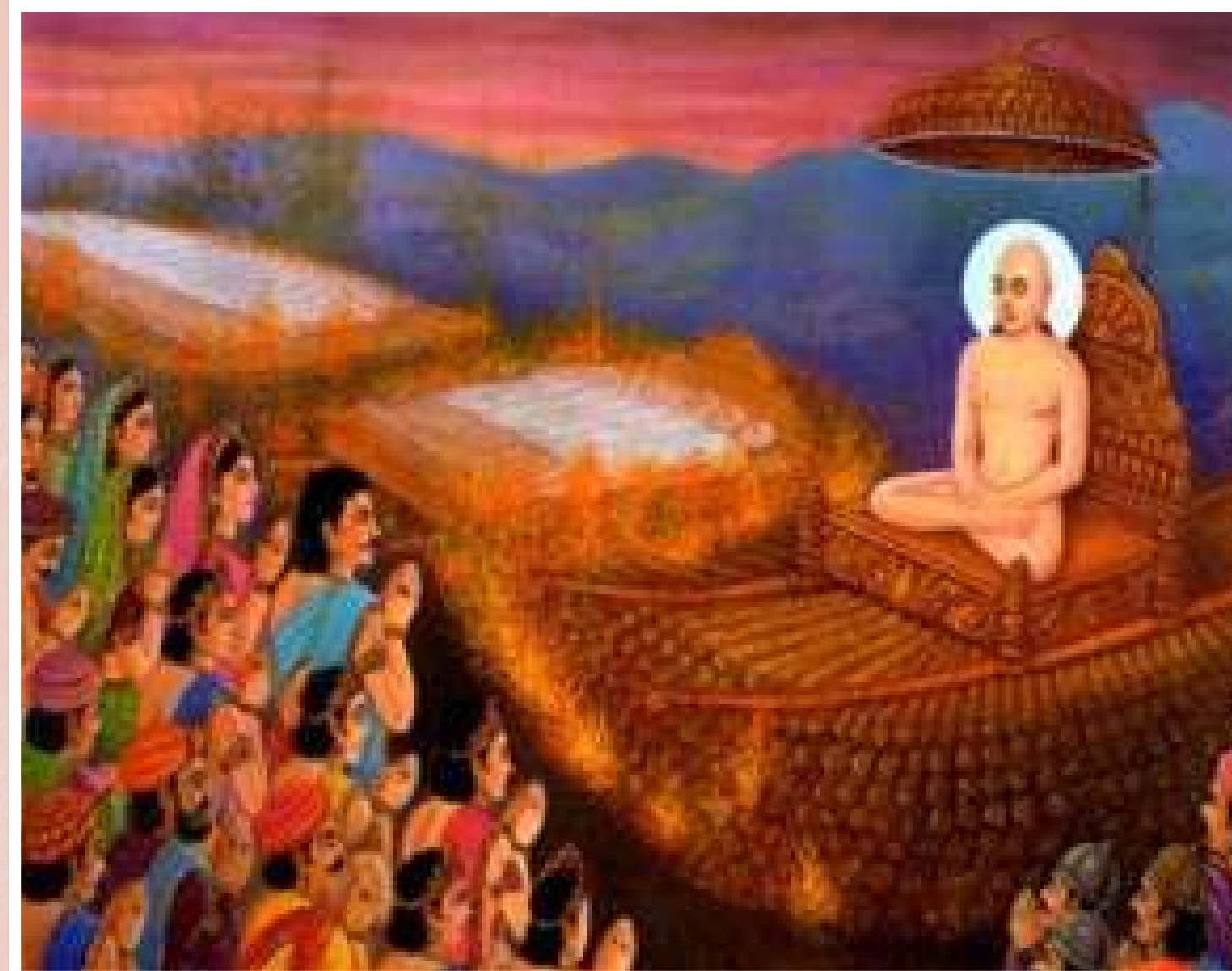
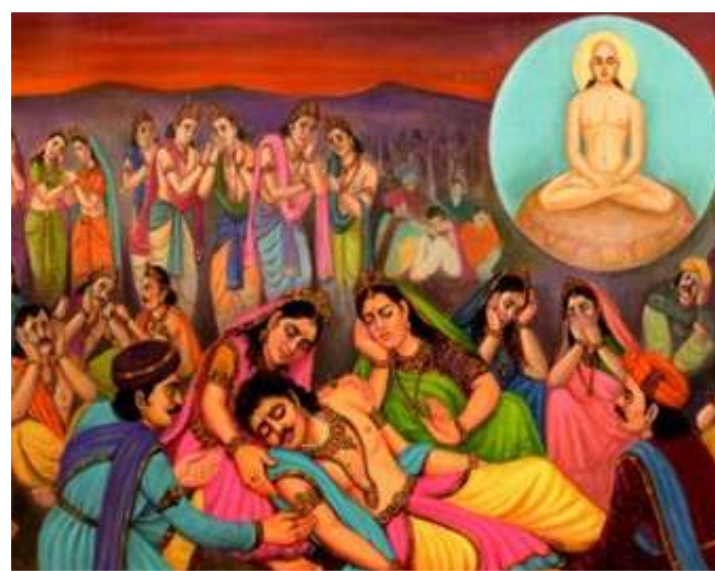
As per our scriptures, Bhagwan Adinath is considered as the Rushabhdev, the first Tirthankara of the current Chauvisi – 24 Tirthankaras and first ruling King. He was born in Ayodhya, during the Yuglik era as the son of the patriarch Nabhi and his queen Marudevi. He was named Rsabha as he bore the mark of a bull on his thigh and his mother – Marudevi – saw a bull in her first dream.

Jain tradition holds that all civilization developed from the teachings of Adinath and is credited with setting up the customs and institutions of society, including marriage, farming, crafts, reading, writing and mathematics.

He was the first person to renounce his worldly life to become a Jain ascetic. Adinath attained Nirvana (moksha) at Mount Ashtapad together with 10,000 additional Jain ascetics.

Jain texts state, after attaining Kevaljnana, when Adinath Bhagwan was delivering a sermon while seated in Samvasaran, King Bharat Chakravati asked him if any human being living here would become a Tirthankar in the future. He replied affirmatively and said that his son Marichi will become the 24th Tirthankar after many life cycles and will be known as Mahavir. He subsequently explained the upcoming 24 Tirthankaras (Chauvisi.). This is how King Bharat came to know the details about the present Chauvisi.

After his nirvana, his son King Bharat Chakravati, overwhelmed by grief, decided to construct a gemstone studded palace (Ratnamay) in his memory on the Ashtapad Mountain, installing 24 idols of Jain Tirthankaras in precious stones as per their varnas (skin tone) and their actual height, Lanchans, Yaksha – Yashini.



It was named Sinha Nishadhyä Prasäd and design said to be Omni-directional (Four sided). The idols of the 3rd, 4th, 5th, 6th Tirthankaras were installed in the South, idols of 7th to 14th Tirthankaras in the West direction, idols of 15th to 24th Tirthankaras in the North direction and idols of 1st & 2nd Tirthankaras in the East. Idols of 99 brothers of King Bharat Chakravati, Brahmi, Sundari and Marudeva Mata, in Siddha Mudra were also installed.

## OTHER FACTS/STORIES ASSOCIATED WITH ASHTAPAD

The Tirth is also referred to by such names as Ratnamay, Rajatadri, Sfatikachal in the scriptures.

- Kalpa Sutra mentions Ashtapad as the Nirvana Bhoomi (place) of Adinath Bhagwan
- Sutra Krutängasutra mentions that Rishabhadev gave discourse to his son, King Bharat, on Ashtäpad.
- Siddhänam Buddhänam Siddhastav Sutra describes the sitting arrangement of idols as “Chattari Aattha Das Doy (Four, Eight, Ten, and Two) Vandiya Jeenvara Chouvisam”.



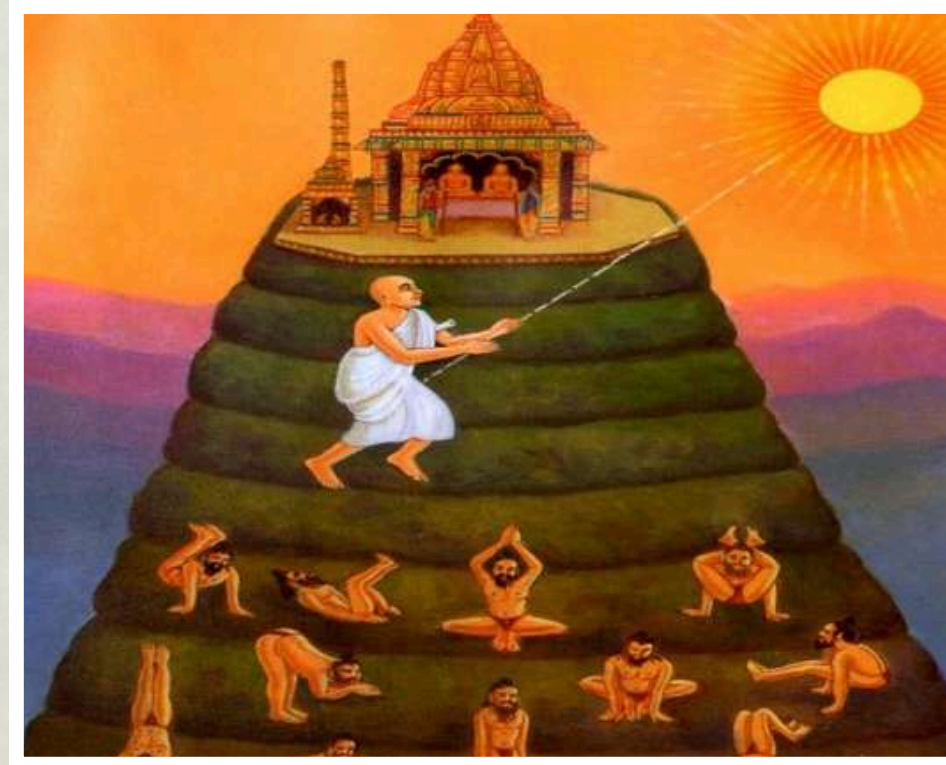
## ASHTAPAD TIRTH

### VISIT BY GAUTAM SWAMI

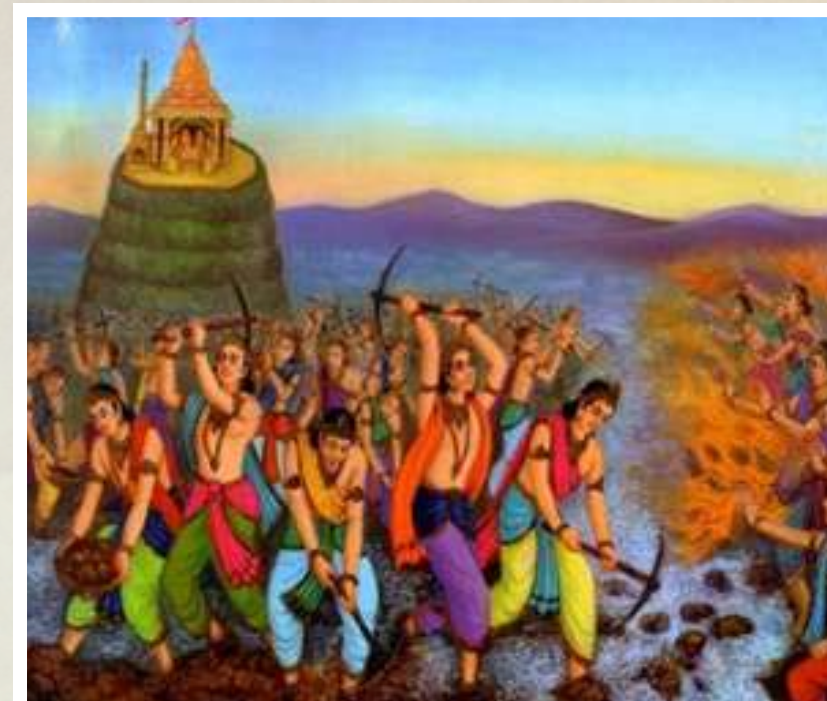
Bhagawän Mahäviri once said during his sermon that any human being, who can scale this mountain and stay overnight there, will attain liberation in his lifetime. Shri Gautam Swami, 2600 years ago, scaled this Tirth with his special powers, stayed overnight and worshiped there.

When he arrived at the bottom of the Ashtäpad Mountain, he saw 3 ascetics, with 500 disciples each trying to scale Mount Ashtäpad. One group could climb only up to the 1st step, the other group climbed only up to the 2nd step and the third stopped at the 3rd step. None of them could climb further. With the help of spiritual power (Ätma-Labhdhi), Gautam Swami scaled the Ashtäpad Mountain by holding the sunrays as a rope. He offered his prayers to all the 24 Tirthankars and stayed there overnight. There he compiled the first two verses of Jagachintämani Sutra.

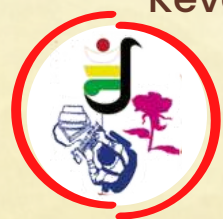
Next morning when he came down, all 1503 Tāpas were impressed by his achievement and wanted to be his disciples. Gautam Swami insisted that they should be Bhagawän Mahäviri's disciples. However due to their earnest desire he initiated them. As all the Tāpas were fasting for 3 days, Gautam Swami arranged for Kheer (rice cooked in milk) Pärnä. Even though the quantity of Kheer was not enough, due to his spiritual power he could feed Kheer to all of them by putting his thumb in the vessel. During Pärnä, 501 Tāpas, now ascetics, became Kevali. On the way, Gautam Swami gave a description of Mahäviri Swami, listening to which another 501 tāpas became Kevali. Upon arrival, they saw Mahäviri Swami in Samavasaran, and the remaining 501 tāpas became Kevali. At that time, Gautam Swami asked all Tāpas to sit along with other Sādhus. Then Bhagawän Mahäviri said, "Gautam! You need to bow to these Kevalis." Now Gautam Swami realized that all the Tāpas had become Kevali.



**King Sagar's sixty thousand sons**, in order to protect the Tirth, dug a big trench all around the mountain, filling it with the holy water from the Ganges. Unfortunately, they disturbed the King of Serpents (Nag Kumar), who with his fiery power reduced all the 60K princes to ashes. On hearing this sad news, King Sagar renounced the worldly life and became a monk under Ajitnath Bhagwan, the 2nd Tirthankar.



**Rävan went up the Ashtäpad Mountain** with his wife Mandodari to worship. Filled with joy she started dancing while Rävan played the Veena (musical instrument like guitar). Accidentally a wire from the Veena broke. Thinking this could be an interruption in her devotional dance; he pulled out a vein from his arm (with the help of Lāghav Vidhyä) and replaced the broken wire of the Veena. This way he kept playing Veena. And then they performed pooja and offered prayers to all the idols. As a consequence of this, Rävan attained the Tirthankar Näm-karma to be born as one of the Tirthankara in the next 24 Tirthankaras.



# ASHTAPAD TIRTH

## KING BHARAT CHAKRAVATI'S DREAMS

One night Bharat saw a number of dreams which perplexed him and went to Adinath Bhagwan, who was staying at Ashtapad. He informed Bharat that his dreams related to the next age – Panchama Kala ( 5th Ara – our current time) – which would be marked by much deterioration and misery.

**Second Dream:** Was of lion followed by a herd of deer which indicated that not all ascetics during Mahavirswami's time would be able to practise true Dharma leading to some ascetics and householders to propagate and spread false doctrines and easier pathway away from the true Dharma

**Fourth Dream:** Was of a group of goats grazing on dry leaves which implied that people would not value the true principles of Dharma leading them to rescind their vows.

**Eighth Dream:** Was of a tank of water filled with water but dry in the centre which meant that Dharma would slowly migrate from India to other parts of the world like Europe and USA.

**Fifteenth Dream:** Bharat saw a dried-up tree that cast no shade indicating that majority of people would abandon religion and become irreligious.

After Adinath Bhagwan, **Munisuvratswami Bhagwan** is the only Tirthankara said to have gone to Ashtapad for meditation and penance, together with his disciples.

### References:

*Shri Ashtapad Maha Tirth Part 1 & 2 | Jain Kashtapat Chitra | Risabha Deva – C R Jain  
Trishashti Shalaka Purusha | The Jain Saga Part 1 | Articles by Kumarpal Desai  
Images: Various Sources*

