

JAIN FESTIVAL

MERU TERAS

Meru Teras is the day on which the first Tirthankara, Rushabhdev Bhagwan attained Nirvana (moksha) at Mount Ashtapad together with 10,000 additional Jain ascetics. Rushabhdev, born at the end of the third Ara, was the first Tirthankara of the current Chauvisi – 24 Tirthankaras. He is also known as Adinath ('Adi' means the first or the beginning and 'Nath' means the Lord).

On this day, Jains try and do at least one 'mala' reciting :

"Om Hrim Shree Adinath Parangatay Namah"

RITUAL: AS PER ONE'S CAPACITY.

To observe a cauvihar fast – avoiding both food and water on the day of Meru Teras. Ideally this fast is to be repeated every 13th day of the month for a minimum of 13 months and maximum of 13 years. It is said that if one completes this undertaking, it ensures the destruction of karmas and worldly success in one's current birth.



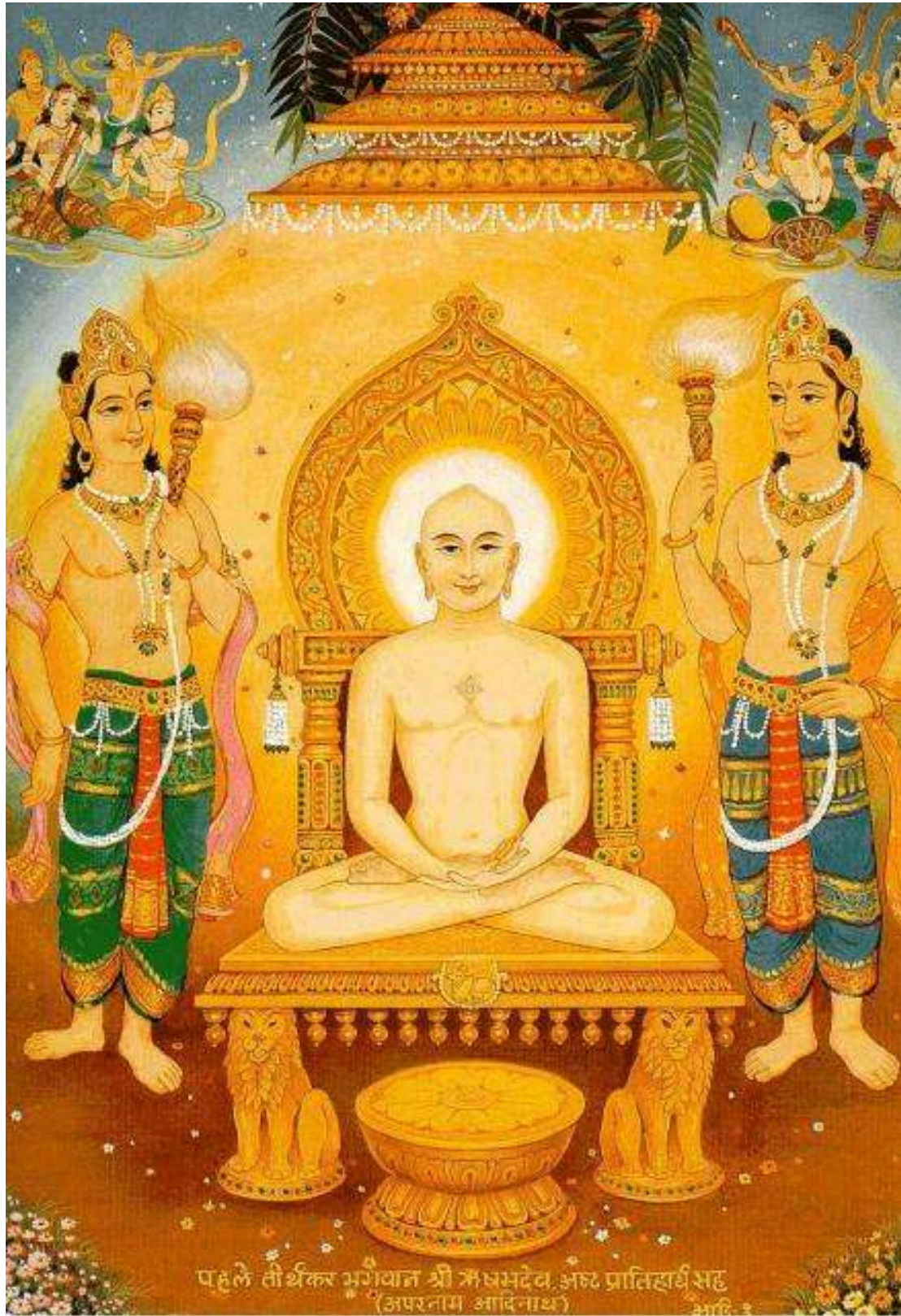


On this auspicious day of Meru Teras, let us reflect on Bhagwan Rushabhdev (Adinath) supreme legacy and remember his life and teachings and what lessons we can learn.

Adinath is also referred to by other names including Rushabhdev , Rishabhdev, Rishabh, Adishwar, Rishabhdeva, Adishvar, Vṛṣabhanātha, Ṛṣabhadeva, Ṛṣabhanātha, mata Marudevi na nand.

- Born at the end of the third period in the current regressive half cycle of time (Avasarpani), during the Yuglik era as the son of the patriarch Nabhi and his queen Marudevi.
- As per Jain tradition, this was the period when the earth changed its status from the land of abundance & enjoyment (Bhoga-bhumi) to that of labour (Karma-bhumi).
- As the first King, he laid the groundwork for a more structured society, balancing spiritual pursuits with practical skills and ethical conduct by educating the people to co-operate with each other for mutual benefit.
- He taught six main professions, establishing the foundation for a structured society: Asi (defence), Krishi, Masi (literature), Vanijya (Commerce), Shilpa (Crafts and engineering) and Vidya (Knowledge and skills) to the people.
- By introducing these professions, Adinath transitioned society from bhoga-bhumi (age of abundance) to karma-bhumi (age of action), encouraging self-sufficiency and personal responsibility.
- **Education:** He taught 72 sciences to men and 64 to women, promoting knowledge and skills development across genders. He is also credited with the invention of a script, taught to his daughters – the script is now known as Brahmi script.
- **Institution of marriage:** Adinath's marriage to Sunanda, whose twin died in an accident, marked the beginning of the marriage system and thus shaping family structures in society.
- **Renunciation:** Renounced worldly life and took Diksha. His decision to renounce was triggered by witnessing the sudden death of a dancer, Nilanjana, which reminded him of life's transitory nature. This event led him to reflect on the impermanence of all worldly existence, inspiring the Jain emphasis on detachment from ephemeral things.
- Impermanence of things, people, and the roles we play. Adinath showed the need to reduce attachment – Aparigaha





- Adinath renounced his kingdom, family, and material wealth, setting an example of complete detachment from worldly possessions and relationships.
- By his actions, Adinath taught that true, enduring happiness comes from seeking spiritual liberation rather than temporary worldly pleasures, influencing Jains to focus on moksha as the ultimate goal.
- **Established Jain Ascetic Practices:** After renunciation, Adinath engaged in severe austerities, including a vow of silence and wandering as a mendicant. Fasting and self-discipline. The practice of giving of alms (gochri) to ascetics started when he ended his fast of 13 months and 13 days.
- **First Tirthankara** in the current Chauvisi - 24 Tirthankaras.
- First to propound Ahimsa Dharma, religion of Equanimity, introduced the concept of Soul.
- First Tirthankara to establish the four-fold Jain Sangh - comprised of monks (Sādhus), nuns (Sādhvis), laymen (Shrāvaks), and laywomen (Shrāvikās) - for the first time in this time cycle.

“He was the first King of this age
and also the first ascetic.

Who also was the first ford-maker
(Tirthankara), my salutations
to that Rishabh Swami.”

Acharaya Hemachandra

I bow down in reverence
to Arihanta Bhagavān

I repeatedly recite the name of
Arihanta with great reverence.

I bow down to his idol wherever it is
installed, may it be on the Ashtāpad
Mountain where Chakravarti Bharat
has installed beautiful gemstone idols of
all the twenty-four Tirthankars

Rushabhadas - 17th Century