JAINA is an umbrella organization of local Jain Associations in U.S.A and Canada. The purpose of the organization is to preserve, practice, and promote Jain Dharma and Jain Way of Life.

JAINA Headquarters: 43-11 Ithaca Street, Elmhurst, NY 11373
Tele: 718 606-2885, Email: jainahq@gmail.com, Web: www.jaina.org

President: Lata Champsee
latachampsee@gmail.com
416-441-2200, 416-877-1442 (Cell)

First VP: Dr. Sushil Jain
skjain99@gmail.com
703-208-1661, 240-277-3038 (Cell)

Secretary: Dilip Punatar
punatar@hotmail.com
937-648-3228

Treasurer: Rita Sheth
jainatreasurers@gmail.com
918-398-6024, 918-812-7802 (Cell)

VP-Canada: Lalit Vora
jyotvora@hotmail.com
514-631-1393

VP-West: Ashok Domadia
ashokdomadia2009@gmail.com,
510-979-9312

VP-South West: Udai Jain
udaijain@yahoo.com,
281-980-0741, 832-567-2298 (Cell)

VP-South East: Dr. Deepika Dalal
kdeepika@aol.com,
954-431-5957, 954-980-8730 (Cell)

VP Mid West: Dr. Manish Mehta
manishm@ncms.org,
734-668-0348, 734-604-7989,

VP North East: Yogendra Jain
yokjain@yahoo.com,
781-856-0769 (Cell)

VP MidEast: Gunvant Shah
profgarystah@yahoo.com,
732-246-4030

Past President: Dilip V. Shah
dilipvshah@gmail.com,
215-561-0508, 215-868-0381 (Cell)

YJA: Vaishali Shah & Mitesh Shah
vaishali.shah@yja.org & mitesh.shah@yja.org
630-992-1031 & 334-655-3339

YJP: Sejal Lakhani & Suchita Gala
sejal_lakhani@yahoo.com & suchita_gala@yahoo.com
917-273-2160 & 703-938-5582

Please go to inside back cover for the list of JAINA Committees. Other Directors, Trustees, Association members, & Affiliate’s information is available on www.jaina.org

eJAIN DIGEST Editorial Team
510-770-9976,
Email: jaindigest.info@gmail.com

Chetan V. Sanghvi
Dr. Deepika Dalal
Dilip Parekh
Heena Nandu
Reena Shah
Shami Shah
Vimal Shah

Rupal Doshi
Sharmila Ranka (Cover Designer)

MIS Section: Dr. Mukesh Doshi
mukusha@gmail.com, 1-647-517-2505

The Editorial Team endeavors to publish material submitted but reserves the right to edit, reformat, or not publish any material for clarity, space, or policy reasons. The views expressed in the articles are those of the authors and do not necessarily represent the views of the Editorial Team. These articles are published with the authors’ names. The articles written or compiled by the Editorial Team are published as a joint contribution of the entire Editorial Team, and do not necessarily represent the views of JAINA.
From the President

Jai Jinendra!

My term as the President of JAINA is coming to an end and, I would like to look back at the entire term with a sense of pride and satisfaction. The honor and respect I received while carrying out my responsibilities has been a humbling experience. Today, JAINA is a very well known and well-respected organization not only in North America but also around the globe.

My visit to over 25 centers took me all over the continent. I travelled over 100,000 miles in the last two years. My meetings with many Jains gave me a better insight of our community. During my visits, I was pleased to meet members of various Jain Centre office bearers, JAINA Directors, exchange views, and participated in a question-answer session about their expectations from JAINA. Their faith in JAINA has touched my heart.

My trips to India were very fruitful as I represented JAINA at the Palitana handicap camp and the Bidad Medical Camp. As a JAINA representative, I also participated in the opening of the JIWO chapters, and the inauguration of Arhat touch. I had the opportunity to meet the Chief Minister of Gujarat - Narendra Modi, His Holiness Dalai Lama, Pujya Maharaj Naypadmasagarji, Acharya Chandnaji, Gurudev Rakeshbhai Zaveri and many other learned and dynamic individuals. I will cherish these memories for the rest of my life.

The accomplishments and activities, which made my Presidency so rewarding, are summarized below:

Victorious Ones: Jain Images of Perfection Art Exhibit (Rubin Museum of Art, NY) – I represented JAINA at the unveiling of the exhibition, which had over 55 displays of Jain art, including some, which have never been publicly displayed. The Exhibit was sponsored by a lead gift from Shital and Suman Jain Family and coordinated by Phyllis Granoff - Professor of Religious Studies at the Yale Graduate School.

V.R. Gandhi stamp: Indian Postal Department recognized the renowned Jain Scholar and writer Shri Virchand Raghavji Gandhi by releasing a multicolored stamp, first day cover and a brochure in his honor in November 2009 at Sanmukhanand hall, Mumbai. This became a reality with the tireless efforts of Pravin C Shah of New York.

Arhat Touch Inauguration: I had the pleasure of inaugurating Shrimad Rajchandra Arhat Touch program (SRA) in Toronto under the blessings of Gurudev Shri Rakeshbhai Zaveri. This event attracted a large participation from the community.

Inauguration of JIWO chapter: I attended the inauguration of JIWO (Jain International Women's Organization) chapter of Juhu, Mumbai on behalf of JAINA.

Kanji Swami Janma Jayanti in Los Angeles: Annual Jain-Swadhyay Seminar for four days was held at Los Angeles Jain Center in May 2010. This was the 121st Janma Jayanti of Gurudev Shri Kanji Swami. I had the honor of inaugurating the seminar. These seminars are being organized for more than ten years now at different places in North America. About 300 mumukshus from North America, Europe and India participated in this Jayanti.

Tribute to Acharya Mahapragya: Jain Vishwa Bharati, New Jersey, under the guidance of Sanmati Sanmat Pragya and Samani Shukla Pragya, organized a memorable event "Path of Ahimsa- A tribute
to Acharyas”, in October 2010. The event has special references to Acharya Mahapragna, who interpreted Bhagwan Mahavir’s message of Ahimsa to common masses. The event marked the release of a book entitled Let Us Learn To Live Twelve Golden Principles of Holistic Living written by Acharya Mahashraman and translated by Samani Sanmatti Pragya. I had the pleasure of releasing the book. The program featured a plethora of guest speakers including Dr. Dipak Jain, former dean of Kellogg’s School of Business, NJ Assemblyman Upendra Chivukula as the chief guest, Woodbridge Mayor John McCormac, myself, and representatives of various Jain organizations from the tri-state area. More than 500 guests attended the event.

**Record Turnout At Palitana Medical camp:** JAINA participated in the Palitana Camp for the disabled. The Camp was inaugurated by the Chief Minister of Gujarat, Shri Narendra Modi and blessed by His Holiness the Dalai Lama. JAINA raised about One Crore Rupees to cover the expenses of the Camp. Total of 28,549 physically handicapped and hearing-impaired individuals of all ages benefitted at the camp. 8341 Calipers were distributed, 664 Jaipur foot were fitted, 3200 crutches were given out to the needy, 671 wheelchairs were given to severely handicapped individuals, 1622 tricycles were given and 11,789 hearing aids were given to hearing-impaired individuals.

**Haiti Earthquake Victims:** JAINA members contributed over $35,000 towards Haiti relief fund. In May 2010, a group of 13 professionals with various backgrounds embarked on a humanitarian medical mission to help the neediest people in western hemisphere. They were, Lata Champsee, Fery Saremi, RN, Kelly Cornilliac, Nayna Patel, Alexa Reeves, MD, Donna Reeves, MD, Ramesh Shah, Nitin Shah, MD, Sushil Jain, MD, Minaxi Patel, MD, Vasant Bhatt, MD, Tuesday Cook, MD and Prakash Mehta went to Port Au Prince, Haiti from May 6 to 13 on a Medical Mission. The trip was organized under the umbrella of JAINA. We were all housed in a big tent. About 125 people slept on small cots covered with mosquito nets. During the day, temperature reached up to 125 F and it was humid. We did not have running water that we could use freely. There were 4 cold-water showers that about 200 people shared. This was an eye opening and humbling experience. In spite of such conditions, our team worked 12 hours a day and performed many surgeries. We all could contribute towards the betterment of Haitians! It was very gratifying experience.

**Bidada Camp:** This year JAINA was one of the sponsors of 37th Bidada Medical and Surgical Camp at Kutch, Gujarat. JAINA raised US$50,000 for this purpose. This year’s camp started with Urology camp, where over 60 surgeries were successfully performed, followed by ENT camp, which performed surgeries and distributed hearing aids to children. During the general surgery camp 152 surgeries were performed. During the cardiac camp 400 patients were triaged out of which 62 patients including 20 children were sent to Mumbai for cardiac surgery. It was another busy year for eye camp, where 646 cataract surgeries were performed. For the first time during gynecologic camp state of the art cervical cancer screening on 125 women were done. They also performed 31 hysterectomies, in addition to many other procedures. The child health program had another successful year where our volunteers and doctors educated 4000 children and completed 1,200 eye exams of school-aged children. The
breast cancer-screening program screened and educated 437 women, of which 13 lumps were sent for further testing. The smoking cessation program ran during the entire camp, educating patients and family members of the dangers of smoking and the harm of tobacco chewing. Total of 25,554 patients were treated and 1042 Surgeries were performed in addition to 157 major surgeries scheduled for Mumbai.

**JAINA Website:** We revamped the JAINA website completely. It is dynamic, interactive and informative. This was the first task handled by present committee. We needed to get this done through professionals and we had to spend some money. Now you can log on to Jaina.org and see the results. Infrastructure is in place to develop it further. This was possible with the efforts of many. Yogen Jain and Chandrakant Vora provided the leadership.

**JAINA Education Committee:** A flagship committee under the leadership of Pravinbhai Shah of NC does tremendous amount of work. Over the past 9 years the committee has distributed more than 50,000 (valued at $200,000) JAINA Education books to the Pathshala students of North America and other countries. There are more than 3500 students attending Jain Pathshalas across North America. Committee also conducts Jain Academic Bowl competition. For the past six years, Virendra Shah and Bharat Shah of Los Angeles handle the entire operation of the Pathshala Book distribution system.

**Jain eLibrary Project:** Over the past 16 months, more than 6100 eLibrary users from 64 countries have registered to download the literature available on the website. During this time, 44,000 books have been downloaded by the members. Meanwhile we continued to add 15,000 pages every month of the Jain literature on the website. The website now contains more than one million pages of scanned images of Jain Literature. You can order the JAINA Education materials, eLibrary DVDs, and pay for your order or donate to JAINA Education and eLibrary activities on this website.

**JAINA Calendars:** JAINA is delighted to present 2010 and 2011 calendars to Jains of North America. JAINA calendars depict rich Jain art and architecture of Jain Temples. 11,000+ JAINA Calendars are shipped free of charge. The response to our 2010 and 2011 Calendars like always was an overwhelming one. Most Jains look forward to receiving this calendar. The JAINA Calendar takes about 4 months to produce, involves over 15 people in 5 cities and over 1,500 man-hours of work.

**JAINA TV Show:** JAINA Media Production Committee produces the only JAIN TV show in North America. The aim is to present Jain religion through television medium in nonbiased non-sectarian way, with special focus on our next generation. The show "MANGALAM" the only Jain TV show in North America is on air, broadcast on weekly basis for the past four years. It has given Jains of North America an important presence in the media world. It is on SAHARA TV every Saturday morning at 9:00am

**JAINA Jivdaya Work:** To promote non-violence and the practice of Ahimsa - non-injury to life. This Committee has so far distributed about 1.2 Million Rupees to Various Panjarapols and Animal Centers in India and is run under the able leadership of Pramodaben Chitrabhanu.

**Leadership Conference at Siddhachalam in April 2010:** 5th Leadership Conference marked in history as the inflection point in accelerated growth of JAINA and its infrastructure. The theme of the conference was How to Deliver on a National Infrastructure for JAINS, JAINA, JAINISM, and JAIN Organizations. More than 50 participants attended the conference for two and a half days at Siddhachalam in the wonderful atmosphere of tranquility and positive energy. The conference was led by Dr. Dipak Jain, the past Dean of Kellogg’s School of Management, and LRP team. After extensive discussions, the team agreed that the following critical infrastructure support is needed to service our members and meet our vision of "To Live and Share a Jain Way of Life."

1. Financial sustainability— short and long term
2. Executive office – serving Jain community, Jain Centers, and the broader society
3. Jain Membership Management
4. Jain Unity
5. Mentorship for young Jains in North America.

**YJA Convention 2010: A Grand Success:** 700 + attendees from ages 14-29, 100 volunteers and 60 guest speakers made this convention a visual and spiritual spectacle. The combination of thought-provoking daytime sessions, magical social events, sumptuous Jain food and marvelous decorations brought YJA convention to a new level. Keynote speakers were Parag Mehta, Michael Tobias, and Dr. Vinod Shah. Attendees got an opportunity to do networking with people from around the world.

**Young Jain Professionals Convention:** Three-day YJP convention was held in June 2010 on a cruise from Miami to the Bahamas. The purpose of this convention was to bring everyone together and discuss various issues that affect us as young Jain professionals, in a setting that would be enjoyable and different from the usual conventions. At the end, group parted with a strong feeling of closeness and friendship.

**Jain Milan:** This event was arranged to support and facilitate matrimonial activities in the Jain Community. It was organized in New Jersey in 2010 and in San Jose in 2011 under the leadership of Gunvantbhai Shah. Over 100 individuals participated in the event.

**Jain Digest is Going Green:** Following JAINA 2009 Convention’s theme of Ecology - The Jain Way, JAINA Executive Committee decided not to distribute a hardcopy but instead offer the publication in the electronic format. eJain Digest is available on both a print-ready PDF and a web-friendly version on www.jaina.org website.

**JAINA Directors:** We have started to strengthen the engagement and support of our 104 directors through dialogue and regional teleconferences.

**Jain Diaspora:** Jain Diaspora is the JAINA initiative to connect all the Jain communities living in 36 countries outside of India and thereby drive greater unity and cohesiveness in the global Jain community. The purpose is to unite Jains around the world under one umbrella; this will empower the next generation to preserve our traditions, and become significant players in global affairs. Late Dr. L M Singhvi envisioned Diaspora Conventions and chaired the first convention that was held in 2007 in NJ, USA. The 2nd Jain Diaspora Conference is being organized on Sunday, July 3, 2011 during JAINA Convention in Houston, Texas. Invitations have been sent to engage leaders from India, UK, Belgium, Kenya, Kuwait, Singapore, Australia and other communities to present talks. The goal of this 2011 Jain Diaspora Conference is to form an intercontinental group for maintaining regular contacts across unified global Jain communities - significant size populations are resident in at least 36 countries of the world.

**Parliament of World Religions:** JAINA through its Interfaith Committee managed a strong presence at the Parliament of World Religions meeting in Australia, December, 2009. - JAINA members played a superb role in sharing the core values of Jainism with the world. Various topics like, “How a Jain Starts the Day: The Rituals” (by Kirit Daftary), “Preksha Meditation” –(by Vinay Pragyaji and Samani Akshay Prajnaji), “Basic tenets and Karma” in Jainism (by Davendra Keertiji and Dr Narayan Kachhara), “Jainism and the environment” ( Pravin K shah and Sohan Lal Gandhi) and “Ancient Jain mantra: sound and spirituality” (by Maharaj Amrender muniji) were presented and discussed.

**Multifaith Conference in Indonesia:** US National Security Council, State Dept. and White House organized a multi-faith conference in Indonesia. 20 religious leaders from USA and 20 members from Indonesia gathered in Jakarta in January 2010. It was a matter of pride for us to know that our Interfaith Chair of JAINA, Arvind Vora was selected to represent JAINISM at this prestigious world forum, thus granting a much-needed acknowledgement to Jainism in a world forum.

**Task Force for Global Initiatives :** Task Force for Global Initiatives for Faith, Health and Development had its first meeting in the White House in July 2010. Approx. 25 people attended it. It is initiated, hosted and supported by Center for Interfaith Action. The second meeting was in October 2010 at the UN. The primary purpose of such initiatives is to discuss how different faiths can work together to solve some of the most pressing human problems.
A manual on Treating Patients of Other Religions and Ethnicities: JAINA, under the leadership of Arvind Vora was part of a project on preparation of a manual on “Treating Patients of Other Religions and Ethnicities”. The purpose of this manual is to provide a brief overview of various religions and cultures within the United States and to effectively address specific medical issues concerning patient care. This document will be available shortly as a link on the National Interfaith Alliance website and will also be linked with the American Medical Association and state medical societies. This will enable the physicians to access the information online prior to entering the patients' rooms. This information will help the medical personnel to be sensitive and understating of the different religious and cultural health care traditions.

Child Nutrition Act HR 5504: In the past three decades, the problem of growing obesity among children has tripled. According to public health experts, diet-related diseases are also increasingly common, one in three American children will now eventually develop diabetes. With more access to plant based (vegetarian) meal options, students are better able to protect their health. A veggie burger, for example, is similar in protein content to a hamburger, but has one third of the fat content, does not have cholesterol, has fewer calories and more fiber. Menus in most school lunch programs are too high in saturated fat and cholesterol and too low in fiber. Nutrient-rich fruits, vegetables, whole grains, and legumes HR 5504 would allow more children to have access to healthy plant-based options. The Healthy School Lunch Campaign encourages schools to offer healthier low fat, cholesterol-free options, including reimbursable meals and beverages, a la carte items, and vending machine items.

JAINA to Work with Boy Scouts of America: JAINA has signed a Memorandum of Understanding with BSA (BOY SCOUTS OF AMERICA). According to this, Jain religion is now recognized by BSA and JAINA is authorized to liaison with BSA. JAINA is in the process of further follow-up steps like getting the Label/Pin/Medal done by a supplier, informative brochure and criteria of awarding, etc. Also Scouts Executive, a person who can look after and liaison with others for the PRAY program is to be appointed. This was possible with the efforts of Prakash Mody of Toronto. More information can be obtained at (http://www.jaina.org/)

JAINA Goes to Washington: "Celebrating Non-Violence" on Capitol Hill: This conference was co-sponsored by JAINA, American Jewish Congress, AAPI and NAACP, held in October 2009. Speaker at the conference included US Congress Chaplain, Rev. Daniel P. Caughlin, Congressman John Lewis, Congressman Jim McDermott, Congressman Frank Pallone, Congressman Ed Royce, NAACP Washington Bureau director Hilary O. Shelton, and White House representatives Paul Montero and Daniell Borin. This conference gave us a big opportunity to network and develop contacts with the US Government officials.

President Obama talks about Bhagwan Mahavir: As a direct result of Dr. Sushil Jain’s networking with the White House, President Obama talked about Bhagwan Mahavir and Jainism at the White House Diwali function.

Visits To Various Sanghs: I had the opportunity to visit over 25 Jain centers. To list a few:

Ashtapad Pratishta in New York: - I attended the Ashtapad Pratishtha in New York, a unique event that took place in June 2010 at Jain Centre of America, New York. Shri Ashtapad Mountain sculptured from 59 pieces of crystal blocks each weighing 50 to 750 lbs. along with the steel frame weighing 1 ton was imported from Jaipur, India. All of 24 idols were carved out of real gemstones.

Pratishta at Cleveland: Jain Society of Greater Cleveland had a grand Pratishta Mahotsav of their neue Temple in July 2010 in Richfield, Ohio. It was a four-day celebration and I had the opportunity to be a part of this grand celebration. Pratishta was for Mulnayak Shri Dharmanath, the 15th Tirthankar, Shri Rushabh Nath and Shri Mahavir Swami. All the events were well organized and there was a lot of enthusiasm amongst the members. Everyone was happy to see that their long due dream came true.

Jain Society of Greater Detroit: Jain Society of Greater Detroit celebrated its 35th Anniversary in June 2010. I was impressed by the cohesiveness of Detroit Jain community. An exhibit was organized which displayed unique memorabilia, literature and photographs collected over the years. I had the opportunity to address the members.
Jain Center of Northern California: I was present at the joyous and eventful 10th Anniversary celebration of the Jain Bhawan held in Milipitas, California in August 2010. The celebration brought together a host of Jain religious leaders, scholars, followers and dignitaries who participated in a comprehensive series of events focusing on the theme: Non-Violence, Peace & Harmony. The cumulative reach of these events was impressive, with more than twenty speakers. The event was attended by over 3000 people.

Visit to Las Vegas: I visited the Las Vegas Sarvadharma Temple, which had Hindu and Jain Murtis. It is a beautiful Temple located on a hill, about 15 miles from "The strip". A small group of Jains displayed lot of dedication.

Visit to Phoenix Center: In August 2010, I visited Jain Center of Phoenix. After their regular Puja, I gave a talk on JAINA activities and visited their pathshala, which was humming with activities. I also had an informal meeting with Jain Center of Greater Phoenix EC, BOD.

Visit to Fort Myers: 15-20 Members were gathered at Mahendrabhai's (JAINA Director) home for an informal meeting to discuss Jain activities in Fort Myers.

Visit to Orlando: I received a very warm welcome during my visit to Orlando Jain Temple. Most members attended the Town Hall meeting and the participation of youngsters was superb. Deepikaben and I stayed overnight at a member's home and enjoyed the hospitality of Orlando Sangh.

Visit to Tampa Jain Sangh: I attended a Snatra Puja at Tampa Jain Center. It was attended by more than 150 members. A town hall meeting was held after the Puja and members were interested in knowing about JAINA. Members were happy to see a JAINA President visiting their center.

Jain Studies at FIU, Florida: A Historic Milestone - Florida International University is establishing a perpetual professorship in Jain studies and is a first ever initiative and a historic milestone for the Jain Community.

Visit to Miami: I attended a Town Hall meeting at Jain Center of Southern Florida (JCSF). About 50-60 people attended the meeting and most members were interested in knowing about JAINA. JCSF is a relatively small organization, with a current membership of 80-100 Jain families. In late 2005, JCSF bought 4000 sq. feet of commercial office space in the newly built complex.

Jain Center of Greater Boston: Jain Center of Greater Boston has moved into their much larger temple in June 2010 in Norwood, MA. JCGB's first temple was one of the first in North America.

Pratishtha in Richmond, VA: A grand Pratishtha celebration was held in Richmond Temple in November 2010. Pratishtha was for Mahavir Swami, Tirthankar Adeshwar and Tirthankar Parshwanath. This was a big achievement for a small sangh.

Visit to Montreal: I participated in the celebrations of Mahavir Janma Kalyanak in Montreal. Program started with Snatra Puja and ended with a sumptuous dinner. Around 60 people were gathered for the event in which I gave a talk on JAINA activities to the gathering.

Visit to Houston: Sushil Jain, Deepika Dalal, Manish Mehta and I visited Houston for Convention planning. We had a very fruitful visit.

Visit to Dallas: Sushil Jain, Nitin Shah and I visited Dallas Jain Center to promote JAINA Convention 2011. Members present were very enthusiastic about the convention being held in their backyard. We were given the tour of the newly acquired building to house their temple.

Visit to Los Angeles: In the last 3 years, I have visited LA more than 8 times. I consider this as my Sangh. During my official visit as JAINA President, I met with EC, BOD of JCSC and had a fruitful discussion on issues related with JAINA.
JAINA office: Jain Center of America (NY) has continued to offer office space for JAINA Headquarters in their center. JAINA is thankful for their generosity.

JAINA Convention: This is the first time a convention is held in Southern part of United States. The volunteers from Houston Jain Society are working very hard to make this convention a big success. A unique play "Gandhi vs. Gandhi" will be presented by artists coming from India. A good daytime programming, excellent entertainment is planned for the benefit of attendees. The registration trend has been very positive so please register, if you have not had a chance to do so.

Please note that many JAINA volunteers are doing an excellent work quietly and without much fanfare. The list of events mentioned above is the result of their dedication and hard work – for which, I remain very grateful. None of this would have been possible without the support of JAINA EC, Board of Directors and Jain community of North America. I hope that JAINA continues to grow and my best wishes are with next administration.

See you all at the Convention in Houston.

With warm Regards

Lata Champsee, President
JAINA, http://www.jain.org

"Each day, well-lived, makes yesterday a dream of happiness and each tomorrow a vision of hope. Look, therefore, to this day, for it and it alone is life."— Ushavandanam by Kalidasa

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Jai Jinendra from the Jain Digest Editorial Team

Namo Aayariyanam!

It has been some time now since our last issue of eJain Digest, and it has been even longer since the last print version of Jain Digest was published. It is a pleasure to bring to you this issue dedicated to Acharyas / Sadhus or Jain Teachers who have not only devoted their lives to lead the Jain Way of Life but also to teach others about Jain philosophy and tradition. This is a humble effort to compile immense amount of information on Jain Acharyas and Sadhus for a small issue of this kind. As we embarked on this task, we realized that there was a lot to cover and an exhaustive compilation is a very tall order. Clearly, we could provide only limited information even after delaying the release of this issue by over three months.

The current issue of Jain Digest offers information on the lives of a few Acharyas / Sadhus in the limited time we were able to spend on this subject. After reaching out to the community to gather information on Acharyas / Sadhus from all traditions (sects), we attempted to compile a list of the names of all the Acharyas living in the current times. There are bound to be omissions in compiling such large lists, but they would not be for lack of trying on our part. We would really like the readers to continue sending us information about the Acharyas / Sadhus who were missed in this list so we can continue to compile this information in one place and make it available to all our readers.

You will notice that we have detailed information on some of the Acharyas/Sadhus and not all of them. This is due to the wonderful opportunity that some of the members on the editorial team got to actually speak with these great Acharyas. This does not in any way suggest that the other Acharyas are of any lesser stature or importance – it is just that we did not have the opportunity to speak to them, nor anyone from the readership reached out regarding their experience with them. Again, we will be happy to include your experiences or write-ups on this in the future issue, so please send them our way.

It was very impressive to see the range of style and the depth of knowledge, which each Acharya/Sadhu uses to spread the message of Jainism, and different philosophies that go with it. They are all different and unique in some respects, at the same time their message and purpose is strikingly similar. We are left with a few concerns about the role of next-generation of Jain community living in North America. Will this generation have the opportunity to interact with and benefit from coming in contact with Acharyas / Sadhus? As the new generation keeps putting down firmer roots in this land, their travel to India and thus opportunity for such interactions will continually decline. So how do we ensure that our spiritual journey continues in this land of opportunity and Jainism finds a permanent home here? We have posed some of these questions as food for thought, and we are quite certain that we will be able to find a way to face these challenges with your feedback and suggestions.

In this issue, we have started with a note from the first female JAINA president. We have also ended this Jain Digest issue with a write-up of the only female Jain Acharya.

Our heart-felt Micchami Dukkadam (apologies) if we have missed any Acharya/Sadhu, from any tradition (sect) or hurt your feelings in the way we have written about the ones we have covered. While, we tried our best to present the interaction with an Acharya to the best of our ability, it is quite likely we may have misrepresented a particular conversation. In that context, we offer our sincere apologies to these great souls.

Thank you and we look forward to engaging discussions on this and other topics with you.

With Warm Regards
Jain Digest Editorial Team
jaindigest.info@gmail.com
Vardhaman at the age of 30, came out of his palace, and with thousands of eyes watching him, he removed all the clothes and ornaments attached with his body, plucked out his long hair, and chanting “Namo Siddhanam”, he left without even looking back at his palace. Thus began the long journey of 12 and half years for Shraman Mahavir. This twelve-year period of spiritual practice that entailed, deep and undisturbed meditation, rigorous penance, extreme tolerance of pain, and ultimate equanimity, has served as the leading example of spiritual practice for Jain sadhus for many generations and will continue to serve as an example for many generation to come.

The above was a glimpse of Veetrag Mahavir. Let us now present a short narration of how a person in modern times undergoes a complete change in one’s lifestyle, due to some strong inner feeling of veetrag. Chunabhatti is a laid-back lower-middle class locality right in the center of the growing metropolitan. It is home to the first cotton mill in Mumbai (Bombay), which was registered in 1886 by Jamshedji Tata. The history of a Jain temple in
Chunabhatti can also be traced back to this period. Recently on Jan 20, 2010, this locality was full of activity. The streets were crowded and a huge procession was on its way. Young, Miss Neha Madanal Godani, college-going girl, dearpet (laadaki) of her father, was on her way to take diksha under Acharya Kirtiyash Suri. On Jan 21, 2010, she became Sadhavi Nandishyra Shriji. Father Madanal, told us, "It is very difficult to see your young one leave you after 22 years, it specially hurts when one imagines the kind of hardships one faces in the path of Sadhavi. However, when I am calm, the thought of my determined daughter committed to the cleansing of her soul makes me immensely happy." When we asked Sadhavi Nandishyra Shriji about the motivations that led her towards the path of sadhutva, she told us that she had come to realize that every worldly relationship was temporary and superficial. On the other hand, she saw her elder sister and masi (aunt), both of them were currently sadhavis, who were undergoing hardships but were still very happy. So instead of building and engaging in superficial relationship, it was better to build a permanent relationship with Parmatma. When we inquired about the hardships she was undergoing as a newly initiated sadhavi, she was honest enough to admit to us that it was hard sometimes and that she would get emotional at times, but her resolve was complete and she had no shanka (doubt) about the correctness of her decision.

Indian Tradition of Sainthood

Shramana is one of most ancient ascetic traditions of India. A shramana is one who renounces the worldly life and leads an ascetic life for the purpose of spiritual development and liberation. Shramana tradition asserts that human beings are responsible for their own deeds and reap the fruits of those deeds, for good or ill. Liberation, therefore, may be achieved by anybody irrespective of caste, creed, color or culture (in contrast to certain historical caste-based traditions) provided the necessary effort is made. The Sanskrit word shramana is derived from the Sanskrit verbal root śṛṃ "to exert effort, labor or to perform austerity". "Shramana" thus means "one who strives" in Sanskrit. The older Aarhat Dharma or Nirgranth Dharma (Pre-Mahavir names of Jain philosophy) would consider this word derived from the original word Saman that means the one who believes in Samata, i.e. equanimity.

Samkhya and Yoga are two early and very important philosophies that follow the Shramana philosophy and whose existence can be traced from archeological finding and related research of the Indus Valley period of about 3000-2000 BCE. Yoga is probably the most important Shramana practice to date, which follows the Samkhya philosophy of liberating oneself from the grip of Prakriti (nature) through individual effort. Jain literature credits the beginning of this tradition to Bhagwan Rushabdev. While the literal translation of the dates in the Jain canons do not match with the scientifically derived dates of the ancient human civilization, logical extrapolation would put this period at the end of the Stone Age and the beginning of the Agriculture Age.

The Sangh of Mahavir

Tirthankar Mahavir swami established a Chaturvihid sangh—the four community pillars of Jainism. The sangh pillars are Male monk (sadhu), Female monk (sadhavi), Male family person (shravak) and Female family person (shravika). As per Jain tradition, Tirthankar leads the sangh while he lives, and continues to be shashan-nayak (head-creator of the order) until a new Tirthankar arrives. After the Tirthankar attains Nirvana, Acharyas who have at least 36 gunas (good qualities) lead the sangh.

After Mahavir swami’s nirvana in 523B.C., the 5th Ganadhar Sudhamaswamy became the first Acharya. Ganadhar Jambuswamy, the second Acharya was the last follower of Mahavir Bhagwan to attain kevalgyan (omniscience) and ultimately became a siddha in this time cycle. The lineage of the undivided sangh as per the different traditional and other accounts is given in the figure on the next page.

There are varying accounts about the split between Digamber and the Shwetamber sect. There is Shwetamber view, Digamber view, and an outsider’s view based on certain historical evidences and archaeological findings. A summary of interesting research done by Prof. Jaini is included in this issue of Jain Digest. A terrible twelve-year famine occurred in Magadha in 293 B.C and the origins of the great schism can be traced to this event. The date of the famine also is different in different Jain traditions, however, reliable date is 293BC based on reign of Chandragupta Maurya. If one takes into account the historical evidences, and traditional data together it seems the separation occurred
gradually. Even though different groups may have been formed earlier, there was still some interaction between the different groups (possibly more than 2), the formal split possibly occurred in 79 or 82 A.D.

The Everlasting Tradition of Jain Sadhutva
Even after 2600 years, one of the most interesting aspects of Jain heritage is the consistency of philosophical approach, ultimate goal, and basic observance in which Sadhutva is practiced across different Jain traditions or sects. There are of course quite a few differences in the practice between the different sects and traditions, but for an outside observer, these differences seem to be more semantic, cultural or situational rather than a result of any deep philosophical divide. The sacred

### Lineage of Acharayas From Mahavir

- **Tirthankar Mahavir Swami**
  - Shri Sudharma Swami (*Nirgrantha Gachh*)
    - Shri Jambu Swami
      - Shri Prabhav Swami
      - Shri Sayyambhav Suri
      - Shri Yashobhadra Suri
      - Shri Sambhutivijay
      - Stha. Sthulbhadra
      - Arya Suhasti Suri
      - Stha. Susthit
      - Stha. Supratibhadha
      - **Shri Kotik Gachh**
      - Stha. Indradinna Suri
      - Stha. Dinnasuri
      - Aa. Sinhasiri
      - Aa. Shri Vajraswami
    - Shri Sambhutivijay
    - Stha. Sthulbhadra
    - Arya Suhasti Suri
    - Stha. Susthit
    - Stha. Supratibhadha
    - **Shri Kotik Gachh**
    - Stha. Indradinna Suri
    - Stha. Dinnasuri
    - Aa. Sinhasiri
    - Aa. Shri Vajraswami
  - Vishnudeva
  - Nandimitra
  - Aparajita
  - Govardhana
  - Shri Bhadrabahu Swami
    - Visakha
    - Prosthiha
    - Kshatria
    - Jayasena
    - Nagasena
    - Siddhartha
    - Dhritisena
    - Vijaya

- **Breakup Per Digambar Tradition Around 373BC**
- **Breakup Of Sangh Per Shwetember Tradition Around 196BC**

The most reliable date of the great famine is 293 BC (Chandragupta Maurya). In all likelihood differences in the sangh started at that time. Formal split most likely did not occur till 79AD.
Acharanga Sutra and the Dasvekalik Sutra of the Shvetambar tradition details the conduct of a Jain ascetic. The Moolachar sutra and the Anagar Dharmamrita provide particulars on sadhutva for the Digamber sects. Below is a picture of Jain monks, representing the different sects and gender. The estimate of the total number of monks in the different Jain Sampradays (sects) currently is given in the table below. The picture on the next page gives the time-line of the different traditions.

**Life during Sadhutva**

Acharya Umaswati (or Umaswami) was probably the last popular Acharya accepted either as part of lineages or as a revered scholar by all current sects of Jainism. The following is a quotation from Acharya Umaswati's Tattvaarth Sutra:

"The life of an ascetic is exacting. It imposes hardships and strains. An ascetic accepts food and drinks according to an uncompromising code. An ascetic endears to live in harmony with nature. He/she keeps few possessions and lives in an ordinary residence with meager facilities and protection from the elements. It is expected that an ascetic will encounter afflictions of hunger, disease, reviling, and the like. As part of ascetic discipline, a mendicant voluntarily and patiently undergoes painful experiences such as hunger and thirst, heat and cold, and, discomforting posture and uncomfortable repose. Through such trials and tribulations, the sage becomes conditioned to face unforeseen afflictions, physically and mentally. When afflictions befall at random, due to past experiences, he/she maintains equanimity and does not falter from the path of spiritual pursuit. Confronting hardships patiently strengthens the resolve of aspirants to pursue asceticism. It also leads to stoppage of inflow and shedding of karmas."

‘Virati’ means giving up feelings, thoughts and conduct of sin. ‘Saravvirati’ means giving up all sins for life. The individual who takes the vow to give up all sins follows the path of sadhutva. This worthy individual renounces the worldly life and all the attachments, and is initiated into the Jain order of monkhood (diksha), the man is called Sadhu, Shraman or Muni and the woman is called Sadhavi, Shramani, or Aryā. Their renunciation is total which means they are completely detached from the social and worldly activities and they do not take any part in those activities anymore. Instead, they spend their time in spiritual pursuit, uplifting their souls and guiding householders such as ourselves how to uplift our souls.

When individuals get initiated into the life of Sadhus and Sadhavis, they take five major vows and act strictly in accordance with those vows. The five great vows are:

**Pranatipātaviraman Mahavrat** - Vow of absolute Non-violence.

First vow of Pranatipātaviraman Mahavrat means sadhu and sadhavis will never cause harm or violence to any living being including even the tiniest creatures.

**Mrishavadaviraman Mahavrat** - Vow of absolute Truthfulness

Second vow of Mrishavadaviraman Mahavrat means they will not lie.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sampraday (sect)</th>
<th>No. of Acharyas</th>
<th>No. of Sadhus</th>
<th>No. Of Sadhavis</th>
<th>Total Monks</th>
<th>% of Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Shvetambar Murtipujak</td>
<td>164</td>
<td>1,927</td>
<td>6,600</td>
<td>8,691</td>
<td>61%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shvetambar Sthanakvasi</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>599</td>
<td>3,012</td>
<td>3,623</td>
<td>26%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shvetambar Terapanth</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>154</td>
<td>525</td>
<td>680</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Digamber</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>614</td>
<td>515</td>
<td>1,186</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td><strong>234</strong></td>
<td><strong>3,294</strong></td>
<td><strong>10,652</strong></td>
<td><strong>14,180</strong></td>
<td><strong>100%</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Jain Traditions and Important Acharya’s Time-line

Maithunaviraman Mahavrata - Vow of absolute Celibacy
Fourth vow of *Maithunaviraman Mahavrata* means they have to observe the celibacy with an absolute adherence to it. The *sadhu* or *sadhavis* should not even touch a member of the opposite sex regardless of their age.

**Parigrahaviraman Mahavrata** - Vow of absolute Non-attachment.

Fifth vow of *Parigrahaviraman Mahavrata* means they do not possess anything and do not have any attachment for things they keep for their daily needs.

Monks not only commit to follow the above vows, they will not ask others to commit actions resulting in such sins and will not support anybody committing such sins.

In addition to the 5 *Mahavrata*, each ascetic also takes the vow of three *Guptis* and five *Samitis*. The three *Guptis* are:

- **Managupti**: Control of the mind
- **Vachanagupti**: Control of speech
- **Kayagupti**: Control of body

The five *Samitis* are:

- **Irya Samiti**: Carefulness while walking
- **Bhasha Samiti**: Carefulness while communicating
- **Eshana Samiti**: Carefulness while eating
- **Adana Nikshepana Samiti**: Carefulness while handling their flywhisks, water gourds, etc.
- **Pratishtapana Samiti or Utsarga Samiti**: Carefulness while disposing of bodily waste matter

In almost all sects, new aspirants of Jain *sadhu*va undergo rigorous training prior to initiation. During that training, they learn about the Jain philosophy, the Jain scriptures, and the special code of conduct for monks and nuns. They learn to detach themselves from all their worldly ties. The training ensures that the candidates have determination, capability and the aptitude to withstand the hardships that a *sadhu* or *sadhavi* may have to face during their lifetime. Once they get used to this life of detachment, they can decide to undertake the role of *sadhu*va. They should not be under any pressure to make this decision. The final decision to accept an aspirant as *sadhu* or *sadhavi* lies in the hands of the Acharya. In *Shwetambar Terapanth* sect, the training aspirants are formally called *Mumukshu*. In the *Digamber* tradition trainee ascetics are known as *Ailaka* or *Kshullaka*. The Ascetics from most traditions (unless specifically a specific tradition is mentioned) follow the following lifestyle:

1) Male *Digamber* monks do not wear any clothes and are nude. They practice non-attachment to the body and hence wear no clothes. *Shwetamber* monks and nuns wear white clothes. *Shwetamber* believe that monks and nuns may wear simple un-stitched white clothes as long as they are not attached to them.

2) They are always bare footed and bare handed. They do not use caps or umbrellas or put on boots, chappals or sandals.

3) Jain monks do not use vehicles of any sort. They travel on foot.

4) Jain monks do not possess any house. They stay in *Upashrayas* of *pausadhsahlas* or any other similar place where they can perform their spiritual practices.

5) They do not stay permanently in any one *Upashraya* (place of temporary residence). The maximum they remain confined to one place is for four months during the rainy season. They move from one place to another during the remaining eight months and preach religion to people.

6) Shwetamber monks keep an *Ogho* (a small cloth broom) and a *muhapatti* (cloth to cover the mouth) with them and a stick when they travel. The Shwetamber Sthanakvasi sects wear the muhapatti most of the times. Digamber monks keep *Morpichhi* (peacock feathers broom) and a *Kamandal* (small wooden pot for water). The peacock feathers *Morpichhi* used by Digamber monks have to be naturally shed by peacock and found on the ground.

7) Monks do not travel or go out of their *Upashrayas* after sunset.

8) Jain monks do not take water or food before sunrise and after sunset. Shwetamber monks can take food, etc. 46 minutes after sunrise. The Shwetamber monks collect their food from different houses (*Gochari*) in wooden vessels, and return to their *Upashrayas* to have food. Digamber monks take food standing and with the help of knotted upturned palms and in one house only where their *sankalpa* (preconceived idea) is fulfilled. Digamber monks have only one meal a day.

9) Most Shwetamber monks drink only boiled water. Certain Shwetamber Sthanakvasi
monks drink ash-filtered water. Digamber monks also use filtered water.

10) Jain monks after initiation do not cut their hair or shave their heads; nor do they get these things done by a barber. However, twice a year or at least once a year, they pluck off their hair or get the hair plucked by others. This is called Keshlochan or Loch. This way they are not dependent on others to carry out their needs. It is also considered as one kind of austerity where one bares the pain of plucking of the hair calmly.

11) Sadhus do not touch any females, while sadhavis do not touch any males.

12) In addition a monk is required daily practice of:
- Samayika – a compulsory 48 minute self-study, meditation, chanting, etc.
- Pratikraman – a prayer for atoning for sins committed knowingly or unknowingly and confessing them before the preceptors and of asking for forgiveness from them. This is normally performed twice a day.

The Bhattarak tradition

The Bhattarak tradition mainly found among the Bispanthi sub-sect of Digambers, most likely started around 1100 AD. Its primary purpose was to take cognizance of Shrvaks to lead them through right path of Dharma. The term Bhattarak is used to imply the most honored. Bhattarakas are mainly responsible for the religious preaching and propagation. The early, Bhattarak followed the practice of nudity and possessed only a Morpicchi (peacock feathers broom) and a Kamandal (small wooden pot for water).

It was during the 14th century, the reign of Firoz Shah Tughluq, that the tradition of Bhattarak was formally defined. It was also during this period that Bhattarak gave up the practice of nudity out of the necessity to interact extensively in King’s courts. The role of Bhattarak was to lead the life pattern of a Rajaguru with all the paraphernalia; royal honors and privileges. They personify sacrifice, learning capacity, literary interest and exhibit great organizational abilities. The organization of religious conferences, collecting and publishing religious works, protecting classic works of the religion, and maintaining important temples and holy places are the duties rested with them. They evince keen interest in the development of art literature, architecture and sculpture and also the performing arts such as music, dance or drama. However, the primary purpose of Bhattarak is the responsibility of practicing and propagating adhyatmic life and uplifting society through religion and education. Bhattarakas are expected to follow the full Nirgranth sadhu stage at the terminal stage of his life.

Any change or reform in religious traditions is bound to attract criticism and the Bhattarak movement has also received its fair share of criticism. Regardless of these censures, one cannot deny that the Bhattarakas have not only served the cause of Jain dharma immensely but they have saved dharma from sinking down during the pre-patta period of Digamberism, i.e. roughly during the two centuries before the Turkish conquest of Northern India. Bhattarakas Sakalakirti Shubhachandra, Prabhachandra and Gyanabhusana have also been named as great Jain scholars. Sri Charukeerthi Bhattach Suchikartyavarya Swami, the present pontiff of Shravanabelagola stands as the main propagator of religion since assuming the peetha in 1969.

Upadhayas

This title is given to those sadhus who have acquired a special knowledge of the Jain canons and philosophical systems. They teach Jain scriptures to sadhus and sadhvis. While understanding the scripture an Upadhayan needs to continue to meditate and concentrate upon the nature of the self (soul) and understand the true meaning of the shastras. This tradition Upadhayas is rigorously followed in the Digamber tradition, but not that much prevalent in the Shvetambar tradition.

Tribute to the Acharyas

The survival of Jains, though as a minority community, for the last so many centuries in India can be safely attributed to a great extent to the glorious and continuous tradition of Jain saints. They never attempted to lead a solitary life in isolation from others. On the contrary, these saints led by their Acharyas have always tried to preserve contacts with the general masses so as to encourage them to lead a religious life. Their contribution goes a lot beyond the day-to-day religious activities. They have contributed to logic, mathematics, language, literature, architecture, ethics, culture, metaphysics, and propounding spiritualism that extends traditional religious boundaries. At the core of all Acharya’s thinking is the message of the Tirthankar and secret of their strength is their own soul taking inspiration their
guru, and the greatest of the great souls (Paramatma – Arihants & Siddhas). They have served as ambassadors of Ahimsa, and influenced some of the most barbaric rulers towards a path of peace and tolerance. Over the past 2600 years, the Jain community had to face many calamities testing the very existence of the faith. Starting from the severe 12-year famine, the Shivite backlash, and brutal Muslim invaders, the Acharyas had to come up with appropriate solutions to effectively keep the sanhgl united and provide the necessary encouragement to face the difficult times. On the other hand with changing times the old traditional values and thoughts had to be reevaluated and in some cases modification was required. The challenge always was how to handle change and yet at the same time ensure Bhagwan Mahavir’s message was fully preserved. In many such situations, the Acharyas made appropriate changes to traditions while emphasizing certain aspects of the philosophy to ensure short-term survival and of a long-term blossoming of the Jain society. Yes, it is true that in the process different sects were formed and there were serious disagreements among sects, but it is still a tremendous testament to all the Acharyas for having preserved the core essence of Jain way of life. We humbly pay tribute to these great souls.

**Acharya**

An Acharya heads the fourfold Jain community. He/She guides, defines rules, does administration of saint order, and directs the community (sangh) in the proper direction. This position shoulders great responsibility not only as the spiritual head but also ensures that the benefits and the essence of the Dharma are spread in the sangh. Such responsibility should under no circumstances be misconstrued towards any form of political power or political influence. In many respects, one can say they have tremendous responsibility without any real power. The only power they possess is the power of their own character and the respect they get due to the commitment to the others’ well-being.

In Jain tradition Acharyas have 36 gunas (referring to both rites and qualities):

- Twelve Kinds of Tapa: Fasting, taking reduced diet, putting of special restrictions or and above the usual, observations, abounding food-taste, lonely habitation, mortification of body, expiation, reverence (paying respect to holy personages), services to saints, study, renunciation and meditation.
- Five Types of Observations (Samiti): Carefulness in walking, carefulness in talking, carefulness in taking food, carefulness in giving – taking things, carefulness in removal of excreta.
- Six Essentials: Vandana, stutis (prayer to Tirthankar), samata (equanimity), pratikaman, pratyakhyan (vows), and kayotasarga.
- Three Gupti (Hidden Things), Man gupti, vachan gupti, and body gupti.

In addition an Acharya has eight additional special skills:

1) **Aachar**: right acts according to laws of monks
2) **Sutra**: knowledge of all agamas (sacred texts) and their meanings
3) **Sharir**: impressive body and aura
4) **Vachan**: descent and serious speech
5) **Vachana**: good teacher
6) **Paug**: Expert in discussions and debates
7) **Mat**: sharp memory and mind
8) **Sangrah**: good store keeper to keep all stocks required by monks

It is not practical to list all the thousands of Acharyas whose unique contribution has not only preserved Jin’s teaching but also made it relevant despite the changing times and circumstances. We have however listed the names of few great souls; we sincerely apologize for not mentioning names of many Acharyas whose contribution to the Jain community was equally large and valuable. The work of Prof. Dr. Kamal Chand Sogani is noteworthy in listing some of the influential Jain Acharyas (see website http://www.herenow4u.de/pages/eng/sections/issjs/StudyNotes/InfluentialJainaAcharyas.htm).

**Acharya Umaswati or Umaswami** is the author of Tattvarta Sutra, a popular Jain text. Both the Digamber and Shwetamber sects claim him. He was a mathematician and one of the most profound thinkers and critical analyzers of the Jain philosophy. Very little is known about the exact period of his life, accounts about his life span vary but he must have lived sometime between the...
200BC to 200AD, most likely in the first century AD. It is likely that at this time, no clear division of the Jain Sangh had emerged, and thus both sects may be right in claiming him. The claims of both Digamber and Shvetambar groups differ a lot, and within their own claims there are contradictions. The colophon given at the end; Bhāṣṭya that he composed great work either explicitly expressed or implied in the city of Kusumapura (modern Patna) can give the best analytical clue that he possibly did spent lot of time in the North. This may also imply that he interacted with both Shvetamber and Digamber leaning groups.

Acharya Samantabhadra was possibly the first Jain saint to write not only on religion but also on general subjects, such as ayurveda and Sanskrit grammar. Some consider him to be in the lineage of Umaswami. Digambers place the period of his life between AD 120 and 185.

Acharya Kundkund (also Kundkund) is a celebrated Jain Acharya, and great Jain scholar of the 2nd century CE. He is the composer of spiritual classics such as: Samayasara, Niyamasara, Pancastikayasara, Pravacanasara, Atthaphahuda and Barasanuvekkha. He occupies a very high place in the tradition of the Jain Acharyas, especially among Digambers. For many Digambers, his name has auspicious significance and occupies third place after Bhagwan Mahavir and Gautama Ganadhar. Though his real name was Padmanandi, he is popularly referred to as Kundkund because he was born in a place named Kaundakunda in South India. Acharya Kundakunda has been called "Light of this Dark Age".

Acharya Devarddhi Kṣamāśramaṇa. The credit of saving, and possibly re-writing the Jain canon (Aams) in a preserve-able form goes to this great Acharya (5th cent. A.D.).

Acharya Siddhasen Diwakar was a highly intelligent Jain Acharya of his time. He was like the illuminating lamp of the Jain order and therefore came to be known as Siddhasen Diwakar. He is credited with the authorship of many books but sadly most of them are not available. Sanmatitarka is his best book on logic and is widely read even at present. The well-known Kalyanmandir Stotra, a monumental work in Sanskrit poetry was also composed by him.

Acharya Pujyapada, who lived in the 5th century CE was a renowned grammarian and saint belonging to the Digamber tradition of Jains.

Before initiation as a Jain ascetic, he was known as Devanandi. He was heavily influenced by the writings of his predecessors Acharya Kundkund and Samantabhadra.

Acharya Haribhadra Suri lived around 650-700AD but is traditionally believed to have lived from 459-529AD. He was a Shvetamber mendicant Jain leader and author. Haribhadra identifies himself as a student of Jinabhadra and Jinadatta of the Vidyadhara Kula. There are several, somewhat contradictory, accounts of his life. Tradition ascribes some 1400 different works to him. A more creditable number is in the vicinity of 100, some of which are among the most highly regarded works in Jainism.

Acharya Akalanaka (8th cent. A.D.): Many consider him to be the father of Jain Logic. His works are: Nyaya Viniścayya (Perception, Inference and Authority), Siddhi Viniścayya - (Pramāṇa, Naya & Nikṣepa), Tattvārthavārttika - (Commentary on Tatvārthasūtra of Umāsvāti), and Aṣṭāsāti - (Commentary on Apta Mīmāṃsā of Samantabhadra).

Acharya Jindattasuri (1075-1154 ) was renowned Acharya having a huge impact on Jain religion and society. He formulated new rules and regulations. He revived the Khartargachcha sect. He abolished many malpractices prevailing all around and he inspired 500 shravaks and 700 shrawikas for initiation. In Rajasthan Atmaya Jindattasuri was known as kalpavriksha, a wish-yielding tree.

Acharya Hemachandra Suri (1089–1172) was a great Jain scholar, poet, and polymath who wrote on grammar, philosophy, prosody, and contemporary history. Noted as a prodigy by his contemporaries, he gained the title Kalikāl Sarvagya, (all knowing of the Kali age). A prodigious writer, Hemachandra wrote grammar of Sanskrit and Prakrit, texts on science and logic and practically all branches of Indian philosophy. His best known work, the epic poem Tri-shashthi-shalaka-purusha-charitra (Lives of Sixty-Three Great Men), is a hagiographical treatment of the sequence of teachers and their pupils who were instrumental in defining the Jain philosophical position, their asceticism and eventual liberation from the cycle of death and rebirth, as well as the legendary spread of the Jain influence.

Acharya Abhaya Deva a 12th CE, Agamic scholar, author of various Tikas that expounded
the various aspects and meaning of many obscure Agamic texts.

Acharya Vaśovijaya a seventeenth century (1624–1688) Jain philosopher-monk was one of India’s greatest philosophers and logician. He was a thinker, prolific writer and commentator who had a strong and lasting influence on Jainism. He was a disciple of Muni Nayanavijaya in the lineage of famous Jain monk Hiravijaya (belonging to the Tapa Gachchha tradition of Shwetamber Jains) who influenced Emperor Akbar to give up meat eating.

Acharya Bhikshu (1726–1803) was one of the great revolutionary saints and reformers of Jainism. He was the founder and first spiritual head of Jain Shwetamber Terapanth sect. He was Agamic scholar and a prolific writer who initiated a reform movement that has had a significant impact on the spread of the Jain philosophy both within and outside the Jain community. His successors have built on this movement to expand the influence across, caste, religion, and national boundaries.

New Groups / Sects

Shrimad Rajchandra (1867 – 1901) was a prominent Jain philosopher. Raychandbhai Ravajibhai Mehta (popularly known as Shrimad Rajchandra) was not a typical Jain sadhu. In fact, he was never initiated and he reportedly was at the threshold of complete renunciation when he contracted an illness from which he never recovered. Though young in age, he was spiritually matured, and remained in a state of heightened awareness. He wrote some of the most intriguing spiritual poems at the tender age of nine. Despite a powerful intrinsic attitude of detachment and a burning desire for total renunciation, at the age of 20, he had to tie the knot of marriage and engage in business. He was also a prolific writer and is famous for his work, Atma Siddhi Shastra. He was the spiritual guru of Mahatma Gandhi. Shrimadji was not an Acharya or a Sadhu in a traditional Jain way, but he was respected by many Jain Acharyas due his level of knowledge and spirituality being in complete conformance with the Jain Philosophy. It is for this reason Jains across all traditions respect Shrimadji teachings.

Kanji Swami (1889-1980) was a Jain scholar, philosopher and spiritual leader. He was the founder of the Kanjipanthe within the Digamber Jain tradition. He was originally initiated as a Sthanakvasi Jain monk at age 24, however subsequent influence by the writing of Acharya Kundkunda made him follow the Digamber tradition. The are however few difference in the interpretation of Acharya Kundkunda’s writing between the traditional Digamber groups and Kanjipanthe.

Dada Bhagwan: Ambalal Muljibhai Patel, also known as Dadashri (1908-1988) was the founder of a now fairly popular religious movement. For most part, the group accepts most of the tenets of Jainism, but does have some fundamental differences. Paying lot on emphasis to self-realization, the group considers Simandhar Swami (living Tirthankar by Jain Tradition) as their highest source of inspiration. Their fundamental premise is that self-realization can be achieved by direct contacts with another Akram Vigyani (a self-realized person), and need not go through the elaborate process of Karma Nirjara, in other words, a short-cut path to Self Realization. Further, such window of self-realization is open for a very short period of time. According to the group, though ultimate liberation is not possible in the current time cycle, with Akram science, it possible for one to attain a level of spirituality whereby a person has only one more life before final salvation. Interestingly, the group considers Hindu Lord Shiva and Lord Krishna were Akram Vignani. In a short period of time, this group has gained a large following, primarily in gujarat.

Only Guru can show path of Moksha
Only Guru can provide Enlightened Knowledge
Only Guru can remove one out of Delusion (Misery)
Only Guru can lead one to permanent happiness (Bliss)

Pragna Prakash Sutra
Abstract of the Paper

Jaina Monks From Mathura: Literary Evidence For Their Identification On Kusana Sculptures

By Padmanabh S. Jaini,
University of California at Berkeley

Among the thousands of Jaina images found throughout India, those from Mathura produced during the Kusana period are unique, for they alone contain representations of unclothed Jaina ascetics holding a single small piece of cloth in such a way as to cover their nudity. These curious figures cannot be identified with monks of the present-day Jaina sects of the Digambers, who practice total nudity, or of the Shvetambers, who wear two long pieces of unstitched white cloth wrapped around their bodies and occasionally a white blanket over their left shoulders.

These figures are referred by some scholars as Ardhiphalakas (monks with partial covering) and some speculate that these figures might be those Yakpaniya monks, another Jain sect that is now extinct. Certain text would indicate that they were the forerunners of the current Shvetamber order following Mahavir’s example where he kept a cloth during his initial period of renunciation. Other texts would indicate that certain monks started this practice at the time of the terrible 12-year drought that eventually lead to the Shvetamber tradition.

The style of research and investigation performed by Prof Jaini is fairly well demonstrated in this paper. Using literary evidences form various Digamber, Shvetamber, Buddhist, and other texts, Jaini has tried to trace the history and practices of Jaina monks and tried to correlate the relationship between the Kusana sculptures and clothing of Jain monks as described in scriptures and text of different traditions.

This paper demonstrates Jaini’s in-depth knowledge in Digamber, Shvetamber and Buddhist literature and Practices. The paper shows the systematic, rigorous and unbiased approach followed by Jaini to analyze the problem. We hope this will inspire you to analyze the entire paper. Please send us an email to jaindigest.info@gmail.com with your request and we will send you a PDF copy of the entire paper.
Jain Traditions and Spirituality in North America

Historical Perspective

Jains believe that Jainism has existed ever since there have been rational, logical, thinking individuals, and from time immemorial Tirthankars have been guiding and reviving religion. Even historians agree that the basic concept of Jainism existed in all likelihood even during the period prior to that of the 23rd Tirthankar Parshwanath Bhagwan (800 BCE). Tirthankar Mahavir Bhagwan presented Dharma, the ultimate path to salvation, in a multifaceted way that could withstand the onslaught of changing times. Various torchbearers from Mahavir's Ganadhars to Acharyas, Upadhyays and Sadhus, throughout history, played a vital role in passing the message of Bhagwan Mahavir, down the generations. Nevertheless, the task of maintaining, spreading and propagating the Dharma without diluting the core message has never been an easy task.

Since the earliest of human civilization, communities have formed traditions, which are passed from one generation to other. Almost all religions have formed traditions that are passed down to generations. Imbibed in these traditions is typically the message of faith. Traditions, by their very nature, are dependent on the social norms and accepted culture at a specific time, location, and situation of the society. In a broader sense, according to Jain philosophy, we can say, traditions are dependent on dravya (substance), kshetra (space), kaal (time), and bhaav (form).

Faced with changing time, social, and climatic conditions, the great Jain Acharyas, throughout history, provided leadership to the community to adapt the traditions in such a manner that the core message of Jainism was preserved over generations. We have many examples of such situations in the history. The survival of the stringent ascetic tradition among Jain monks was under huge strain during the 12-year drought around 300 BCE. While the great Advaita philosopher Adi Shankara revived the Brahmanic faith (Sanatana Dharma) by his propagation of logic through debate, the subsequent followers of that faith put the Digamber tradition under severe attack in southern India. Similar was the situation when outside invaders and Muslim rulers started attacking Jain temples and establishments. In all such situations, the Acharyas made appropriate changes to traditions while emphasizing certain aspects of the philosophy to ensure the survival of a longer term blossoming of the Jain society. Yes, in the process, there were many disagreements resulting in the formation of different groups or sects, but in all cases, the core essence of Jain way of life was preserved.

Jainism In Northern America (Past)

If Swami Vivekananda introduced the eternal spiritual values of India to the western audience by his famous "Sisters and Brothers of America" speech, Virachand Raghavji Gandhi presented a strong case to follow the timeless religion of non-violence. In the first World Parliament of Religions in Chicago in 1893, Virachandji presented that even after countless invasions and foreign occupations the soul of Indian Heritage was untarnished. This unique national strength comes from a culture of tolerance that shuns dogmatism, developed over many centuries through a process of non-violence. Virachand Raghavji Gandhi
brought the flag of Jainism and eastern human values to North America (NA).

A replica of a Jain temple was constructed at the St. Louis World Fair in 1904-5 and the remains of that structure are currently located in Jain Society of Southern California. Though the fascination for eastern spirituality in USA began in the early part of the twentieth century, immigration to NA from India prior to 1965 was minuscule and isolated, with some traces of NA Jain families going back to 1944. (The exception was the large contingent of Sikh farmers and laborers who migrated to western USA during the period 1899-1914). With members started migrating to USA, and with that also started the significant migration of Jains in NA. The early Jain communities mostly celebrated the religious festivals jointly with their Hindu counterparts, a tradition that is followed even today in many smaller metropolitan cities of NA. The formation of Jain Center of America in New York in 1966 and the visit backed by a series of lectures of Gurudev Shri Chitrabhanuji in 1970 saw the beginnings of a distinct identity of the Jain community shaping up in NA. This landmark event was followed by the visit of Acharya Sushil Kumarji in 1973, which in many respects contributed to the building of the spiritual foundation of Jainism in NA.

Soon after 1970, various local Jain societies were formed in different cities. The NA Jain community had its first convention in Los Angles in 1981 and JAINA was established in 1983. Since its formative years, the Jain Society of North America has taken several steps over the past few decades in bringing the Jain community together, centered on the preaching of Bhagwan Mahavir:

- It has taken advantage of the rich traditions of building dedicated places of worship.
- Preaching of the Jain philosophy has been supported actively by the visits of various Jain monks and scholars from India.
- Jain society has taken various steps to promote the education of Jain philosophy targeted to different age and social groups.
Society has created avenues of communication among the Jain Northern American community. The Jain community has clearly established its presence by building some of the most unique and exquisite Jain temples in many NA metropolitans. In some of the smaller cities, the Jain community has joined hands with the larger Hindu community to build a common place of worship. The unique Shikhari replica at the Siddhachalam inspired by the late Acharya Sushil Kumarji has become a Tirth in NA. The three JVB centers where Samanjis are present throughout the year, the meditation center of Gurudev Chitrabhanuji, and certain other Jain or Jain philosophy based meditation centers, established a firm footing for Jainism in NA. The full list of temples and place of Jain worship in NA is included in this edition.

Jain tradition for centuries has been kept alive by succession of Acharyas and their monk followers. They have not only followed the rigorous physical and mental discipline to purify their own soul but have also tirelessly preached the path of righteousness among the Jain sanghs. However, the tradition of Jain sadhus prescribed in the ancient Jain canons to avoid the use of vehicular travel, limits travel of such great saints to NA. However, most Jain sects have come up with their own solutions to spread the message of Bhagwan Mahavir in NA. To begin with, certain groups have accepted that modern time, requires changes to certain traditions and have effectively accepted limited vehicular means of travel. Frequent travel and eloquent lectures by monks like Acharya Sushil Kumarji, Acharya Chandanaji, Roop Chand Maharaj, Munishri Munichandraji Maharaj (and his younger brothers - Triputi) and Muni Amrendra have benefitted the Jain community of North America. Other Jain sects that refuse to accept vehicular travel for sadhus have instead preferred to send their blessing or message to the NA Jain community via scholars or pundits. The late Acharya Tulsi of the Terapanth sect came up with a unique solution by starting a new order of Samans and Samanis, who were given limited freedom of vehicular travel, till their Guru allowed them to take the full diksha. From the Digamber Jain tradition, NA had visits from Bhattaraks, scholars and in some cases Ailaka (trainee ascetics) who have been granted limited permission by their guru to travel. The eloquent Sri Rakeshbhai Zaveri, who is a follower of Shrimad Rajchandra, not only travels frequently to NA, but also uses long distance learning techniques to conduct shibiris. The influence of these scholars and monks, especially those who are mostly resident in NA, have inspired many members outside the Jain community to believe in certain tenets of the Jain philosophy. For example, Gurudev Chitrabhanuji has influenced Non-Jains to adopt vegetarianism. Similarly, samanijis at the JVB centers have a large Non-Jain following.

Jainism In Northern America (Present)
The Jain Centers and JAINA are very actively
members are also very active in the Parliament of World religions and other interfaith dialogs. This Jain Digest magazine, JAINA calendar, and the www.jaina.org website, are all geared towards increasing community communications. There are various other initiatives taken by JAINA and the respective centers to improve the overall well-being of the society. The community has been involved in various philanthropic and Jiv Daya activities across the globe. On May 22, 2010 for the first time, a Jain prayer was recited at both the US congress and US senate. Also for the first time a US President (Barak Obama) mentioned Bhagwan Mahavir's Nirvana in his Diwali greeting meant for general Indian community.

Finally, there is recognition among the community both at JAINA and the individual center level that the community needs to build and groom next-generation Jain community leaders. Initiatives towards these objectives have been undertaken at both JAINA and the center's level.

Current Model of Jain Practice in NA
To understand the model of Jain practice in NA is important to cognize the community’s background. Most Jain migrants came to this country with a motive to grow financially or professionally. No wonder the Jain community is one of the most professionally and financially advanced community in USA (considering the size of 100,000 individuals in NA). The need for religion in many cases arises when people realize that their children may lose touch of the culture with which the immigrants grew up in India. The second need of the community is the strong desire for social interactions as most Jain migrants come from highly social families (as opposed to small
families living an individualistic lifestyle). The third need is truly traditional, a subset of migrants in any given metropolitan have grown up with strong traditional roots and would like to continue their personal life in the same traditional way. These fundamental needs coupled with the professional outlook (some may say American outlook) which the migrant Jains have picked up from the American society in many respects influence the nature, operation and the model of the Jain centers of NA.

**Challenges**

Jain Community of North America has successfully established the symbol of the essence of Jainism in building Jain Centers across the continent. In spite of all various activities and utilizing modern methods of bringing people together, the community mostly follows the traditional modes of imparting and acquiring knowledge. But looking at future, there are challenges that it will have to address. A substantial challenge that all Jain temples of North America will face is the same challenge that Jainism as a whole has faced over the last 2600 years, and successfully tackled. When challenged by other faiths, by environmental conditions etc., how will Jains of NA adapt while staying true to the essence? In the past, diverse opinions resulted in the breakup of the community in multiple groups or traditions, but each of these groups maintained and passed down the core essence of Jainism imbued in their traditions and at the same time it offered spiritual aspirant the complete guidance and opportunity for self-purification. Will Jains of NA as a community become leaders for Green change, like the Jain Acharyas in the past brought about positive social changes (the changes that the society of the time was in dire need of)? How well will the NA Jain community preserve the core Jain message over generations? How will individuals take their first baby-steps towards their ultimate salvation? The social environment of North America, the globalization effect due to rapidly changing technology, and the mostly materialistic Jain community of NA presents a challenge to staying true to the essence of Jain spirituality.

**New generation’s challenge**

The challenge lies ahead, when the new generation takes over the leadership of the community. Will this leadership predominantly be of the traditionally conscious new migrants from India (as has been the case so far, and more will continue to come), or traditional liberal youths brought up in a different social environment? Over the past few decades, people who came from India and grew up in different, albeit, structured, and traditional environment have run Jain Centers of North America. They may have more modern outlook, but their roots are still traditional. When the new generation takes over the leadership of the community, will this leadership predominantly be of those traditionally
conscious new migrants from India (as has been the case so far, and more will continue to come), or traditionally liberal youth brought up in a different social environment? Over the next few decades we will see a mix of immigrant Jains with traditional outlook, while on the other hand there will be the second generation of Jains growing up in US with their fairly agnostic outlook towards both traditions and languages. Can Jain Centers of NA centers that have largely tried to unify under the banner of Jain heritage, but have still been based on a traditional outlook attract the next generation to practice and understand the essence of Jain heritage? The factor of common cultural roots that has helped the Jain community of NA to cement may lose its effectiveness in the next few decades. This is not a criticism, but a fact of life. We bring with us our experiences based on our environment and learning, and incorporate the same in our personal, professional as well as other aspects of our lives.

Let us understand the environment and make-up of the second-generation Jains.

i. Based in socioeconomic survey of South Asian Indian (specific survey of Jain was not available), and the general business aptitude of the Jain community, we can safely say that over 75% of the Jain youth will attain a bachelor's or a higher degree and many of them will be involved in high income, generating jobs or enterprise. This will put the next generation in the elite USA category in terms of education and prosperity.

ii. Next, let us examine cultural heritage, just as children today are growing up color-blind to various skin colors in the melting pot of US, most youth of coming generation will grow up tradition-blind. Most of these children may not have the opportunity to absorb traditions from grandparents and other family members as their counterparts in India. (Studies have shown that the most meaningful gift grandparents give are memories and traditions) It is important to realize the difference between value systems and traditions. Traditions are procedural, while value systems are set of principles that a person believes in. While, parents play a huge role in the child's value-system, grandparents invariably play a huge role of passing the traditions.

iii. Many of the second-generation Jains may marry a non-Jain spouse, and thus their children will grow up in an inter-faith environment. Therefore, practice of the religion is bound to change.

The young NA born affluent and educated Jains from various backgrounds will bring a set of diverging approaches and they will defiantly question the tradition base. On the other hand, we will have young immigrants who will be more inclined to retain the Indian traditional base. Further, considering the trend in many Jain centers of a majority of the dedicated young volunteers are actually new immigrants and not natural born NA USA citizens, there is a serious danger of losing the NA born Jains from participating in the Jain Centers.

The responsibility of setting up a framework that will facilitate maintenance of all the key elements of the Jain faith while ensuring the participation of next-generation Jains by adapting to the different thinking and multi-faith, multi-cultural lifestyles still lies on the shoulders of this generation.

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Future

Attracting and grooming Future Leaders

The difference in approach of different generations is already evident in some of the challenges we are seeing today. In spite of very successful Pathshala programs at all the Centers, where the number of students in lower grades is increasing year after year, these programs in general seem to have failed to maintain the same level of interest amongst children in higher grades – the defining years in a young person's life.

We have to be able to sustain the momentum seen in younger grades by being able to retain the students as they go further up in grades. The
message from the youngsters is clear – they want to learn in various ways they are used to learning in this society. They want to debate and learn how to apply the teachings of Jainism in their lives. This could mean reevaluating the teaching methods and combining the best of traditional eastern and successful open methods of the west; training the teachers and providing them with resources to educate, and inspire and empower the future leaders of the Jain community.

Looking at the young professional NA born Jains, we can take immense pride in their incredible success in all walks of their lives. Given a forum to participate in, an opportunity to innovate and a cause to lead, they have done a fabulous job in organizing the YJA Convention over the years. Does that enthusiasm disappear or get deflated over the years? We have to figure out how to attract and mold our next generation – the young adults and young professionals. Recently an interesting observation was made at most major universities and companies like Google, Microsoft, and Cisco where there are decent numbers of immigrant Indians working with NAs of Indian origin: The NAs of Indian origin joined their immigrant cousin to enjoy watching world cup cricket; likewise, the immigrant Indians joined the NAs of Indian origin in watching the games of March madness. Learning from the observation, we can clearly say, the roots are common, we just have to find avenues and means for collaboration.

Many of these young NA born professionals are expressing their Jain values in many non-traditional ways, such as leading the green cause (vegan life style), making a commitment to live a life of honesty and integrity, helping the underprivileged of the society and some even believe in meditation and self-introspection. If we ask our youth to take over and run the Jain organizations, they will not be successful if we limit them within the strict bounds of an established tradition, they will have to be given freedom to make changes to our traditions. This is bound to generate conflict. However, if we understand Jainism, it never condemns conflicts, as a matter of fact, in many respects it encourages discussing conflicts. Conflicts are a natural outcome of our karmic state, what Jainism teaches is a method to resolve such conflicts or find amicable way to work around conflicts and in the process ensuring core message of Jainism is not lost. Acharya Umaswati (or Umaswami) revered by both Shwetamber and Digamber fractions could not resolve the conflicts between the two groups, but his classic Tattvartha Sutra ensured continuation of Jain values for many generations to come.

Looking at the broader aspect of the sangh – Jain community of NA, let us not forget that religion is only one aspect of Jains of North America, just as it is of a person’s life. Let us not forget the social and cultural aspects – it is the whole package that will be needed to attract and bring back the young professionals - a platform for the new generation to come together to bond, network and relate to each other – spiritually, culturally and professionally.

**Spirituality among Jain families**

During our interview with various Acharyas in India, we were amazed to find similarity in their answers related to spirituality in USA. In one of the earlier visits Acharya Mahapragya once explained to us the importance and difference of Upasana (tradition) and Adahyama (spirituality). There is no difference in spirituality among all the Jain traditions, in fact concept or spirituality extends the boundaries of a specific religion. The difference is in the traditions, traditions are required to maintain a sangh, help in propagating the religion, and set a stage for inspiring spirituality. Thus, a tradition by its very nature has cultural influence, its spirituality that helps in the ultimate self-realization. In a classic Jain sense one can view spirituality as the practice of Veetrag. Veetrag or the practice of Veetrag is development of the internal state that is free from attachment and aversion.

Let us do a small probabilistic evaluation of spirituality from a sadhutva perspective. One can assume some amount of spiritual feeling is innate among certain individuals. Taking the population of Jains in NA to be around hundred thousand compared to ten million in India, about hundred sadhus should be living among us (compared to about 10000 sadhus in India). This, not being the case, it would imply that either the environment is not conducive for people in NA to leave sansaric life, or the population distribution is such that they are not prepared to take up the path of Sadhutva. In all likelihood it is some combination of the above two situations. Yet among the next-
generation Jains, many of them being agnostic to traditions we will find some individuals who if inspired would decide to give up material world and prefer to live a life of sainthood. The abstract of Vinit Talsania (included in this magazine) is a living example. When we asked Acharya Yashovijay Maharaj, about ways to inspire spirituality among the NA population, he responded saying the most important thing was sanskar. The surrounding, the day-to-day interaction with parents, interactions with other family members and family associates, friends, and the overall social environment influences the value systems of a child. Sanskar is somewhat deeper. Some portions of Sanskar are innate, while some portions of it are a result of the parents and the elders influence. Sanskar starts by setting an example, the child is constantly noticing his/her elders. The second part of sanskar is encouraging the goodness of a child, something that is inborn in all humans, but not allowed to bloom. The third part is discussing the family values and let the child absorb them as he or she grows. If somebody does things out of fear of parents, elders, or society it is not sanskar. If a child grows with proper sanskar, spiritual feeling is bound to arise during the course of his life.

Studies done on close-knit Jewish families show that children of these families invariably return back to their family roots. It is not a surprise then that Jainism pays tremendous weightage to their traditional sanskar when bringing up a child. Guru in Jain dharma occupies the highest position. It is the guru that nurtures the practice of veetrag in an individual. Jain scriptures clearly state that the path of a soul to moksha is only through the guiding hand of a guru. Will the next-generation youth have to rely on finding their guru, who predominantly resides in India, or the Jains of North America will produce their own spiritual practitioners of the religion who will help adapt the message to the local area's dravya, kshetra, bhaav and kaal while maintaining the core message of Bhagwan Mahavir? Other religions like Buddhism have succeeded in adapting and prospering in their new environments even after moving away from their native regions. Can Jains of North America rise to that challenge?

If we rise to the challenges in front of us, the Jain community of North America will not only be unique but will start a trend that can bring about a fundamental change in our larger society.

In Search for Happiness

Vinit Talsania
Vinit.talsania@gmail.com

From as early as I can remember, I have always wanted happiness. I spent most of my youth like most normal American kids do in search for happiness - chasing the opposite sex, money, material things, popularity, etc. I never thought of myself as religious since I only went to the deraser on the "big" days like Mahavir Jayanti and during Paryushan, and even then the main reason for going was to socialize. Having been born in a Jain family, I was naturally raised as a vegetarian. And I knew I was a vegetarian because of the key principle in Jainism called Ahimsa. I knew the Navkar Mantra. I did Athai (8 days of only water) during Paryushan when I was a sophomore in high school, mainly since my Dad kept telling me I wouldn't be able to do it. And after I successfully completed the 8 day fast, loads of family and friends came to see me and gave me cash and gifts amounting to over $2000. I was pretty skied to say the least!

Happiness was always directed outward. Even while I was at Rutgers University and was more interested in studying personal development, the focus was to improve myself so that I could create the best possible outcome in my relationships, business, social circle, etc. I wanted to eat healthy and have a nice body so I could impress people (mainly girls). I wanted to do something great for the world so that I could, as a by-product, become super wealthy, be somewhat of a celebrity, and known for how I was such a "good" person. I was persistent in this belief because I really did want this amazing happiness that I did not have and could only dream of.

Possibly because of my strong commitment to search for true happiness, I was fortunate enough
that before I wasted an entire lifetime trying to find happiness in the materialistic world, that I started looking somewhere else; I started looking within. This Master whom I have known for five years and who I now refer to as my Sadguru (True Guru), is whom I owe all the credit for this simple, yet significant, change in my life's direction. His name is, respectfully, Pujiyashri Rakeshbhai Jhaveri.

Rakeshbhai Jhaveri (whom I now refer to as Gurudev) is a disciple of the Jain Saint, Shrimad Rajchandra. He has many qualifications that could impress anybody like a PhD, thousands of disciples across the globe, lots of knowledge, well spoken, and of course an all-white attire, but those are not the things that attracted me to Him. What attracted me to Him was his non-insistence (being an American youth this was very important!) and modern, and yet spiritual, approach to living a happy life.

In these past 5 years, I've only met Him personally a handful of times. They were mainly when He had visited the US to give lectures. Each time our conversations were very friendly and informal. I wasn't much interested in His lectures at the time since they were mainly in Gujarati. Once or twice when He visited our house and mainly because my parents insisted, I would pose some questions to Him that were of concern to me. I asked Him once, "How can I be as happy as I am when I drink (alcohol), and maintain that same state all the time?". Each time I would ask Him, He would listen and then logically give some points for me to ponder. At the end of it though, the choice was always left in my hands, which was very relieving. Little did I realize at the time that he was always hinting me to search within. I wasn't ready to give up my search for happiness in worldly matters, and am still not sure in many ways, but I now know that I have a Self Realized Guru guiding me each step of the way, and I feel very much at ease.

Because of the mystical nature of my Guru's relationship with me, I find it difficult if someone asks me to describe my relationship now. If a relationship is all about how you "relate" to another person, then just as quickly as I change, grow, and purify myself, so does my relationship with him changes, grows, and purifies as well.

The biggest leap that our relationship took was approximately 1½ years ago. Gurudev had come to New Jersey in December 2008 and had casually mentioned that they were going to Rajasthan in January for the annual youth retreat. I was working, but I managed to take off one week to attend the retreat in India with Gurudev and approximately 700 youth who were part of the organization He has established - Shrimad Rajchandra Ashram - Dharampur.

During that retreat, I was so uplifted by the sessions and by the energetic atmosphere that I decided I could no longer work for the company I was working for, since it conflicted with my moral values now. Despite being a vegetarian, I had allowed myself to eat eggs when in baked goods, but after giving up eggs, I could not justify selling the same product in large quantity any longer. I immediately went to the business center of the resort where we were staying and wrote an email explaining the situation to my boss.

Little did I know, that one small decision of attending one ashram would change my life forever.

I extended my stay in India since I no longer needed to rush back to work. My cousin, her husband, and their two kids had recently moved to Ahmedabad and insisted I stay with them. During the weekdays I would go to their office (a software company) and on the weekends I would get away to either the Ashram in Dharampur (Gujarat) or Mumbai by train. During the weekends that I would be at the ashram, I would be in a serene atmosphere attending Gurudev's satsangs. When in Mumbai, I would be in the noisy and hectic metropolitan city. In both environments, Gurudev would teach us to remain detached. I was getting trained and was starting to realize that I didn't want this trip to end.

Nine months went by like this and finally I decided it was time to return "home" to the US. But this was not my final return, but just a visit. For my real home now was India. All my dreams to live in California were thrown out of the window and I decided to live in Mumbai, a city, where I could never think of living.

I've been in India for over 18 months now and Mumbai for the last 9 months and am really happy with my new life. I do miss my old friends and familiar environment, but I'm learning more and more to enjoy change, since that is the only thing constant in this world. In many ways, I'm still the same person I was before, but the difference is that my values and my goals have changed. Instead of hanging out in my spare time, I choose
to spend my time around Gurudev and other followers like myself. I’m not yet married, and am not sure if I really want to. No offense to my ex-girlfriends, but along with the joy, comes some amount of sadness and separation. There is another option that a handful of people are choosing every year in Gurudev’s group. This option is something that I am seriously considering and striving to prepare myself for. I want to be an Atmarpit. The Atmarpit group is for individuals who want to live a highly dedicated and spiritually focused life. They have a certain amount of sadhana (spiritual practices) and seva (service) that they are required to complete daily, along with a vow of brahmacharya (celibacy). Depending on their family’s financial situation some of the Atmarpits are still working to support themselves and their family. This is a diksha although they are not full-fledged monks yet, but you can say they are like monks in training.

Getting married or not getting married is never an easy decision. — the two sides of the argument do not always agree. However, with my goal of Self Realization, I no longer see so much value in marriage. I have still not decided one way or another. The attraction towards the opposite is sex strong, but I do find myself getting less and less pulled in that direction each day. As more happiness is manufactured inside, less dependency is left on the outside. This may just be a first small step towards Moksha, but I would not have it any other way. Whether or not one believes in rebirth, I feel I’ve been reborn this year and am starting my life from scratch. With an out-of-this-world Guide and with such a simple, yet high goal, I can only imagine what is yet to come.

### Jain Centers & Temples in North America

#### Centers with Jain Temple or Dedicated Place of Worship
- Jain Center of Greater Phoenix, Scottsdale, AZ
- Jain Center of S. California-Los Angeles, CA
- Jain Center of Northern California, San Jose, CA
- Jain Sangh of N.J.- (Cherry Hill)
- Jain Society of Central Florida, Inc., Indianatie, FL
- Jain Center of South Florida, Miami, FL
- Jain Vishwa Bharati, Orlando, FL
- Jain Society Inc. of Tampa Bay, Palm Harbor, FL
- Jain Society of Greater Atlanta, Atlanta, GA
- Jain Society of Metro Chicago, Chicago, IL
- Jain Sangh of New England, Burlington, MA
- Jain Center of Greater Boston, Norwood, MA
- Jain Soc. of Metro Washington, SilverSpring, MD
- Jain Center of Greater Charlotte, Charlotte, NC
- JVB New Jersey Center, Iselin, NJ
- Jain Center of N.J. - Essex Fells, Jersey City, NJ
- Jain Center of America - Bellerose, NY
- Jain Center of Cincinnati/Dayton, Fairfield, OH
- Jain Center of Central Ohio, Columbus, OH
- Jain Society of Greater Cleveland, Richfield, OH
- Jain Society of Toronto Inc., ONT
- Jain Vishwa Bharati, Houston, TX
- Jain Society of N. Texas/Dallas, Plano, TX
- Jain Society of Houston, Sugar Land, TX
- Jain Society of Greater Detroit, Inc., MI
- Jain Society of Seattle, Bothell, WA

#### Centers with Shared Place of Worship (Joint Hindu-Jain Temple)
- Jain Society of Alberta, Edmonton, AB
- Jain Society of Greater Sacramento, Macero, CA
- Jain Society of San Diego, San Diego, CA
- Jain Center of Colorado, Highlands Ranch, CO
- Jain Center of G. Hartford, S. Glastonbury, CT
- Jain Association of Northeast Florida, FL
- Augusta Jain Community, Martinez, GA
- Jain Association of KC., Overland Park, KS
- Jain Society of Southern Louisiana, Gretna, LA
- Jain Society of Greater Lansing, Okemos, MI
- Jain Center of Minnesota, St. Paul, MN
- Jain Center of Greater St. Louis, Ballwin, MO
- Jain Study Center of N. Carolina, Raleigh, NC
- Atlantic Jain Sangh, Galloway, NJ
- Jain Society of Las Vegas, Las Vegas, NV
- Jain Community of Buffalo, Lockport, NY
- Jain Society of Capitol District-Albany, NY
- Jain Sangh of Hudson Valley, Poughkeepsie, NY
### Jain Monks and Scholars Visiting or Stationed in North America

#### List of Monks

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Jain Monk</th>
<th>Jain Monk</th>
<th>Jain Monk</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Shri Amarendra Muniji Maharaj</td>
<td>Sadhvi Subhamji</td>
<td>Samani Vishad Pragyaji</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shri Atmanandji Maharaj</td>
<td>Sadhvi Shilapaji</td>
<td>(Stations in Orlando)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shri Ashwini Prajnaaji</td>
<td>Saman Shrut Pragya Swamiji</td>
<td>Samani Chaitania Pragyaji</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shri Bhuvnesh Muniji Maharaj</td>
<td>Samani Sammati Pragyaji (Stationed</td>
<td>Samani Unnate Pragyaji</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acharya Chandanaji</td>
<td>in NJ)</td>
<td>(Stationed in FIU)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gurudev Chitrabhanuji</td>
<td>Samani Jayant Pragyaji (Stationed</td>
<td>Samanijis: Other Samanijis from</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bhattarak Charukeerti</td>
<td>in NJ)</td>
<td>India travel as needed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shri Jinchandsuriiji Maharaj</td>
<td>Samani Akshay Pragyaji (Stationed</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shri Jinchandrajji Maharaj</td>
<td>in Houston)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shri Keertichandraji Maharaj</td>
<td>Samani Parimal Pragyaji (Stationed</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Shri Manak Muniji Maharaj</td>
<td>in Houston)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shri Roop Chandraji Maharaj</td>
<td>Samani Bhavit Pragyaji (Stationed</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mataji Subhmati</td>
<td>in Orlando)</td>
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#### List of Participating Jain Scholars in NA

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Jain Scholar</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pdt. Abhay Kumar Jain</td>
<td>Mrs. Dipti Shah</td>
<td>Dr. Jitendra Shah</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr. Anand Kumar Jain</td>
<td>Ms. Falguni Zaveri</td>
<td>Mr. Jyotindra Doshi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr. Anup Vora</td>
<td>Mr. Girish Shah</td>
<td>Dr. Keertibhai Shah</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shri. Anupam Shah</td>
<td>Mr. Harendra Shah</td>
<td>Pdt. Khemchandra Jain</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr. Bhadrabahuvisijyi Jain</td>
<td>Mr. Hemant Gandhi</td>
<td>Mr. Kirit Gosalia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prof. Bhagchandra Jain</td>
<td>Mr. Hermann Kuhn</td>
<td>Ms. Koklaben Doshi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr. Bharat S. Shah</td>
<td>Mr. Hitesh Shah</td>
<td>Dr. Kumarpal Desai</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr. Chandrakant Mehta</td>
<td>Dr. Hukamchand Bharill</td>
<td>Mr. Lalit Dhami Veer Senik</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pdt. Dharma Chandra (Shastri)</td>
<td>Mr. Jagdeeschandra Doshi</td>
<td>Mr. Yogesh Shah Veer Senik</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pdt. Dheeraj Lal Mehta</td>
<td>Dr. Jagdish Jain</td>
<td>Vidhikar Manoj Kumar Haran</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dr. Dipak Jain</td>
<td>Pdt. Jay Kumar Upadhyaya</td>
<td>Mr. Manubhai Doshi</td>
</tr>
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</table>
Muni Shri Santbalji - A Great Social Worker (1904-1982)

Muni Shri Santbalji was born in 1904 in the village Tol of Morbi Taluka where Shrimad Rajchandra and Maharshi Dayanand Saraswati were also born. Shivalal took Diksha in 1929 in the presence of thousands of Jains and non-Jains. He became an ardent disciple of Shri Nanchandraji Maharaj and later became famous as Santbal.

He came to be known as Shata Vadhani (one who remembers one hundred verses at a time). His scholarly attributes earned him the title of Bharat Ratna. He converted the four scriptures—Uttaradhyayan, Dashvaishalik, Acharang and Avashyak into simple Gujarati language with effective narrations. He also translated Tattvarth Sootra in Gujarati poetic form.

Breaking the traditional boundaries, he expressed revolutionary ideas to create society based on the principles of core Jain beliefs. As a result, the Sangh that granted him Diksha, disapproved of him as a mendicant and boycotted him.

He was fully determined to be amongst people and he moved to the backward villages of Bhalk-Nalkantha region of Gujarat. He started co-operatives, encouraged Khadi and cottage industries, adopted improved agriculture methods, activated village panchayats, started the system of arbitration for village disputes, clinics, experimental unions and several other institutions. He wanted to build the society based on single religion of equality, sympathy and honor for all. He opposed injustice by non-violent methods and made all out efforts to ensure truth & justice.

He breathed his last on Friday, March 26, 1982. He was an activist and said, “Service to society is service to Self” and advised everyone to remember this principle.

Information provided by Mr. Pravin K. Shah

Jain Munishi Maitripribh Sagarji has been arrested by UP police for his non-violent protest of fast unto death at Baraut, Baagpat (U.P). He started his fast on April 26, 2011 in protest of issuing 10 new licenses for new slaughter-houses. All the proposed ultra-modern slaughter-houses will have a capacity to butcher 10,000-20,000 animals per day and the meat will be exported out of India.

You can send post card/Fax/email to different authorities. Please see more details on the JAINA web site.
The Murtipujak Jain Sampraday traces its origin directly from Bhagwan Mahavir. The sampraday’s records give a very detailed lineage of Acharyas, with the current Acharyas falling between the 75th to 80th in the line after Shri Sudharma Swami (the fifth Ganadhar of Bhagwan Mahavir). The adjacent figure shows the level of detail maintained by Tapa Gachh Jain Sampraday. The Murtipujak Sampraday is split into Achalgachh, Kathargachh, Paychandgachh, Tapagachh and Tristutik sects. The Tapagachh is by far the largest of these sects. In fact the number of monks in Tapagachh are more than all other sect’s Jain monks (including Digamber and Sthanakvasi), and accordingly the following is comparatively large. The compiled list of all Murtipujak Acharyas is given at the end of this section. We have included the profiles of very few Acharyas whom we had a chance to meet, or if any of the community member provided such information.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Murtipujak Sect</th>
<th>Tristutik</th>
<th>Achalgachh</th>
<th>Tapa-gachh</th>
<th>Paychandgachh</th>
<th>Kathargachh</th>
<th>Total</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Number of Monks</td>
<td>246</td>
<td>312</td>
<td>7785</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>280</td>
<td>8691</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% Split</td>
<td>2.83%</td>
<td>3.59%</td>
<td>89.58%</td>
<td>0.78%</td>
<td>3.22%</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% In Entire Jain Sangh</td>
<td>1.73%</td>
<td>2.20%</td>
<td>54.90%</td>
<td>0.48%</td>
<td>1.97%</td>
<td>61%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
A seven-year-old Kantilal was having his favorite meal, when a beggar came at his doorstep. The child looked at the beggar then looked at his tasty meal and finally decided to give the whole meal away to this beggar. Confused about the whole situation the child hid in a corner crying for more than an hour. He finally approached his father and asked him the reason why some people had to suffer so much. His father explained to him, *jive hinsa* results in unhappiness, while *jive ahimsa* is the source of real happiness. As he started to imbibe the message of Ahimsa, he was attracted towards a lifestyle in which he could live without hurting others. He would learn later that Sadhutava was that lifestyle where one could live without hurting others. At a tender age of thirteen, Kantilal joined his father towards the path of Sadhutava. This caring and compassionate child grew up to be Acharya Kirtiyash Suriji.

Acharya Kirtiyash Suriji was born to Jiviben and Gagalbhai in Bhorol, a pilgrim town near Palanpur, Gujarat. Acharyaji took Diksha along with his father at a tender age of thirteen. Acharya Kirtiyash Suriji’s father Shri Gagalbhai later known as Acharya Gunayash Suriji became the disciple of great Acharya Ramchandra Surishwarji. Acharya Gunayash Suriji became Acharya Kirtiyash Suriji’s Guru; immediate predecessor in the line of succession in Jain Shwetamber Murtipujak Tapagatch tradition. Trained under

Acharya Shri Ramchandra Surishwarji, Acharya Kirtiyash Suriji has wide knowledge on Jain architecture, literature, *Agam* and rites and rituals of Jainism.

During our meeting with Acharyaji we asked how one could justify the Jain tradition of Child *Diksha*. He replied giving his own example. He had fond memories of his parents, specially his mother who was very loving and like every mother would fulfill every desire of the child. His father on the other hand was a disciplinarian. For a child, his mother is his world and if a child is willing to give up mother’s tender love, he can give up everything else in the world. It is true that a child may not have the capacity to express all his feelings and some inner thoughts, but a child still has the capacity to understand and perceive the truth. It is the feeling that one senses but cannot express. That *bhav* (feeling) is identical in a child and an adult. Giving another example, Acharyaji further added that the *bhav* resulting from deep *sadhana* is difficult to be expressed in words. In this case both a child and an adult could have similar experiences and neither of them would be capable of fully expressing their experiences. The *bhav* that drives one towards *sadhutva* is internal, and is very independent of what the world understands as adult maturity.

In our next question, we tried to understand the level of detachment in the life of a great *sadhu*. 
Taking his own life as an example we asked him about the possible attachment that a father and son could share as Acharya Gunayash Suriji was both his Guru and father. Acharya Kirtiyash Suriji while explaining the personality of his father recalled that regardless of the fact that he was the only son of his parents, his father (a true disciplinarian) never passed any undue favors but ensured his proper development and upbringing. Gagalbhai (sanskari name of Acharya Gunayash Suriji) had a great sense of duty towards his family but not attachment (mooha). Acharyaji went on to describe various other instances that demonstrated this relationship. Another such instance is when; Acharyaji developed a serious leg infection, couple years after his diksha. During this period, Acharya Ramchandra Surishwarji wanted his disciple Muni Gunayash Suri to undertake a long journey, while concerned about health of the teenage Muni Kirtiyash Vijay. Expressing his concern, Acharya Ramchandra Surishwarji asked Muni Gunayash Suri if it was advisable for him to undertake the long journey leaving the teenage Muni behind. Muni Gunayash Suri did not hesitate to tell his Guru that as a sadhu it was his duty to follow his guru and that the well-being of teenage Muni Kirtiyash would be looked after by the head of the congregation, Acharya Ramchandra Surishwarji.

Giving a second incident exemplifying the relationship, Acharyaji talked about a serious roadside accident that he met three to four years ago. Lying in the hospital in a very critical condition, his Guru Acharya Gunayash Suriji came to visit him. The Guru’s message was very simple, “You realize that suffering is a result of past karmas, handle them with samata (Equanimity)”. Ten days later when Acharyaji’s health had somewhat improved his Guru again visited him, and offered a different message “You cannot afford to sleep anymore; we have a lot of responsibility towards Dharma and the Sangh.” Acharyaji depicted the life of a sadhu through this simple narration. He highlighted the deeper
meaning of equanimity (samata), compassion, and commitment towards duty.

Acharya Shri Kirtiyash Suri is a very inspirational and popular speaker (Pravachan Prabhaavak) and hundreds of people come to listen to his daily discourses. His speeches leave a deep impression on the listener's mind. Some individuals have changed their entire path of life after simply listening to his discourses. Prior to joining the path of monkhood, Muni Samvegyash Vijay was an executive involved in marketing computing systems. He had a degree from Mumbai University and was least interested in Jain tradition or philosophy. It was a sheer chance that he heard the discourses of Acharya Ramchandra Surishwarji and Acharya Kirtiyash Suri (then Muni Shri Kirtiyash Vijayji) which transformed his life. He then went on to become a disciple of Acharya Kirtiyash Suriji.

Bowing and touching the feet of Acharya Kirtiyash Suriji was a unique experience. It is difficult to describe in words the blissful feeling that this interviewer experienced when Acharyaji touched the back of his head. We encourage our readers to visit such great Acharyas and experience firsthand, the energy of care and compassion.

Unleashing The Power of The Ego-less Self

A young sadhu barely eleven years old, learns the basic principles of Jainism from his esteemed Guru but still struggles to find his real self—Who am I? The Guru says, "I can guide but only self can realize the true nature of self". At the age of thirteen sadhu embraces maun (a state where he does not speak) and stays in that state for over 30 years. This sadhu is popularly known as Acharya Maharaj Yashovijay Suriji.

At the age of eight, Acharyaji fell seriously ill, and most people including doctors were not sure if the child would survive. At that point, his mother made a vow that she would allow him to take diksha if he survived. Later his mother would tell him, "Child you have come to this world to live a life of Sadhu". The child never looked back, an inner power took over him and the only thing he thought was diksha. At a tender age of eleven, Acharya Maharaj Yashovijay Suriji took diksha under his guru Ohmkar Suriji.

Acharya Yashovijay Suriji

We asked Acharyaji about the reason for staying in maun. Acharyaji explained by giving the example of writing a book. He asked a few simple questions, "How could one write a book unless it was blank to start-with? What was the use of any knowledge if our preconceived notions or delusory conception corrupted it?" Giving credit again to his guru, he told us that his guru first helped him to erase his book and subsequently helped him to write the book with real knowledge, of which some portion of it he could not even express in day-to-day language. Laying a lot of emphasis on introspection, he told us a few things: "knowledge remains superficial unless one absorbs its deeper meaning through introspection. Our likes and dislikes keep us in the external world. These likes and dislikes evaporate once we realize that all these are a result of our own fault or our delusion. Words are only required to stay in the outer world, no words are required to stay close to the soul. Unless one stays within we cannot
understand the reality of self." Acharyaji stayed in maun until he was able to realize his self — Who I am? That name-less self.

As the discussion progressed from maun to to his decision to come out of the maun state, Acharyaji said:

निजःप्रदृष्टि कृत्ये धरीति
जे पाणे अयावह.

Only after one realizes the power of ego-less self, one can give the message of truth to the outside world.

“My Parmatama’s message was to first realize the power of the ego-less self. With that realization came a unique joy (anand). The second part of the message was to guide others to realize the same anand. A book of knowledge only provides the outline, but the joy of one’s soul can inspire another soul to the same joyful state.” – Acharyaji.

Coming to the topic of Sadhutva, Acharyaji explained how to look within and realize the immense anand of the soul to be able to motivate others to feel the same anand was the essence of Sadhutva, everything else was just a procedure or tradition. Dharma was nothing but learning and practicing the true art of living. Deep introspection brought one to reality of self (soul) and the art of living was to stay within the bounds of reality and not delusion.

For people living in foreign countries, he laid emphasis on the importance of imparting right sanskar, to the younger generation. A simple ten-minute prayer prior to the meal could go a long way. A lively discussion of human value systems could also have a profound impact on the young minds. However, his most pertinent observation was that children always observed their parents and unless they lived a life of Dharma (not just in the traditional sense but in sense of basic integrity and human values), all later efforts could go waste.

At the end of the interview, Acharya Maharaj Yashovijay Suriji explained the Jain teaching in few words: “Mere observation does not result in karmas; being in a state of equanimity is meditation (which is elimination of karmas); a desire to do something results in karmas. To understand the finer implications of the shastras one has to look within to understand the true nature of self.

Acharya Vijay Nandighosha Suri

Acharya Nandighoshavijayji is a revered monk who is exploring science and studying its compatibility to the Jain scriptures. He is very certain that it is essential to represent the scientific principles that lay hidden in our Jain scriptures. He received his vows of monkhood almost 37 years ago under Gacchadhipati Acharya Shri Suryodayasuriji. He was born as Nirmal Kumar Nagindas Shah and was a keen student of math and science. After almost 8 years of monkhood and having mastered Sanskrit and Prakrit, he was able to study the Jain scriptures in depth. This study along with his keen interest in science enabled him to relate to the scientific thoughts in the Jain scriptures with modern day science. In addition to the routine chores of a Jain Monk his celestial mind is also occupied with pure physics, Einstein’s theories, quantum leap etc. He has made a deep study of various profound topics in mathematics and physics along with the Jain Agams vis-a-vis modern theories. He got the book “Jainism through Science” published in English and Gujarati.
Dear Friends:

Jai Jinendra!

JAINA cordially invites you and your family to its 16th biennial convention to be held at George R. Brown Convention Center in Houston, Texas from Friday, July 1st to Monday, July 4th, 2011. The theme for the 2011 JAINA convention is “Live and Help Live”.

We have planned a wide variety of discussions, lectures, and panel discussions with dignitaries and scholars from all over the world to convey the message of Jainism and non-violence. We will learn, inspire, vocalize and understand the key Jainism messages through meetings, discourses, debates and discussions during the convention.

Visit www.Jaina.org web-site for more details on the upcoming convention, including registration information. We look forward to welcoming you to Houston.

Best Regards

Sushil Jain
Udai Jain
Himanshu Ajmera

Blessings from:

- Shree Jinchandraji Maharaj
- Bhattarak Shree Charukeerti Swamiji
- Samani Shree Charitra Prajnaji

Chalo Houston

With over 2,500 attendees already registered, we expect registration to sell out quickly. So, take action today without delay. Join your friends and family this July 4th for an amazing experience and memories of a lifetime. Register online at http://convention.jaina.org or complete and mail a paper registration form. We are waiting for you!!!
Convention Highlights

- NASA - An Out of This World Experience
- Discovery Green Eco Park
- Children's Museum, Waterworld
- Gateway to Cruises
- Moody Gardens and IMAX at Galveston Island
- Recognized Theaters, Museums and Temples

Sessions
- Religious & Spiritual Discourses
- Entrepreneurship & Development Workshops
- Jain Unity & Interfaith
- Science & Jainism
- Jain Tirth, Jain Art, Jain History
- Jain Way of Life
- Healthy Lifestyles for Seniors
- Seniors Sessions

Events
- Keynote Speeches on “Live and Help Live”
- Sessions on Science and Jainism, Panel Discussions
- Exhibits, Vendor booths, and Poster sessions
- International Jain Leaders Forum - “Diaspora”
- Cultural Programs by Jain Centers
- “Jains got Talent” competition
- Garba-Raas-Bhangra
- Professional entertainment

On Site Kids Club
- From 3 to 13 yrs of Age Group
- Participate in Convention worry free
- Supervised fun activities for kids
- Fun, educational, and spiritual activities

Networking Opportunities
- JAIN 21, JNF, Youth Forum
- Show your Culinary skills - Jain Way
- Networking with Professionals
- Reconnect and make new friends
- Family, Group, and Community Reunions

Transportation
- Airline booking discounts available
- Houston Airport Shuttle (IAH and HOU)
- Private buses from your Center to Convention can be arranged
- Optional local area and excursion tours
- Valet Parking will be available

Available Sponsorships
- Sanghpati ($31,000)
- Corporate ($25,000)
- Platinum ($15,000)
- Diamond ($11,000)
- & more... (Less then $11,000)

Jain & Vegan Food
- 15 meals planned
- Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner
- Tea Time and Snacks
- Healthy Jain & Vegan diet choices

Over 2500 people have registered!

Registration Fees:
- May 16 - Jun 24 = $169/Adult and $129/Child
- Jun 25 - on-site = $175/Adult and $135/Child

Friday-Monday  July 1-4, 2011  16th Biennial JAINA Convention

http://convention.jaina.org  Phone:(832) 447-8495  www.jainelibrary.org
## Tracks and Topics

### Professional Tracks (Tentative)

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<th>Topic 2</th>
<th>Topic 3</th>
<th>Topic 4</th>
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<tr>
<td>Jainism in West</td>
<td>Academic Studies: Strategies for Growth</td>
<td>Perceptions of western visitors of Jain Temples in India</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
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Evening Entertainment

**JAINS got TALENT**

FIRST EVER ‘Jains Got Talent’
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Indian Idols coming to JAINA, 2011
Jam the evening away to these entertainers...

Melodious Bhoomi Trivedi
Rocking Rakesh Maini
Soul stirring Sreeram
His Work:
Acharya Nandighoshavijayji has set out various themes that indicate Jain concepts of science in accordance with modern science. The Jain concept is qualitative but the modern concept of science is quantitative. His articles in the book "Jainism through Science" discuss intricate topics like the concept of time, origin and development of universe, Darwin’s theory of evolution, Wave theory of light and many more such topics. The basic scientific introduction has been followed up with a detailed discussion according to Jain Philosophy. He uses strong logical arguments to put forward his view. He uses strong logical arguments to put forward his view. For instance, an article in the book, on the shortcomings of the theory of special relativity according to jainology, the Muni (currently Acharya) has made an attempt to point up drawbacks in Einstein’s Special Theory of Relativity (STR) by putting forth arguments derived from the interpretation of Jain philosophy, with support from the hypothesis on the existence of “techyon”, which are currently postulated to have a velocity higher than light.

Dr Vaidya, a renowned mathematician observed, “The results of these comparisons may not be acceptable to all, but that does not diminish the importance of these writings”. Einstein once wrote, “Science without religion is lame and religion without science is blind”. Acharyaji in his book has challenged certain shortcomings of Einstein’s Special Theory of Relativity (STR), by putting forth arguments derived from interpretation of Jain scriptures.

Research Institute
A Research Institute to explore the ancient Indian religious and philosophical traditions and to re-establish the religious culture amongst the youth, has been recently established at Ahmedabad by the inspiration and guidance of Acharya Nandi Ghosh Vijayji Maharaj. Dr. P.C. Vaidya inaugurated the Institute.

Contribution to JAINA
Acharya Nandighosh Suri has assisted JAINA by editing and correcting most of the Pathshala education books.

His Ideas & Thoughts:
Acharyaji says that being a Jain Monk has limitations regarding practical work in the field of science. He says he has not tested the scientific principles laid down in Jain scriptures practically. Acharyaji however, seems to be set on a lifetime course of comparative study of scriptures and science. What he inscribed on a copy of his book is his motto: “Knowing is not enough. We must apply. Willing is not enough. We must do.”
Darshan of An Ever Smiling, Ever Blessing Acharya Jaishekhsursuri

Jyant had made the impossible possible, his leadership skills coupled with an excellent batting performance had enabled the seventh graders beat the 11th graders team. The cricket coach of Kabubhai High School was already seeing a “Pataudi” in making (Tendulkar was probably not even born). The coach was probably thinking of Bombay’s upcoming prestigious Harris Shield tournament. However, Jyant was not destined to be a “Tendulkar”, his Guru had other more important plans. Like any typical Jain Gujarati woman, Jyant’s mother was concerned about her son’s future. She would see him spending every spare moment with cricket bat and ball. She finally managed to convince him to at least attend pathshala. Jyant started attending the pathshala simply to please his mother. However, he soon realized that reciting and memorizing Jain stotras came naturally to him. Jyant himself never cared much about his newly gained skill but his pathshala teachers were clearly impressed. Pathshala influenced Jyant to attend some Acharya Jayanandsuri’s lectures. One day Jyant casually asked Jayanandsuri that while he visited various families in the neighborhood for gochari, will he also visit his home. Maharaj replied with smile “your home” and then proceeded to say “yes”. Few days later Jyant’s mother asked him to go and request Acharya Jyanaandsuri to come for gochari as they had cooked a special meal. Jyanaandsuri accepted the invitation and went along with Jyant to his home. The mother was very pleased on seeing Swamiji at her doorstep. She immediately asked Jyant to voharav (give food to) Swamiji. Instead, Maharaj turned around to the mother and asked her “can you voharav something very nice that nobody would”. Puzzled the mother had no answer. After some time Jayanandsuri Maharaj asked her “Can you voharav your eldest son?” The puzzled mother asked the Maharaj if he was talking about this kid (Jayant) who has nothing but cricket in his mind. Maharaj replied, “you will see after 11 months”. Acharya Jaishekhsursuri Maharaj, to this day, remembers the exact time on the clock at that moment - exactly 11.00 am – the point when Jyant’s life changed drastically – new boundary lines were drawn. He would constantly think about his Guru and the religious teachings.

After about eleven months, Acharya Pratapsuri gave diksha to Jaishekhar Maharaj. Under the supervision of Acharya Pratapsuri, Acharya Dharmasuri, Acharya Jayanandsuri and various other pundits, Jaishekharji underwent rigorous education for 7 years. He studied Jain Agams, various stotras, Ardha-Magadhidi and various other Jain literature and commentaries. When things would become tough, Acharya Pratapsuri’s simple incentives and gentle approach would encourage him to work hard. Jaishekharji had found his comfortable new unconventional home (or no-home as some would say). He realized that life as such was very simple and natural. The inner anand (joy) increased day by day.

The joy of the soul is beyond description of our human language. However, seeing Acharyaji’s constantly smiling face one can only sense something extra-ordinary. It reminded this interviewer of a description of Bhagwan Mahavir in Mahasena gardens, the day after he attained Keval Gyan on the banks of river Rijuvaluka. One
Acharyaji is an excellent orator. He is specially known for his extempore examples that relate directly to audience’s concerns and questions. He credits his guru Jayanandsuri Maharaj and Pratapsuri Maharaj for this skill. One day when a large attendance was expected, both Pratapsuri Maharaj and Jayanandsuri Maharaj excused themselves, leaving the then young sadhu Jaishakhaerji alone in front of the audience. The young nervous Jaishakhar Maharaj had no option but to give his first extempore vyakhayan; a lecture that was highly appreciated. Three days later he was addressing a huge gathering with his guru sitting beside him.

Acharyaji raised concern about the Jain Society in India. He feels that beyond the practice of vegetarianism and certain Jain traditions, many in society are morally bankrupt. He has noticed a fundamental change in the social structure, due to small independent families. The elderly have nowhere to go. They are not welcomed at their children houses and at the same time they are neither financially nor physically capable of living independently. After a small experiment at Palitana he is convinced of a need for elderly homes. Family members can visit them or they can visit their family but they would have an independent home of their own. Acharyaji also sees a need to improve education among Jain youths. He realizes the value of English as a medium of education in the modern world. He wants Jain philanthropists to come forward and build quality schools that would provide education with Jain Heritage in mind.

The following beautiful Sanskrit subhashit (saying) best describes Acharya Shri Jaishakharsuri.

Prabodhaya Hitaya Cha, Prashamaya Vivekaya Cha.

Samyak Tatvopadeshena, Santasukthi Pravartate.

A life of a Saint (Sadhu) is to awaken the others, ensure welfare of others, assist other in emotional purification, guide other to discriminate and learn what is correct and share the knowledge of Truth.

List of Acharyas of Murtipujak Samudays (Sub-groups)

Acharya Shri Vijay Ramachandrasuriiji
Samuday

1. Gachchha Sthavir Acharya Lalitshekhar Suri

Ji
2. Acharya Rajshekhar Suri ji
3. Acharya Prabhakar Suri ji
4. Acharya Veer Shekhar Suri ji
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The Jain Digamber Sampraday

The history of Digamber sect for the first six centuries is very hazy. The Digambers unlike Shvetambers did not write detailed historical accounts of their sect, and what has been written seems to have been created around the 6th century AD (based on the inscription found in Shravana Belgola). According to Digamber tradition, the breakup of joint sangh began with Vishakha, who was a disciple of Bhadrabahu. Many believe that it was in the 2nd century AD that Acharya Kundakunda set the Digamber tradition on a firm footing. Today most Digamber traditions revere Acharya Kundakunda more than Vishaka and Bhadrabahu, who are otherwise above in the lineage of saints.

Digamber Sampraday, in recent centuries, has been divided into the following sub-sects:

Major sub-sects:
1. Bispanth
2. Digamber Terapanth
3. Taranapanth or Samaiyapanth

Other sub-sects:
a. Gumanapanth
b. Totapanth
c. Karji-Panth

Bispanth, according to some, is the original group of Digamber sect and has the highest following among all Digamber Jains. Bispanth has a large following in Karnataka, Maharashtra, Tamil Nadu, Rajasthan and Gujarat. The followers of Bispanth support the Dharma-gurus, that is, religious authorities known as Bhattarak who are also the heads of Jain Maths (monasteries). The Bisapanth, in their temples, worship the idols of Tirthankars. They also worship the idols of Ksetrapala, Padmavati and other deities.

Digamber Terapanth arose in North India in the year around 1664 AD as a revolt against the domination and conduct of the Bhattarakas. As a result, in this sub-sector, the institution of Bhattarakas lost respect in North India. In their temples, the Terapanthis install the idols of Tirthankars and not of other deities. The Terapanthis are more in number in Uttar Pradesh, Rajasthan, and Madhya Pradesh.

Taranapanth is known after its founder Tarana-Swami or Tarana-tarana-Swami (1448-1515 A.D.). This sub-sector is also called Samaiyapantha because its followers worship Sarnaya, i.e., sacred books and not the idols. Taranapanthi strongly refute idolatry but they have their own temples in which they keep their sacred books for worship. Taranapanthi give more importance to spiritual values and the study of sacred literature instead of any ceremonial pujas. The Taranapanthi are few in number and are mostly confined to Bundelkhand and Malwa area of...
Madhya Pradesh, and Khandesh area of Maharashtra. 

**Gumanapanth** is a very small sect. This sub-sect was started by Pandit Gumani Rama or Gumani Rai, a son of Pandit Todaramal, a resident of Jaipur in Rajasthan. **Gumanapanth** originated in the 18th Century A.D. and flourished mainly during that century. It is found now in some areas of Rajasthan around Jaipur.

**Totapanth** came into existence as a result of differences between the **Bispantha** and **Terapanth** sub-sects. Many sincere efforts were made to strike a compromise between the **Bis** (i.e. twenty) **Panth** and the **Tera** (i.e. thirteen) **panth** and the outcome was **sadhesolaha** (i.e., sixteen and a half)-**Panth** or '**Totapanth**'. That is why the followers of **Totapanth** believe to some extent in the doctrines of **Bispanth** and to some extent in those of **Terapanth**. The **Totapanthis** are very few in number and are found in some pockets of Madhya Pradesh.

**Kanji-panth** or followers of Kanji Swami are a part of this new sect. Saint Kanji Swami largely succeeded in popularizing the old sacred texts of the great **Digamber** saint Acharya Kundakunda of South India. The influence of Kanjipanth is steadily increasing around the Sonagarh in Gujarat and Jaipur in Rajasthan. The compiled list of all **Digamber** Acharyas is given in the end of this section. We have included the profiles of very few Acharyas whom we had a chance to meet, or if any of the community member provided such information.

### Acharya Vidhyanandaji

To give up the attachment towards **Jeen** and to embrace **Jin**; was the expression Acharya Vidyanandaji used to explain the goal of **Sadhutva**. **(Jeen** is the term used for leather saddle, here referring to the physical body.). The main purpose of **Sadhu** is to lead a life that maintains the awareness and focus towards the permanence of the soul and the transitional nature of the physical body. The attachment towards the transitional body is the key hindrance for the soul’s complete independence.

Born in a small village called Shedwal in Karnataka, Surendra (later known as Acharya Vidyanandiji), was a very determined child right from his childhood and had tremendous amount of perseverance to pursue his goals. His oratorical skills coupled with his leadership skills saw the birth of a scholarly and renowned personality. The influence of sadhus and sadhvis on him due to the proximity of...
Enlightened knowledge leads to a meditative state; Meditation results in Nirjara (reduction of Karmic bonds); the benefit of Nirjara is Moksha; thus gaining enlightened knowledge is important.

Acharyaji who had delved deep to understand the message of Jin, gave his first lecture on the auspicious Sudpanchami day in the city of Jaipur. Thus, from Jaipur the great oratory journey of this scholarly monk began. His popularity and audience grew in leaps and bounds. His depth in understanding the scriptures, overall knowledge, and ability to present the essence of religious message appropriately to the target audience won people’s hearts and many of them became his devotees. He did not limit himself his discussion to Jainism but extended it to Vedic culture and other traditional Indian philosophies. He went out of his way to prisons to convince the prisoners of hope if one makes an effort to change one’s lifestyle.

He is one of those saints who is renowned not just as a Jain saint but is famous as national saint who promoted nonviolence to the vast Indian community. His vast knowledge and studies have given him recognition worldwide. His lectures attracted Hindus, Christians, Sikhs and Muslims. Muslims at times felt as if he was their Sufi Sant. Understanding that bhajans were a very good method to get community participation, he encouraged his devotees to prepare bhajans that would have mass appeal. From his inspiring words Shraman Jain Bhajan Pracharak Sangh was established and gradually they collected and recorded lots of bhajans. This became an initial media to spread the message of Ahimsa to some of the most remote parts of the country.

His powerful words had an impact to bring some amount of truce in dispute of control of Sammed Shikharji (Sammet in Shwetamber tradition) between the Digamber and Shwetamber sects. He was able to arbitrate the dispute and help start renovation work at Sammed Shikharji. For a person who many consider to be one the foremost experts in understanding and practice of Ahimsa, he was humble enough to give credit to Gandhiji for demonstrating the practical and political use of Ahimsa to bring about a fundamental change in the society. Explaining the nuances of Ahimsa he would ask his secular audience to follow Gandhiji’s philosophy of truth, love and nonviolence. He believed that society could be transformed by following these principles. Leading by example he would ask his audience to stay
away from artificial or superficial flamboyant behavior. Just as a monk he did not waste any food and took only that was absolutely required, he campaigned against national waste. While personally following a strict Digamber Jain tradition, he neither imposed nor emphasized any specific ritual or tradition.

He travelled across the breadth and length of the country to make people realize the good in every individual. He firmly believed that everyone could be happy if they always saw goodness in people and didn’t indulge in finding faults in anyone. Our thoughts should be good and we should use positive words which express affection because these words have immense power. He believed that Sadhu is like a mirror, through whom a society can look at their weaknesses and shortcomings. A sadhu and society are interrelated, one wouldn’t exist without each other.

On the way to Badrinath, in Haridwar, he gave a very impressive pravachan to the Digamber samaj that people recall even today. He was the first saint in the present century to go to Badrinath. Travelling through difficult and cold paths, Acharyaji went from Badrinath to Srinagar and did his chaaturmaas there. He inspired a lot of people to write and publish articles/poems on Jainism. He inspired one person to write an anthology of poems on Lord Mahavir.

Acharya Vidyandjji’s powerful address to the society and politicians in Delhi in a Sarva Dharma meet, was a big eye opener and served as a guide for them to understand and appreciate the role of Jains in the past and current society. He pointed out the contribution of Jains to the society at large by telling everyone that Jains had opened aushadhalaya/hospitals, provided scholars, philanthropists, schools, and publishing houses funds and had helped large number of people in the community. To commemorate the 2500 nirvana anniversary of Bhagwan Mahavir, he urged people to do things that would be in the welfare of the society and country. He would not teach people but would urge them to become an example of what they would want to teach to people, that way people would watch/observe and follow them. He urged Jains and members of other communities to work towards the betterment of society and learn to respect the good in others. With this lecture, he not only inspired Jains to contribute more towards the wellbeing of the society, but also brought in forefront the ills spread within the government structure and society at large. He accosted the audience to stop focusing only on individual gains but to do things for the betterment of our country. To commemorate Bhagwan Mahavir’s 2500 years of nirvana, he motivated people to donate for building an establishment, which would work towards developing and maintain all ancient Jain Canons and literature. Mahavir Sthali in Delhi was established at the initiative of Acharya Vidyandji on the land granted by the late Prime Minister, Rajiv Gandhi.

His largest contribution to the Jain community was to bring together the different sects to speak in a common voice. He was very instrumental in resolving various conflicts between Shwetamber and Digamber Jain sects by making them realize that they would do better if they complemented each other in whatever they undertook instead of fighting with each other. As a renowned scholar of not only of Jain Digamber scripture but also Jain Agams (as accepted by Shwetamber tradition to be original Jain text), he was in a unique position to expose the futility of the sometimes exaggerated conflicts between the two sects. He was the inventor of the five color Jain flag, now commonly used by all Jain sects. He was the initial proponent of a common Jain symbol, where he worked and conferred with different Acharyas to come up with a Jain symbol acceptable to all Jain sects. In the process of such discussion, he developed a unique respect and friendship with different Jain Acharyas with whom he had an opportunity to exchange ideas and views. He developed a very special relationship with the Terapanth Acharya Mahapragya. The two great scholars spend many hours together discussions all aspects philosophy, relevant methods and messages for the current time, and spreading the message of Ahimsa to bring peace in the society. When we specifically asked him to tell us about his interactions with Acharya Mahapragya, he responded by telling I have already written about him, but if my health and time permits, I would like to write a lot more about that great soul.

Acharya Vidyandjji, is one of the most senior Jain monks of Digamber sect. For more than five decades, he walked the land, in good weather and bad, through forests and mountains, preaching and practicing the creed of the Jinas, the gentle spiritual conquerors till the elements no longer bothered him, nor did afflictive emotions.
The author of this write-up still reminises the sensation of the vital energy flowing thorough him when he touched Acharyaji's feet and Acharyaji gave his blessings by putting his pious hand on the author's forehead. That pure aura does bring out the spiritually within us.

The above write-up was produced based on one interview with Acharya Vidhyanandji and further augmented by information from Satish Jain's book "Vande Tadgunalabdhyaye".

Acharya Vidya Sagar Maharaj

Acharya Vidyasagarji is one of the most widely known Digamber Jain Acharya of modern times. He is recognized for his scholarship, tapasya, inspirational speeches and dialogues, large number of disciples, and a very large following.

Introduction:
Vidya Sagar Maharaj was born in a Digamber Jain family as Vidyadhar on October 10, 1946 in Sadalga district in Belgaum, Karnataka. His father Shri Mallappa later became Muni Mallisagar and eventually attained samadhi. His mother Shrimati later became Aryika Samayamati also attained samadhi. Acharyaji adopted the Brahmacharya Vrat at a very early age. He was initiated as a monk in Ajmer on June 30, 1968 by Acharya Gyanasagarji, who belonged to the lineage of Acharya Shantisagar. He was elevated to the Acharya status on November 22, 1972.

His Work:
Acharya Vidyasagarji is an expert in classical languages like Sanskrit and Prakrit and several other languages like Hindi, Marathi and Kannada. Several researchers have studied his works for Masters and Doctorate degrees. His works include:

- Sanskrit texts: Niranjana Shataka, Bhavana Shataka, Parishah Jaya Shataka, Suniti Shataka and Shramana Shataka.
- Hindi epic: Muka Maati, published by Bharatiya Jnanpith.
- Verse translations of classics: Yogasara, Ishtopadesha, Samayasar (Kundakunda ka Kundan), Gomatash thudi etc.
- Verse translation of Samana Suttam
He has initiated more than 125 monks, a number unmatched in the past 9 centuries for the Digamber tradition. Acharya Vidyasagarji also initiated two of his brothers Muni Yogasagarji and Muni Samaysagarji as Monks. Several Panch kalyanak and Gajrath Mahotsavas have been organized in the holy presence of Acharya Shri Vidyasagar and his Sangh in various places like Drongiri, Chattarpur (M.P.), Bina Baraha Sagar (M.P.), Morena (M.P.), Madangunj Kishanghar AjmerRaj, Khajuralho Kundalgri, Koniji, Jabalpur etc.

Acharya Vidya Sagarji has inspired people to initiate many welfare institutions. Some of these institutions are as follows:
1. Brahma Vidya Ashram, Sagar.
4. Bharat varsiya, Dig
5. Acharya Vidyasagar management Science Institution, Bhopal.
10. Acharya Vidyasagar Scholarship Trust, Atishay Chhetra Mahuwa.

Acharya Sri Vidyasagarji is also responsible for the construction, development and renovation of Jain temples all over India. Acharya Sri has worked relentlessly to invite eminent scholars to give discourses on different subjects. Acharya Sri has also initiated classes to teach different Granthas to his disciples. More than hundred books articles have been written on Acharya Sri Vidyasagarji by eminent scholars and dedicated devotees.

Mr. Shrish Jain (most likely a US resident) in his blog wrote about his inspirational visit to Acharyaji on Dec 14 2008. Here is a quote from his blog, “I left the place in the afternoon. And I was more than satisfied to visit him. I was personally thinking when I would be fortunate to become a saint, but seemed my time is too far- may be in next births. I could very well extrapolate- how Moksha state would be infinitely full of bliss, when the saints are so blissful.”

Param Pujya Pragyashraman Rashtra Santa Saraswatacharya 108
Shri Devnandiji Maharaj

He was born in 1965 at Shangrah in Sagar district of Madhya Pradesh. His parents were Shri Prem Chandra and Shreemati Sheela Devi Jain and his birth name was Mulayam Chandra. He left home at the age of 16 and became a Kshullak on Feb 5, 1981 under the guidance of Acharya KunthuSagar ji. He took Muni Diksha on March 31, 1982 and Acharya Diksha on April 5, 1998 at Aurangabad under the guidance of Ganadharyachrya Shri 108 Kunthu Sagar Ji. He travelled far and wide within India (from Maharashtra to Karnataka to Bihar and Tamil Nadu). His knowledge extends to Vastushashtra, Spiritual Philosophy and the history of Jainism.

On a recent visit to South India, some of us were fortunate to meet Acharya Shri Devnandji at the Jin Kanchi temple. He explained at length the history of the temple, how it was built about 2000 years ago, why the idols were situated in a particular direction and how the pillars of the temples had stories inscribed on them (similar to the pillars in Khajuraho temple).

Acharya Shri Devnandji has written number of books: Vastu Chitamani, Devndi Upavach, Rakhe Dridhan Sidhan.

Under Achryashri's leadership, about 20-25 Adhiveshans and conferences were organized in Jaingiri, Drongiri and Khajuraho. He also conducted a Yuva Mahila Adhiveshan Mahasabha for women and started the Mahavir Yuva Sangathan for young adults. He has participated in 21 Muni Dikshas, 3 Eilliaks, 9 Kshullaks, 12 Aryikas, 9 Kshullikas, 34 Panch Kalyanak Pujas, 10 Vedi Pratishthas and 20 Samadhis. He has mastered languages like Sanskrit, Prakrit, Kannada, Hindi, Marathi and English.

An Excerpt from his lecture on KARMA:
“Mind, Speech and Action are the doors to invite the Karma. Avoid Anger by observing tolerance and supreme forgiveness. Avoid ego by humility, deception by honesty, greed by purity, Sanyam and Parigrah Trishna by charity. Abstain from all pleasures of raag by Self-restrain (Sanyam). Speak the truth which helps others but does not hurt them.”

“Dharma, Seva, Kshanti, Mridutvmrijuta, ch Shotmath, Satyam Akinchanyam, Brahms, Tyagshch, Tapashch, Sanyamshcheti.”

Munishri Tarunsagarjri
The Revolutionary Rastra Sant Jain Monk of 21st Century

Munishri Tarunsagarjri was born on June 26, 1967 in Guhanchi district in Madhya Pradesh as Pawan Kumar Jain. His parents were Shri Pratap Chandra and Smt. Shantibai Jain. He took Diksha in 1982, at the young age of 14, under his guru Acharya Shri 108 Pushpadant Sagari Maharaj. He soon got the degree of Jaineshwari. Acharya Pushpadant Sagar understood the capability of this young saint and knew that one day he would be addressing a very large audience. No, wonder this Revolutionary Saint addressed an audience of around 5 lakh people from the rampart of Red Fort, Delhi. He has a
natural gift of both humor and oratory. His contention is that Lord Mahavir is not the asset of only Jains but that of all humanity. He discourses are not limited to topics on Jainism and Mahavir, but mixes the speech with subject matters from Ramayana, Sant Kabir’s poems, Patanjali, words of Guru Nanak, Buddha, Vivekananda and Osho. Muni Shri Tarun Sagari is a Digamber Jain Saint who attracts not only Jains but also members of all communities to his speech. Wide range of audience attends Munishri Tarunsagarji’s discourses because he speaks the truth for the welfare of society. Munishri Tarunsagarji addressed the Maratha Light Infantry Regiment on September 21, 2005. Tarunsagarji is the first saint to have received the Guard of Honor from the Indian Army.

His Work & Literature:
Muni Shri Tarun Sagari is the director of "Anand Yatra", "Anand Yatra" arranged by Munishri is pleasant in real sense of the word anand. Anand Yatra (journey) is a miraculous and unique experiment, where Munishri makes the listeners laugh on one hand and hands over valuable asset of knowledge with a humorous touch on the other. When Munishri stops, the yatra of anand continues and when the journey proceeds, there is anand of yatra again. He says, "I eat pleasure, I drink pleasure, I wear pleasure, I distribute pleasure and live in pleasure." Anand Yatra is a journey without journey.

Muni Shri Tarun Sagari has authored many religious books. His literature is read with great interest and various editions of each book are published. The literature of Munishri is a mirror of his own emotions and experiences in which the art of amending the direction and condition of life is discussed. The literature of Munishri is the outcome of his devotion to his soul, his personal experience, and his innermost imagery. His books are targeted to alleviate people from mental worry. It is a ragas or composition vibrating from the notes of life where Veetrag is merged. His book “Mrityu Bodh” (Perception of death, a formula of revolution in life) presents the foot print of the holy journey of Munishri and the holy water pot of the importance of life for the people. His speeches come straight from the heart. They capture the listeners to the extent that they eventually become unaware of the outer world. He says, "I want to escape from the temples. That is why I have stopped giving pravachans in temples. I give pravachans in the squares of roads, because I want to see Bhagwan Mahavir out of temples. I want to spread Mahavir’s thoughts among the masses". He adds, "Mahavir’s message, his conduct; and his ideal life should be visible to the entire world." His aim is to spread the philosophy of Bhagwan Mahavir – "Live and Let Live".

Shri Deevendrakirthiji

A Global Torchbearer of Jain Traditions

Shri Deevendrakeerthi Bhattarak Swamiji was consecrated to the Bhattarak seat at Humcha, Karnataka at a young age of 22 years in 1969. He had an erudite knowledge on Jain philosophy and was known for his scholarly discourses on Jainism across the world. He is one among the few Jain pontiffs who had taken keen interest for the propagation of Jainism globally. Popularly called as Deevendrakirthi, he had a huge followership in India and overseas cutting across religions boundaries.

Many Jain temples have been constructed under his guidance and leadership in India and across the globe. He was also instrumental in the renovation of numerous ancient Jain temples in Karnataka. He represented Jainism and

Shri Deevendrakeerthi Bhattarak Swamiji
delivered discourses at World Parliament of Religions held at Chicago (1993), Cape Town (1999), Barcelona (2004), Monterrey (2007) and Melbourne (2009). Devendrakirthi has made a huge contribution in the development of Jain heritage and culture in North America. He had made regular visits, given numerous lectures and sermons, and participated in various temple pratishthas. Many in the Digamber Jains of North America consider him as a torchbearer who ensured the continuation of the rich Digamber Jain tradition in North America. He won the hearts of the Jain community by his non-sectarian approach, his deep knowledge in Jainology, and his commitment to support all Jain traditions in North America.

On 14 July 2010, his Holiness Bharata Gaurava Swasti Sri Deevendrakeerthi Bhattarak Swamijii passed away due to cardiac arrest. His demise was grieved all across the globe. His contribution to the Jain community and Jain Heritage was enormous, and he will always be remembered.

Lead me closer to the Moksha Marg.

-Ashok Sethi
Resident of Silicon Valley - Bay Area; Member JCNC.

About twenty years ago, when I was visiting India, I happened to meet two great Sadhus Yuva Muni 1008 Shri Suvidhisagarji and Muni 1008 Shri Kshamasagarji. They both inspired me a lot and changed my life. I got inspired to learn about our religion and to start working towards the path of Moksha. Muni 1008 Shri Suvidhi Sagarji gave me personal lessons on the six elements (Six Dravyas). He also gave me personal copy of the Kalyanmandir Stotra and taught me how to recite them. Muni 1008 Shri Kshamasagarji motivated me to learn about the Karma theory, and start the process of shedding my karmas. I invariably listen to his pravachans on the Karma theory. He was also the source of my inspiration to learn the recitation of the Mahaveerashthak stotra, based on his cassette.

The meeting with these two saints has made me realize the impact these great souls can have on our life. Every time now when I visit India (almost once every two years), I make it a point to do darshan of as many Muni as possible and every time I learn something new. I wish we could have Sadhus in the US who would continuously give us the inspiration to work towards getting rid of our karmas and ultimately get out of the cycle of birth and death. Until then, we should always try to meet and get inspiration from our Sadhus when we visit India. Reading the biographies of the great saints will also inspire us towards vairagya and lead us closer to the Moksha marg.

List of Digamber Acharyas

1. Acharya Abhinandan Sagarji
2. Acharya Amritsenji
3. Acharya Anand Sagarji
4. Acharya Atamnandi
5. Acharya Bharat Sagarji
6. Acharya Chaityasagarji
7. Acharya Chandra Sagarji (disciple of Acharya Sanmati Sagarji)
8. Acharya Chandra Sagarji (disciple of Acharya Shree RayanSagarji)
9. Acharya Darshan Sagarji
10. Acharya Daya Sagarji
11. Acharya Dev Nandiji
12. Acharya Devsenji
13. Acharya Dharambhushanjii
14. Acharya Dhyan Sagarji
15. Acharya Gandharacharya Shree Kunthusagarji
16. Acharya Gundhar Nandiji
17. Acharya Gun Nandiji
| 18. | Acharya Gupti Nandiji |
| 19. | Acharya Gyan Bhushanji |
| 20. | Acharya Hem Sagari |
| 21. | Acharya Jai Sagari |
| 22. | Acharya Kalpavarksh Nandiji |
| 23. | Acharya Kalpshic Nandiji |
| 24. | Acharya Kalyansagarji |
| 25. | Acharya Kanak Nandiji |
| 26. | Acharya Kanak Sagari |
| 27. | Acharya Kumud Nandiji |
| 28. | Acharya Kushagra Nandiji |
| 29. | Acharya Merubhushanji |
| 30. | Acharya Namit Sagari |
| 31. | Acharya Nemi Sagari |
| 32. | Acharya Nirbhay Sagari |
| 33. | Acharya Nirmal Sagari (disciple of Acharya Shree VimalSagari) |
| 34. | Acharya Nirmal Sagari (disciple of Acharya Shri Vimalsagari) |
| 35. | Acharya Nishant Sagari |
| 36. | Acharya Nishaya Sagari |
| 37. | Acharya Padam Nandiji |
| 38. | Acharya Pushpadant Sagari |
| 39. | Acharya Rayan Sagari (disciple of Acharya Shree Dayasagari) |
| 40. | Acharya Rayan Sagari (disciple of Acharya Shree Samatsagari) |
| 41. | Acharya Sambhav Sagari |
| 42. | Acharya Sanman Sagari |
| 43. | Acharya Sanmat Sagari (Hupari) |
| 44. | Acharya Sanmat Sagari (Tapasvi samrat) |
| 45. | Acharya Sanmat Sagar (Vudhyabhushan) |
| 46. | Acharya Saubhagya Sagari |
| 47. | Acharya Seemandhar sagari |
| 48. | Acharya Shanti Sagari 'Namokar Wale' |
| 49. | Acharya Shanti Sagari ji 'Porsa Wale' |
| 50. | Acharya Shanti Sagari 'Podanpur |
| 51. | Acharya Shrut Sagari |
| 52. | Acharya Shiv Sagari |
| 53. | Acharya Siddhant Sagari |
| 54. | Acharya Subahu Sagari |
| 55. | Acharya Sudarshan Sagari |
| 56. | Acharya Sudhramsagari |
| 57. | Acharya Sukumal Nandiji |
| 58. | Acharya Sunil Sagari |
| 59. | Acharya Suriya Sagari |
| 60. | Acharya Surratan Sagari |
| 61. | Acharya Suvidhi Sagari |
| 62. | Acharya Syadwad Sagari |
| 63. | Acharya Vairagya Nandiji |
| 64. | Acharya Vardhman Sagari |
| 65. | Acharya Vasupujya Sagari |
| 66. | Acharya Veer Sagari |
| 67. | Acharya Vidyantarodi |
| 68. | Acharya Vidya Sagari Mahraj |
| 69. | Acharya Vimal Sagari |
| 70. | Acharya Vipul Sagari |
| 71. | Acharya Virag Sagari |
| 72. | Acharya Vishad Sagari |
| 73. | Acharya Vishudh Sagari |
| 74. | Acharya Vivek Sagari |
| 75. | Acharya Yogindra Sagari |

The following Acharyas have attained Samadhi in the last few years

Acharya Bahubali Sagari (Samadhi: 11 May 2010 Chulgiri, Rajasthan)
Acharya Bharat Sagari (Samadhi: 21 October 2006 at Aninda Parasvanath, Rajasthan)
Acharya Varduttsagari (Samadhi: 22 June 2006 at Kothli, Karnataka)
Jain Sthanakvasi Sampraday

The current Sthanakvasi sect has its origin from an older reforming sect, the Lonka sect of Jainism. Lonkashaha, a rich and well-read merchant of Ahmedabad, founded the Lonka sect around 1474 A.D. Apparently Lonkashaha’s job involved coping books with included the ancient scriptures. While writing these books, he was struck by the fact that idol worship was not mentioned in any of the ancient scriptures. When he brought this to the notice of the monks, a huge debate took place on the desirability of idolatry. He opposed the rites where any form of violence or injury was involved. He finally started his own sect that got named after him. Lonka sect was able to become popular due to certain amount of slackness and internal squabbles prevailing within the then Shvetamber sect. In addition, the destruction of the temples and idols by the Muslim invaders may have also helped Lonkashaha to spread his doctrine. At a later state in or about 1476 Lonkashaha took sanyas without actually being initiated by any Acharya. He in effect became the Acharya of his disciples.

A another set of reform took place when a merchant named Lavaji (Varaji by some accounts) from Surat took initiation as a sadhu and followed a very strict from of sadhutva as per the doctrine of the scriptures. Impressed by his commitment to sainthood, most members of the Lonka sect joined him and the Sthanakvasi sect was formed in 1663 AD. Since then the Sthanakvasi sect has undergone some more splits, the most notable being the Terapanth.

The Sthanakvasi Divisions (2009)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of Sangh</th>
<th>Name of Acharya or Head</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Shraman sangh</td>
<td>Acharya-1; Sadhu-243; Sadhvi-839; Total-1082</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Acharya Shri Dr. Shiv Muni</td>
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<tr>
<td>Swatantra Sampradaya</td>
<td>11 sub sect -8 Acharya, 219 Sadhu; 997 Sadhvi – Total 1216</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ratna Vansh</td>
<td>Acharya Hirachandraji</td>
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<tr>
<td>Gyan Gachchha</td>
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<td>Madan guru sangh</td>
<td>Shri Prakash chandraji</td>
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</tbody>
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(This section of Sthanakvasi Divisions is continued on Page 62)
Acharya Shree Shiv Muniji

"Dhammo Mangal Mukkitham, Ahimsa Sanjamo Tavo,
Deva Vi Tan Namastanti, Jass Dhamme Saya Mano."

The Enlightened Dharma (Religion) is Non-Violence, Self-Control, and Penance. Even heavenly gods worship the one, whose mind is always engaged in Enlightened Dharma.

Following the tradition of Varsitap sadhana initiated by Bhagwan Rishabhdev, the fourth Acharya Samrat Dr. Shiv Muniji (who heads and leads the Shvetamber Sthanakvasi Shraman Sangh with more than 1300 Sadhus and Sadhvis under his guidance), is currently doing his 25th varsitap (penance). The Shraman Sangh was formed 60 years ago by uniting 22 Sampradays. It began with Jain Acharya Samar Atmaramji, Anand Rishiji, Devendra Muniji and now Acharya Dr. Shiv Muniji. Acharya Dr. Shiv Muniji is currently the spiritual head of the sangh. He is an extremely pious soul whose inner piety and goodness is revealed in divine splendor on his face.

History & Background:
Shiv Muniji was born in a very affluent and respectable Oswal family in a small town called Malaout in the Malwa region of Punjab on September 18, 1942. He was known for his sharp intellect and power of comprehension. He had nurtured an intense desire to know and realize spiritual truth ever since his childhood. His acquisition of higher academic knowledge further intensified his desire for higher spiritual knowledge. During his student life he traveled far and wide throughout America, Canada, England and several other countries. The wealth and material comforts of worldly life failed to tempt and bind him. He thoroughly studied the life and teachings of Lord Mahavir, Jain philosophy and theology. This stirred his inner being and he made a firm resolve to renounce this worldly life and take to the life of an ascetic. He got his doctorate from the Punjabi University, Patiala, on the topic of "Doctrine of Liberation in Indian Religions, with special reference to Jainism".

On May 17, 1972 he was initiated in the Shraman Sangh as a disciple of Gian Muniji. Gian Muniji was a well-known Jain scholar and a disciple of Acharya Atma Ramji. After his initiation into the Shraman Sangh, on his Guru's directives, Shiv Muni travelled throughout India preaching Jain tenets. Shiv Muni sojourned through the interiors of Punjab, Haryana, Delhi, Uttar Pradesh, Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, Orissa, Tamil Nadu, Gujarat and other states. It was during this sojourn that the Shraman Sangh selected him as its first Yuva Acharya on May 13, 1987 at Pune and on June 9, 1999 he was declared the Acharya or the spiritual head of the Shraman Sangh.

Spiritual Journey & Meditation:
Through meditation, he has constantly been on the upward move of his spiritual journey. During the course of this inward sojourn, he has had wonderful experiences with truth called Atma Dhyyan or Self Meditation. For more than two decades, he researched various methods of
meditation and developed his own result-oriented technique called Atmadhyan. It is based on the Acharang Sutra. Millions of people have benefited from his method of meditation. He trained several meditation instructors who travel across the country and around the globe to organize camps to give practical training of meditation to interested people and enable them to bring about a positive change in their lives. In the meditation camps, Acharyashri inspires people to clean the five sheaths of bodies of our being: physical body, aural body, mind body, intellectual body and bliss body. His meditation study is divided into four parts:

- **Basic Shibir I**: 3 hours for 3 days with prayer, faith, help, yogasana, some methods of dhyan where one learns to get a glimpse of self.
- **Advance II**: 4 days with complete silence. Special pratikraman, kayotsarg and Mangal Maitry is used for the experiment.
- **Advance III**: This is a 7 day practice, where one learns to go from Bhed to Abhed.
- **Self meditation teaching workshop**: Where one learns how to teach others.

Acharyashri is of the opinion that management is about shifting the goal of an industry from being profit oriented to service oriented industry. Companies and entrepreneurs undergoing meditation training under Acharyashri’s guidance have found increased cooperation and harmony among their employees. His books like Dhyan Ek Divya Sadhana, Nadi Nav Sanjog, The Jain Tradition, and The Jain Pathway to Liberation have benefitted thousands of people.

**Simple Messages from Acharyaji:**
Detachment, Austerity, Enlightenment and Meditation have been the four pillars of his pious life. His message to all of us is as follows:

- **Sadhana— Atmadhyan** - Self meditate
- **Seva— Help Others**
- **Shiksha— Get Knowledge**

**Who am I? = KOHAM and I am that Soul = SOHAM. This is the Truth.**

**Sthanak Vasi = People Living in their Soul**
-Thanag Sutra

Achary Shiv Muniji asks us to, “Use body as a vehicle to go towards the soul. Meditation is carried by the body. Soul only experiences it as knowledge” - Gnata Drashta Bhav Namaskar brings humility (Vinaya) and reduces ego.

In the words of Suvrat Muniji. “The holy vibrations that surround Shiv Muni and his meditation powers come directly from the blessings of Tirthankar Simandhar Swami”.

Web site. www.jainacharya.com
E-mail: shivachryaji@jainachrya.com

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**Acharya Raghavji Swami**

The time is 11.30 am in a small town of Kutch. An elderly Jain monk is spotted walking alone on the streets with gochari (food collected by sadhu) vessels in his hand, head bent little downwards though focused on the streets - sometimes stopping to bless people who are bowing to him, sometimes smiling at kids playing on the street, unperturbed by dogs barking, the saint finally reaches his sthanak. The sthanak is fully packed with devotees now at 1.55pm. Two saints are sitting on top of a small pedestal. A small group of visitors visiting from Mumbai moves to the front and are taking with the saints holding a handkerchief in front of their mouth. It is now exactly 2.00pm, the elderly sadhu after reciting the Navakar mantra starts his vyakhyan talking about the soul. His clarity of thought and superb delivery captures the audience’s heart and mind. The lecture is highly interactive, where the monk fields questions to his audience, or answers questions raised from the audience. The monk even had a simple question for a small child sitting close to him. As the end of the vyakhyan (lecture), the great soul has touched every soul in the audience.

In the above 3-hour snapshot here, we have tried to visualize a picture of Pujya Acharya Raghavji Swami. Pujya-saheb (as his devotees called him) who humbly requested others not to take his photographs. While, we do not have a portrait of Pujya-saheb's physical body, we do have some glimpses from a life-long portrait of a great soul. In the above paragraph, we have attempted to present some of his unique attributes. We began
with his humility, regardless of being topmost in the hierarchy, of the Nani Paksh order, he would himself go to collect gochari, when it would be his turn. Next was his compassionate nature; always willing to help every soul that would come in touch with him. His walk reflected his state of constant awareness. His smile reflected his simplicity and friendliness. Being unperturbed in somewhat adverse conditions reflected his state of equanimity. Guiding his chelas (monks under his guidance) at every stage showed his commitment towards their growth and well-being. Finally, it depicts his unique ability to inspire everyone; ranging from new visitors to diehard followers, from the most humble to the most affluent, and from the very young to the very old.

Pujya Raghavaji Swami had been one of the most inspiring and impressive personalities of our times. Born on February 5, 1931 at Bhujpur-Kutch, he was influenced by the Jain religious teachings from his childhood. His parents Tejbai and Nenshi Shah also motivated him to follow the religious path. The turning path in Raghavji Swami’s life came when his cousin died at a very young age. This generated a feeling of detachment in his mind. He wanted to enter ascetic path. However, his mother was reluctant to grant him permission for asceticism. It was due to the persuasion of Pujya Shamji Swami, Gorani Devkvavbari Swami and Megbhai Swami that Tejbai allowed his son to take Diksha. He was given Diksha on November 24, 1949 by Pujya Shamji Swami, and he joined the monk order of Aath Kotti Nani Paksha Sthanakvasi Jain sect. The monks of this Jain sect do not travel outside boundaries of Kutch-Gujarat. They are known to follow an extremely rigid sadhutava doctrine, and are very selective about letting anyone join the monk order. Only individuals who are mentally prepared to handle the hardships that come in a typical sadhu’s life are allowed to join the sect. Even today, they avoid the use of any form of technology, such as mike, photographs, metal parts, or other electrical or electronic gadgets. In a relatively short period, the young sadhu had studied 32 Agams. His first chaturmas was at Bhujpur. His simple and very friendly nature allowed others to freely communicate with him. He brought about subtle changes in the outlook of the others with his sheer simplicity. Raghavji Swami would invariably use some of these simple examples from life while interacting with different people. This would encourage a two-way dialog.
among his audience during his **vyakhyan**, increasing the possibility of positive influence. His modest and affectionate speech would win over many hearts. Through his **vyakhyanas** during the **chaturmas** of Mundra, he inspired Tulsidas (traditionally non-Jain), the collector of Mundra to start following the Jain Way of Life.

Once one rich householder asked Pujiya-saheb if he could spend a large sum of money in the activities deemed fit by Sahebji. Pujiya-saheb replied that they did not accept money and that money was of no use if there was no need for it. In his simplistic style, Sahebji had imparted the message of futility in materialism. The **shrawak** was very much impressed, changed his outlook towards life and became a staunch follower of Pujiya-saheb. This modest outlook is noticed in all **sthanaaks** of the Aath Koti Nani Paksha, which are all very simple structures, with no fanfare.

On June 6, 1993 Raghavji Swami became Acharya (head of the sect). He was the seventh Acharya of Aath Koti Nani Paksha in the lineage of Pujya Hansrajji Swami. His first male and female disciples were Jayeshji Swami (Bagda) and Manjaribai Swami (Karagoga). Under his leadership, 8 men and 12 women took Diksha. He possessed all the 36 qualities of Acharya. He started the concept of **Gharsabha** and **Dharmasabha**. Through **Gharsabha** he was able to resolve many of the household disputes. **Dnansatra, Balsatra and Samuhik Dharma Aradhana** were also initiated by him.

During the **chaturmas** of Kandagara, an individual threatened to kill Pujiya-saheb if he would continue to travel on his regular route. His followers advised him to avoid the route. Not only did Pujiya-saheb stick to his schedule and route, but also requested that his schedule be made known to the potential killer. Pujiya-saheb was more concerned about this aggressor’s **karmas** than his own life, he wanted the aggressor to realize his mistake. Within no time, the individual realized his mistake and apologized to Pujiya saheb. While doing so, Pujiya-saheb explained the real meaning of **Ahimsa** to him. In another instance when a medical practicing doctor was arguing that the real religion was serving other people, Pujiya-saheb agreed with the ideal of service, but at the same time pointed out that service should be for all living beings in the universe. According to him, serving one set of beings and hurting other set of beings could not possibly be religion. Giving such simple but pointed arguments, he had convinced the doctor about the value of vegetarianism. Similar interactions had impressed Maneka Gandhi about the purpose of following an eco-friendly life-style.

During his life-time he did 61 **chaturmas**. In spite of being Acharya, he would take his turn to bring **gochari** for the younger ascetics. He would visit the households of Jain as well as non-Jains to inspire them on the noble path. He always remained active throughout his life. If any of the ascetics were not in good health, he would immediately visit them, even if it meant walking many miles. His memory was so sharp that he would remember the name and family details of any **shrawak** even after a gap of few years.

Acharyaji knew it was time to move on. He took the vow of fasting unto death. He died on February 27, 2011. His **palkhi** was carried on February 28, 2011. As the **Maha-atma** continuing the journey towards **Moksha**, it inspires many thousands of other wandering souls in the same direction of **Moksha**.

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**Acharyashri Virendra Muniji (M. A.)**

**Shashtry Achar (Action, Behavior) is Religion**

“विनय चेहरे लक्ष्मण, विक्षित चेहरे बलकृष्ण, अने विवेक चेहरे शारिरजोग, अ र तुष्मा थी रेकली पपु विपेक्षा चेहरे मोहम्मदी विपेक्षा”

— Acharya Virendra Muniji

These simple yet profound words speak about the simplicity of Acharya Shri Virendramuniji. A sadhu with few words, but an intent listener, reminds one of a psychiatrist like qualities in him. His guidance and counseling to his **sangh** makes him a true guru.

Virendra Muni is the 28th Acharya of the Dariyapuri Sthanakvasi Sampraday. He has about 120 followers (sadhus and sadhvis). Acharyashri Virendra Muniji was born on April 26 1944 as Vinodbhai. His parents were Ramanlal and
Kantaben Mehta. He lost his father at a very early age and thus became very close to his grandfather who taught him Samayik and also inculcated the sound values of humanity and humility at a very early age. Due to his liking for religion from a very tender age, his grandfather would lovingly call him “Bhagat”. At the age of 12 he could recite Pratikraman in the Upashray during Paryushan. Right after high school, he was inclined to take Diksha. However, his family wanted him to be more matured and asked him to wait until he finished college. As his quest for spiritual knowledge increased, he began to spend more and more time at the Upashray. After acquiring his bachelor’s degree in Philosophy with a subject like Ardh Magdhi, he once again sought permission from his family for taking Diksha. The family kept delaying his decision by convincing him this time to finish his Master’s Degree.

Nothing could stop this determined young man from taking diksha and he finally gave up all worldly possessions and became a Sadhu named Virendra Muni on May 4, 1968. In his 38 years of monk-hood, he has grown immensely in terms of knowledge, faith, and conduct. His guru Acharya Shri Sahantilalji would fondly say “My Viru is unbreakable like a copper pot and he shines even more with every new challenge.”. On February 19, 2000, he received the Acharya Pad in Mumbai and was inducted as an Acharya in the Darjapuri Sthanakvasi Sangh.

His knowledge of Sadhak Sahachari (Spiritual Guide) is very deep. Sadhak Sahachari are important verses compiled as a poem in Gujarati by Munishree Santabalaji from Uttardhyhan Sutra and Dasa Vaikalika Sutra. His humility, respect for all life forms and simplicity is quite extraordinary. He explains the rules of Jinshashan to all like a parent would teach to a loving child. His peaceful personality and detachment from the worldly expectations attracts shravaks who want to meet him over and over again. Monk and Acharyas of other sects have also appreciated his deep sense of spirituality. He is extremely vigilant towards his duties. His quest for knowledge (Gyanpipasa) makes him a true learner. He is a source of motivation and inspiration to his Sangh. His contribution to the society by way of arranging Dhyan Shibirs (meditation camps), working towards preparing directory of the Sangh or counseling people makes him a true Karm Yogi and Dharma Yogi. He truly fulfills the Acharyapad: ‘Acharam Acharati Param, Param Acharvanti eti Acharya’.

Question Answer session with Guruji:
Did you have any difficulty in the beginning when you started giving lectures?
Yes, In the beginning, a lecture that would take an hour to prepare and would conclude in 15 minutes. However, working with Gurudev and learning from him it became easier.

How do you like to teach?
“Padhamam Nanam tao daya, Avam Chiththai savva sanjaye. Annani kim kahi, kim va nahl say pavagga”—Das Vaikalika Sutra. Most important thing is Knowledge followed by action (Daya), which leads to Nirvana.

What is more important - Humanity or Jain Religion?
Humanity is a part of Jainism. But we cannot neglect introspection for humanity.

Can you tell us what is good or bad about life?
Don’t live with memories of yesterday or think about what the future will bring. Khashanam Jana hi Pandit- The one who knows this moment and lives in the present is a real knowledgeable person.

Yuva Hridaya Samrat Gurudev Pujya Namra Muni

Pujya Shri Namra Muni Maharaj Saheb, a Jain Muni of Gondal Sampraday was born on September 26, 1969 in Nagpur. After he lost his father at the age of three, he moved to his native place Lathi, in Saurashtra and from there to his maternal uncle’s place in Delhi. At the tender age of six years, he had farsighted vision. One night in his dreams, he heard a divine voice saying, “Your life is very short do whatever you want to do.”

He narrated this dream to his mother who instead of ignoring his dream encouraged him to take Diksha and make his life worthy. He then left for Jodhpur to study religion and learnt the 32 Agams and their meaning. He took Diksha at the age of 21 and came to be known as the Jain Saint Namramuni Maharaj. When he was 22 years of age, he fell critically sick. He started chanting “Shri Uvasagasarah Stotra” which he had never heard nor learnt before. As the doctors continued
with their treatment, he went on reciting the *stotra* and was saved miraculously. He spent one *chaturmaas* with *tap Samrat Pujya Gurudev Shri Ratilalji Maharaj* and became his disciple. After his Guru’s death, he propagated his teachings and preachings. Gurudev Namra Muni has put in tremendous effort to spread Jain religion and hence the title of “Shashan Prabhavak” was conferred upon him.

Namra Muni’s teachings target the youth and children of today. Gurudev started the *Arham Yuva Group* in November 2005 in Mulund, Mumbai to channelize the youthful energy and thoughts in the right direction. “The meaning of the word *Arham*” is to overcome anger and ego to become a self-composed human being. *Gurudev* wishes to bring youngsters together and help them get rid of their ego, pride, anger, and guide them to walk on the religious path. The group that began with only 50 members grew fast with over 2000 members now. *Look and Learn* group was targeted towards children. Pujya Gurudev felt that if the children were taught the principles of religion with modern technological aids, more kids would attend *Pathshala* willingly and regularly. *He* worked relentlessly for two years to publish a fascinating book on *Samayik* and *Pratikraman* with colorful illustrations. It is an extremely detailed book and has chapters written in three languages (Ardh Magdhi, Gujarati & English). Approximately 40 *Pathshalas* and 400 teachers worked on this project. The goal for *Look and Learn* was to create a loving and playful environment, which fostered the moral and spiritual development of children. According to Guru Namra Muni, “Religion is about, bringing a positive change in one’s day to day life and a lasting change in one’s attitude and behavior.” The *Kolkata Parasdhram* and lately *Pavandham* have also been started by Namra Muniji.

**Meeting with PujyaNamramuni Maharaj:**

One of our editors was fortunate to meet and seek his blessing in July 2010. Here is a brief excerpt from the question and answer session that took place in this meeting:

What is the difference between *Dharma* (Religion) and *Sampraday*? Is *Sampraday* important for the future generation?

*Religion* is a quality of the soul. *Sampraday* is one of the roads to reach the final destination. Religion is the same for everyone, but the journey from Jeev to Shiv Atma to Siddhatma there are multiple paths (Sampraday). There need not be any claims from any Sampraday about their path being the only correct one. Reaching the higher destination is a more important goal than the kind of path taken to achieve it. By respecting others and accepting good from everyone helps us improve our knowledge. True Dharma or religion is a feeling that comes when one experiences the nature of one’s own soul.

**It comes with Deed (Action) not by Words.**

Is *Puja* (Worship) necessary?

*There are two kinds of Puja: Sakar (keeping the figure as a medium) and Nirakar (keeping Soul as a medium). Each Puja has its own position in each one’s life. It is improper to feel that one might be better than the other.**

Could you comment on the debate of 40 Loguss vs. 20 Loguss for each Kaussag?

The most important thing is to detach the body from physical activities and concentrate or meditate towards the self. Previously it was meant to go for 100 respirations, which was difficult to practice, therefore Acharyas taught us to use Loguss which became a tradition. We should focus on remaining detached from outside activities to focus within and not on the number of Loguss we can say.

Is Punya good or bad? Can doing a good deed be bad?

*Punya* is a byproduct of good religious behavior. *Punya* is not a Hay or Upaday, but it is a Gnay. Without *Punya* receiving healthy human life, meeting proper person (Sadguru), developing faith, learning and practicing right way of living is not possible. *Punya* is the vehicle to help us towards our goal of Moksh.

**Message to the people:**
People today forget that Bhagwan Mahavir lived in the jungle for 12.5 years and went through severe penance to become Arihant. Currently many Jains are preoccupied only with rituals. It is like a turtle living in a lake. We should aim to be a turtle living in the ocean. Bhagwan Mahavir does not belong to Jains only. We need to cultivate awareness, look at the present, learn from the past and revise our plan for the future to spread Bhagwan Mahavir's message of Ahimsa, Anekantvad, Aparigrah and equanimity to the world.

"We have a very short stroke of time to do things fast and with perfection." -- Namra Muni

#### आचार्य भगवान्त श्री हस्तीमल जी

जिनके विमल प्रताप से, हुआ हिताहित ज्ञान।
भक्तिसुख्त गुरुदेव का, धर्म ह्येंत में ध्यान।।

मेरे आराध्यदेव मेरी असीन श्रद्धा के केन्द्र पूजा गुरुदेव
आचार्य भगवान्त श्री हस्तीमल जी माता, का जब भी समय करती हूँ, मन भ्रमण एवं उत्साह से भर जाता है। मेरे उनके दर्शन सम्प्रभु आज से 38 साल पहले सन 1972 में बाली, राजस्थान में किये थे। उस समय हम सावधानी उदयगर, कृषीशिखर नाम जी गये थे। मीठे समय रात्रि में गुरुदेव के दर्शन में हम पाली करके शान का साथ, हम जयपुर जाने की जिम्मेदारी थी, इसलिए हम उनके साथी में यज्ञा नहीं रूक गई। उस समय मेरे हम सही धार्मिक नहीं हो गई थी। हमने बाले लीजिए समय उसके मानसिक फसलों के लिए कहा, तो उन्होंने कहा कि अभी जयपुर जा से भी हो क्या? हमने जब ही कहा तब उन्होंने अपने दिन जाने को कहा। लेकिन हम लोगों ने हम की यह बात पर ध्यान नहीं किया तब हमने मानसिक फसल दी। उनके पश्चात हम पाली से जयपुर के लिए रवाना हो गये। हमारे पिताजी के सदर विभाग मे गांधियां में थे कीर्ती 8-10 किमी। ही चले होम के हमारी एक गाँडी बीच जंगल में खुशबू हो गई। गाँडी का कोई पुत्र नहीं हो गया, तब हम लीजिए गये वास्तव भी ही जाना चाहा। गाँडी ठीक होने-होने काफी रात्रि सूखी कुंदी, अने, हमने सुहावने होने पर ही रवाना होना उचित समझा। गुरुदेव के बाद याद आई, उन्होंने कहा था कि सुहावने चलो जाना, पर हमने उस समय उनकी बात नहीं मानी थी। शायद उन्होंने इस बात का पहले ही आचार्य हो गया था। सुहावने होने पर हमें हम गुरुदेव के दर्शन करना पड़ा, यह रात बीती सारी बात, कहीं, लेकिन गुरुदेव मान रहे, और मानसिक फसल दी।

उसके पश्चात मेरे 1976 में बालीतारा, राजस्थान में गुरुदेव के दर्शन किये, और उसके बाद मेरे लगभग हर भिक्षा उनके दर्शन करने जाती थीं। ये हमें सामान्य बातों की प्रेरणा दे देते थे। जब मेरी जान थी तो यही पुस्तक थे कि सामाजिक बाधा चल रही है ना। न तो कभी पिताजी सम्बन्धित कोई बात पूछते और न कभी अन्य किसी सामाजिक बात की चर्चा करते थे। ये कम ही बात करते थे और जब कभी बात करते थे तो केवल धार्मिक, आध्यात्मिक एवं कर्मों से मुक्त समाजिक ही बात करते थे। वे अपने समय लेखन अथवा ध्यान आदि साधना में लीने रहते थे। गुरुदेव के मीठे बिंदु के लिए भी हम पिताजी में बैठने से आनंद का अनुभव होना था। उनके दर्शन मात्र से ही वे हम में एक अनोखी सुविधा से भी मिलती थी। जब मेरी माता भी माता मेरी माता हमने उनके दर्शनों के लिए जाने की योजना थी। समय के साथ साथ मेरे ब्रह्म बड़की गई, और साथ साथ धार्मिक भावना भी उभरी हो गई।

अगमोदधराक श्री ग्हासिलल्झि महाराज

Jain Acharya and a literary giant, Ghasilalji Maharaj was a great intellectual in the Sthanakvasi Jain community. Shri Ghasilalji was born in 1885 at Banol village, which is known for its great warriors near Jashwantgadh in Mewar region. Shri Ghasilalji’s personal appearance was very impressive. Anybody who saw him predicted that the boy would be a great man in the future.
He was a disciple of the great Acharya Shri Jawaharlalji Maharaj. His sound knowledge of Jain literature established him as a profound thinker and his literary creations reflect his holy, restrained and vow-full life.

Ghasilalji did not attend any school but learnt everything from nature. He learnt the virtues of tolerance, renunciation, satisfaction, appreciation of other's virtues, fearlessness, simplicity, equal feelings for all, and self-support from nature itself. He would go away to the nearby forests to think about life & nature. Ghasilalji was deeply influenced by Acharya Shri Jawaharlalji Maharaj's preaching. Ghasiramji expressed his desire to take Diksha. Acharya Shri told him, "It is very difficult & painful to follow vows but it is the only way to be free from the bondage of deeds". Ghasilalji at once replied, "I shall suffer all pains with total determination to follow the restrained life because restraint always brings happiness in this life as also in future lives." Noticing Ghasiramji's firm commitment over a period of time Acharya Jawaharlalji granted him Diksha in 1952 at Jashwantgadh.

He mastered 16 languages. He also had deep knowledge of grammar, logic (Nyaya), darshan & literature. He spent his monsoons in many regions of India spreading the Jain scripture knowledge to the wider Indian community. Accepting requests from several devotees from all over India, he started the work of translating 32 Agamic scriptures. For this task, he worked continuously at Ahmedabad for 16 years. Finally, people had access to these scriptures in a language they could understand. He translated the original scriptures first in the form of prose & poetry and then later with detailed comments and meanings. The Jain community will always be grateful to Acharya Ghasilalji for his contribution of translating the Jain scriptures in Gujarati & Hindi.

His greatness and vast learning is evident from his works. He was endowed with the virtues of simplicity, nobility, sweetness of speech, large-heartedness, tolerance, self-supporting nature etc. It was for this reason people of all communities respected him. He always advocated love for all, friendship and spiritual tolerance.

Shri Ghasilalji was awarded the titles of Kolhapur Raj Purush and Shasanacharya because of his great knowledge and literary work. The Karachi Jain Sangh conferred on him the titles of Jain Diwakar and Jain Acharya because of his total renunciation, penance and restraint. Finally, as his health started failing him, he embraced Sallekhana vow (fast unto death) and on February 2, 1973 at the age of 88 Acharya Shri Ghasilalji passed away.

(Continued from page 54)

**Bruhad Gujarat Samuday**

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The Legend and the Legacy
A Tribute to Acharya Mahapragya

"Muni Nathmal was in a profound meditative state pondering over the embedded meaning of an Agam verse". This sentence depicts the complete devotion of a prodigy sage, Muni Nathmal, to comprehend the truth passed on by Bhagwan Mahavir. Right from the beginning, at the tender age of ten, he devoted himself to the study, research, and correlation of the rich treasures of the Jain Agams and related Jain canons for over thirty years. Continuously guided, encouraged, and sometimes even prodded by Guru Acharya Tulsi, Muni Nathmal would dwell deep into a particular subject matter, analyzing it from multiple angles and ultimately realizing the very essence of the message as if it was delivered directly by Kevali Mahavir. He was able to master the Nirgranth faith (the original name of Mahavir's philosophy) in its original form and find applicability for it in modern times by filtering off the possible distortions of language, time, social changes, and traditionalism. Appreciating the great knowledge, discipline, and the wisdom of his disciple, Acharya Tulsi brought this great personage out of seclusion and presented him to the world by endowing additional honors and responsibilities. Acharya Tulsi honored him with the qualitative epithet of Mahapragya (highly knowledgeable) on 12 November 1978. The Legend, whom we know as Acharya Mahapragya, became known to public.

Nathmal (Acharyashri's childhood name) was born to Tola Ram Choraria and Baluji in the small village of Tamkor in the Jhunjhu nu district in Rajasthan. He lost his father when he was just two and half months old. Growing up in an extended family, he gained support from all the family members. Nathmal's mother was very fond and affectionate towards him. There was no formal school in Tamkor village in those days and Acharyashri did not receive a formal education. He nonetheless had lessons on letters and mathematics tables from local teacher(s). He was inspired towards spirituality by his mother's religious devotion and by the lessons learnt from sadhus who visited the village from time to time. Eventually he conveyed to his mother his wish to become a monk. On January 29, 1931, at the age of 10 Acharya Kalugani initiated him into the Jain Shwetamber Terapanth order. Assigned under the mentorship of Muni Tulsi; a guru-chela relationship that grew exponentially as time passed. The combination and somewhat complementary skills of these two masters not only grew the Terapanth sangh far beyond the confines of Rajasthan's few northern districts, but also made its deep impact on the Indian nation and its influence spread throughout the globe.

Thoughts churned out from the depths of his meditation are lasting and effective. In his single famous quote - "Soul is my god. Renunciation is my prayer. Amity is my devotion. Self-restraint is my strength. Non-violence is my religion." - Acharya Mahapragya defined the essence of Dharma, sahmooth, and his own path to salvation. At the same time, he inspired mankind to follow the path founded on fundamental human strengths and values.

The word Mahaprajna (spoken as Mahapragya) means "Highly knowledgeable". Acharya Mahapragya's disciples refer to him as Gurudev and saw him as a Karunadhari (companionate - kind, gentle and generous) guru with a treasure of
infinite knowledge, always providing blessing and guidance for their upliftment and empowerment. Besides being a philosopher-thinker lost in philosophy, he was also an extempore and inspirational poet. His verses in both Hindi and Sanskrit reveal his subtle delicate feelings and the depth of his philosophical understanding. Sambodhi, Ashruvina, Mukulam (in Sanskrit) and Rishabhayana, Shraman Mahavir (in Hindi) are some of the jewels contributed by him to the world of literature. Acharyashri's early scholarly works were read and personally recognized by Dr. Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan, the second President of India, and India's most influential scholars of comparative religion and philosophy. Ravtrakavi (National poet) Ram Dhari Singh Dinkar said, "Mahapragya is a Modern Vivekananda". In 2004 Indian President A. P. J. Abdul Kalam, mentioned Acharyashri's name in his Republic Day Speech to the nation. This is the first time in Indian Parliamentary history that the name of a religious leader was mentioned in a national speech. The recognition that the basic Jain principles can become the cornerstone of peace and harmony in the country is a matter of pride for the entire Jain community.

When one of the authors of the Jain Digest met him in Ladnun, Rajasthan, it was that time of the year when over 5000 devotees had gathered to celebrate the annual Maryada Mahotsava. Acharyashri still managed to find time for people who wanted to meet him. When asked about religious sects he said, "If you are not a religious fanatic, everybody is yours and if you are a religious fanatic, whatever is yours also doesn't remain with you any more". He further went on to emphasize the importance of spirituality over theology and tradition, but at the same time, he did not discount the need for tradition. In that short time span, he showed certain meditation techniques, and emphasized its importance. In the end we ran out of questions, Acharyashri did not run out of time. In the end, he gave an advice to start taking simple steps to remain inside while living in the outside world.

Acharyashri spent years studying and experimenting on various meditation techniques described in various ancient Jain scriptures. Correlating the results of his experimentation with Yoga science (as described by various eastern scholars), Biology, Physics, Naturopathy and Ayurveda, Acharyashri realized the wonderful benefits of meditation. He formalized his discovery in the form of Preksha Dhyan (Perceptive Meditation), a new meditation technique relevant for the modern times. The simple steps of Preksha Dhyan calm the most fickle and wandering mind, rejuvenate the physical body, and ultimately sow the seed of spirituality.

Modern educational systems have been standardized towards intellectual development and imparting knowledge. Acharyashri realized that the ills of the society cannot be resolved unless the basic moral value system is instilled in the youth right from the formative years of their education. Acharyashri introduced Jeevan Vigyan (Science of Living) system with the intent of holistic development of students that includes their emotional, intellectual and physical development. Combining Pranayam, Yoga postures, Meditation, and contemplation techniques with other scientifically validated affirmation techniques, Science of Living Education inculcates positive attitude and helps in the development of a balanced personality.

Transformations in social outlook can occur through movements that touch the goodness inherent in human psyche that invariably remains dormant. Under the guidance of Acharya Tulsi, Mahapragyaji played an instrumental role in the Anuvrat movement. The ultimate aim of the movement is to create a nonviolent socio-political world order with the help of a worldwide network of self-transformed people. This grassroots movement is making slow but effective progress across the globe.

The economic growth, steered by phenomenal globalization and advances in technology, has also become the amplifier of human greed and the thirst for power. Such strong unrestrained emotions result in terrorist attacks, communal and ethnic clashes, and increased disparity between the rich and the poor. Acharya Mahapragya started a mass movement – a long journey christened Ahimsa Yatra, to act as an antidote to the spread of human negativism. Ahimsa Yatra would influence people from all walks of life with the power of Ahimsa. Covering nine states and thousands of villages, towns and cities by foot, Acharyashri would first bring the problems of all forms of violence into sharp focus, then find common ground in differing ideas and views, and finally, by persuasion, convert negative thoughts and emotions into positive and constructive views. Ahimsa Yatra inspired over 40,000 volunteers, who would work at local levels, resolving conflicts
and bringing peace and harmony to the community.
Those who have extensively practiced nonviolence have not only made profound positive impact on society but have also given us hope for a harmonious future. Acharyashri realized that he and his dedicated disciples, alone, could only do so much. He needed to team up with other like-minded individuals to spread the power of Ahimsa. Mahapragyaji went out of his way to meet and collaborate with other Jain Acharyas and leaders to spread Jain philosophy and the essence of our ancient heritage. He also interacted with leaders of other faiths finding common ground and advancing the cause of Ahimsa. Acharyashri successfully convinced and motivated various renowned academicians, sociopolitical personalities, professional and business leaders towards projects leading to social upliftment constructed on the principles of Ahimsa. The collaborative work with Dr. A P J Abdul Kalam is a classic example of such endeavor.

In the book, The Family and The Nation, written jointly by Acharya Mahapragyaji and Dr. A P J Abdul Kalam. They put forwards compelling argument of needing both adhyatma (spirituality), and vigyan (science - but broadly defined as economic growth) for the country to progress. They prescribe a process to build ethics at all levels in the country:

- If a nation is to have ethics, society has to promote ethics and value systems.
- If society is to have ethics and value systems, families should adhere to ethics and value systems.
- If families have to evolve with ethics and value systems, parenthood should have inbuilt ethics.
- Parental ethics come from great learning, value-based education and creation of clean environment that leads to righteousness in the heart.

How do we define a great master? Is it by the legendary qualities or by the legacy? The question was answered by Jain Sashan - we bow to Arihants before we bow to Siddhas. While the enlightened soul departed from the physical body on May 9, 2010, Gurudev Mahapragyaji lives on and his legacy remains alive.

As we welcome the new Acharya Mahashraman, a gift to the world from his Guru, Acharya Mahapragyaji; someone educated, nurtured, groomed and eventually empowered under his guidance, to carry forward the message of Bhagwan Mahavir. Acharya Mahashraman will not only advance the legacy of Acharya Mahapragyaji, his Guru, but in time, will establish his own legacy.

Acharya Mahashraman
A Glimpse of a Great Soul

Jain Dharma has given immense importance to the role of a guru in a soul’s journey towards enlightenment. Blessed are those who have received the kind and insightful guidance from the great spiritual leaders; especially if these spiritual gurus include the visionary Gurudev Acharya Tulsi and the legendary scholar Gurudev Acharya Mahapragyaji. It seems both Acharya Tulsi and Mahapragyaji had reserved some of the choicest words for their most worthy disciple Mahashraman. An English translation of these words would not do justice as it would fail to define the unique nature of an enlightened soul. It is only through Anupreksha (deep meditation on selected words or phrases) that we begin to understand the deeper meaning of these seemingly simple words that define the unique nature,
capabilities and charitra of Acharya Mahashraman.


"Mahashraman is a legend in leading a pure life, firm conduct observance, and highly enlightened Saint. He is enormously capable. The future is in good hands." (the translation is intended to give the overall meaning instead of it being a paraphrase.)

"Mahatapasvi Veh Hota Hai Jisme Indriya Sanyam Hota Hai. Mahashraman Ka Indriya Sanyam Anuttar Hai." - Acharya Mahapragna

"A high profiled ascetic is the personality who has disciplined his mind, body and instincts blissfully. Mahashraman is an extra ordinary example of it. Therefore I recognize him as an exemplary ascetic."

Acharya Shri Mahashraman was born as Mohan Dugar on May 13, 1962 in Sardarshahar, Rajasthan in western India. His profound religious pursuits became manifest in his early formative years, along with an intense quest for in-depth knowledge and truth. A few days shy of his twelfth birthday, this child prodigy convinced the, then Acharya Tulsi to initiate him as a monk and thus began the meticulous nurturing and training that turned him into an outstanding saint and eminent Jain scholar. At the same time, he was also transformed into an extraordinary leader under the astute guidance and prudent prodding not only of his late grand guru but also of the late Acharya Mahapragna, for whom he has had the utmost devotion and reverence. Being a Yuvacharya, he was involved inseparably in all of Acharya Mahapragna’s work. Acharya Mahapragna used to experience ‘oneness’ with Acharya Mahashraman.

One witnesses rare coincidences in Acharya Mahashraman’s life every 12 years. Every 12th year brought a new direction and responsibility in his life. He took diksha at the age of 12, he became Acharya Mahapragna’s close subordinate at the age of 24, he became a Yuvacharya (designated Acharya) at the age of 36 and finally became the Acharya at the age of 48. Similarly, the month of May has been special in Acharya Mahashraman’s life; he was born on May 13, took his diksha on May 13, became Acharya Tulsi’s disciple on May 13, and became the group leader on May 14. With his recent induction as the 11th Acharya of Terapanth, on May 23, 2010, in his hometown of Sardarshahar, the coincidences of 12 years and the month of May continues.

Tirthankar Mahavir showed the path of liberation from karmic bondage through enlightened faith or perception (samyak darshana), enlightened knowledge (samyak jnana), and enlightened conduct (samyak charitra) 2600 years ago. Now it seems that three great Terapanth Jain saints of the modern era have become symbols of this three pronged concept. Acharya Tulsi laid the foundation by creating an institution that puts emphasis on the basic tenets of the Dharma while deemphasizing (not rejecting) certain age old traditions. It is an institution that encourages belief in reality that leads to rational perception. Belief in the core Jain philosophical concepts resulting from rational perception rather than blind faith is much stronger and clearer.

Acharya Mahapragna built further on the foundation laid by Tulsiji. Many of Acharya Mahapragna’s disciples describe him as an “Ocean of Knowledge”. An ardent researcher and investigator, Mahapragna gained deep knowledge of the Jain Agams, other Jain canons, and various other eastern and western philosophical works. He subsequently showed the relevance of his mastery of this ancient treasure in every walk of life, including its positive impact on each and every aspect of our diverse modern society.

The great efforts of these two masters would remain incomplete unless we in the society start imbibing these core values within us. This
mountainous task of convincing and motivating the society to start living the value system so lucidly described by his gurus is now in the hands of Acharya Mahashraman. The distinct qualities of Acharya Mahashraman allows him to lead us with his own example. What stands out is Mahashraman’s unparalleled amount of humility and equanimity. It seems his keen sense of awareness is active all the time, the same quality he subtly induces in people who come in contact with him. Under his otherwise quiet persona there is a deep sense of purpose and remarkable ability to bring about a change in the society.

Practicing meditation in the peaceful ambience at the dawn of the day is an important part of his daily life. Even as the day progresses and he engages in various activities and programs, he continues to present the same peaceful and equanimous nature. He is a living example of the concept of the Sthitapragnya as described in Shrimad Bhagwat Gita. This is the reason why every person entering his aura feels purity, peace and solace. The very presence of this saintly aura coupled with his great oratory skills, not only leaves a lasting impression, but also influences a shuttle change towards spirituality in his audience. While, Jain Agams have always been the basis of his speeches, he would, on many occasions dwell deep into teachings of Shrimad Bhagwat Gita and Buddhist scripture Dhammapad. With his clear beliefs that texts, sacred notes, religious orders or saints can be different but their learning experiences and facts are the same, his talks would have lasting impact on various non-Jain members of our society. This unique strength was aptly demonstrated during his tour of the remote tribal areas, where Acharyashri explained the significance of the principle of Ahimsa. Many tribal people not only listened and understood Ahimsa but also accepted it practically by renouncing hunting, addictive substances, non-vegetarian food and innocent killing.

Glorious in peace, sharp in silence, humble in learning and specially in simplicity this young Acharya is beacon of hope and a solace in this era of dwindling morality, intolerance and unrest. Humankind can look to this brightly shining star for a path to salvation.

ज्ञानीनी दशा

(This Article in Gujarati is based on the writing of Puja Shri Rakeshbhai Zaveri, who has been inspired by the teaching of Shrimad Rajchandra.)

देख छता ज्ञानी दशा वर्त देखतीत
ते ज्ञानीनी शरणास्माह हो विधन अगस्तीत

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सुप्रात्मिक प्रवृत्ति साधने जो हैं। इससे प्राप्ति प्राप्ति संपूर्ण स्वतंत्र, पोताली जो पोताली पारितपुष्प, सुध मात्र पर साधने नजर दागती नहीं। आत्मा द्वारा प्राप्ति करने, तने सहज बनाएगा मात्र बदले पुष्पपुष्प आयात है। कलागर कुछताची विचार होत करून राखून से हे आधारी करी सूति करून ध्यान देणे की अनुभव साधना ।

3) अवतारी

अभी तो समय अभाव नाही, तेव्हा आत्मा प्रवृत्ति अभाव करत नाही, तेव्हा इस्तेमाल समय अभाव. साधने नाही, तेव्हा इस्तेमाल त्याची तयारी करावी. नीचे दिल्ली अनुभव जरिये ही त्याची नवीनता इत्यादी तयार करा. "सत्य करत आईल, अल्पवात समय समाधी" प्रवृत्ति साधने करा. तेव्हा तेव्हा नवीन उपयोगकर्ता परिस्थिती करा.

2) अपूर्व ज्ञान

शास्त्रीय शिक्षणाचे संस्कृती प्रवृत्ति प्राप्त होत नाही, त्याचे पुरुष अनेकाची विद्या साधने जो है। संसाराच्या दरम्यान पुरुष तेव्हा तेव्हा शिक्षा नवीन वाचविले प्रति तेव्हा तेव्हा तेव्हा तेव्हा तेव्हा तेव्हा तेव्हा तेव्हा तेव्हा तेव्हा तेव्हा तेव्हा तेव्हा तेव्हा तेव्हा तेव्हा तेव्हा तेव्हा तेव्हा तेव्हा तेव्हा तेव्हा तेव्हा तेव्हा तेव्हा तेव्हा तेव्हा तेव्हा तेव्हा तेव्हा तेव्हा तेव्हा तेव्हा तेव्हा तेव्हा तेव्हा तेव्हा तेव्हा तेव्हा तेव्हा तेव्हा तेव्हा तेव्हा तेव्हा तेव्हा तेव्हा तेव्हा तेव्हा तेव्हा तेव्हा तेव्हा तेव्हा तेव्हा तेव्हा तेव्हा तेव्हा तेव्हा तेव्हा तेव्हा तेव्हा तेव्हा तेव्हा तेव्हा तेव्हा तेव्हा तेव्हा तेव्हा तेव्हा तेव्हा तेव्हा तेव्हा तेव्हा तेव्हा तेव्हा तेव्हा तेव्हा तेव्हा तेव्हा तेव्हा तेव्हा तेव्हा तेव्हा तेव्हा तेव्हा तेव्हा तेव्हा तेव्हा तेव्हा तेव्हा तेव्हा तेव्हा तेव्हा तेव्हा तेव्हा तेव्हा तेव्हा तेव्हा तेव्हा तेव्हा तेव्हा तेव्हा तेव्हा तेव्हा तेव्हा तेव्हा तेव्हा तेव्हा तेव्हा तेव्हा तेव्हा तेव्हा तेव्हा तेव्हा तेव्हा तेव्हा तेव्हा तेव्हा तेव्हा तेव्हा तेव्हा तेव्हा तेव्हा तेव्हा तेव्हा तेव्हा तेव्हा तेव्हा तेव्हा तेव्हा तेव्हा तेव्हा तेव्हा तेव्हा तेव्हा तेव्हा तेव्हा तेव्हा तेव्हा तेव्हा तेव्हा तेव्हा तेव्हा तेव्हा तेव्हा तेव्हा तेव्हा तेव्हा तेव्हा तेव्हा तेव्हा तेव्हा तेव्हा तेव्हा तेव्हा तेव्हा तेव्हा तेव्हा तेव्हा तेव्हा तेव्हा तेव्हा तेव्हा तेव्हा तेव्हा तेव्हा तेव्हा तेव्हा तेव्हा तेव्हा तेव्हा तेव्हा तेव्हा तेव्हा तेव्हा तेव्हा तेव्हा तेव्हा तेव्हा तेव्हा तेव्हा तेव्हा तेव्हा तेव्हा तेव्हा तेव्हा तेव्हा तेव्हा तेव्हा तेव्हा तेव्हा तेव्हा तेव्हा तेव्हा तेव्हा तेव्हा तेव्हा तेव्हा तेव्हा तेव्हा तेव्हा तेव्हा तेव्हा तेव्हा तेव्हा तेव्हा तेव्हा तेव्हा तेव्हा तेव्हा तेव्हा तेव्हा तेव्हा तेव्हा तेव्हा तेव्हा तेव्हा तेव्हा
Spreading Jainism Globally.

Jain tradition for centuries has been kept alive by succession of Acharyas and their monk followers. We now cover those specific Acharyas and Monks who have taken the bold step to travel beyond the shores of India to spread the message of Mahavir. Their have made a significant impact on the North American Jain Community.
Acharya Sushil Kumarji Maharaj (1926 - 1994)

Just as cakes become sweet when they are coated with sugar frosting, so do places in this world become holy and pure when a saint abides in them."


Acharya Sushil Kumarji Maharaj was not only a visionary Jain Monk but was also a Poet, Writer, Historian and Speaker. He was the first Jain monk to leave India and to use transportation while continuing to remain a Jain monk. Jain monks are permitted to travel by foot only, yet Acharya Sushilji broke the ancient restraint order for the monks to share the Bhagwan Mahavir’s message of nonviolence and peace with the whole world. He was born on 15th June 1926 at Shikhopur (Shusilgarh) in the State of Haryana, India.

At the age of seven Acharya left his family to live with a Jain monk Shri Chotelalji Maharaj. It is said that while he was a little boy, he was inspired by Shri Roop Chandji Maharaj, who appeared to him in spirit and told him to become a monk. Shri Roop Chandji Maharaj was an enlightened Jain monk who lived during the 19th century. On April 20th, 1942 at the age of fifteen Acharya Sushilji became a Jain monk and was initiated into the Jain Sthanakvasi sect at Jagranwala in the Punjab, India. He pursued an academic career and obtained a degree of Shastrī, Acharya, Vidya-Ratna, and Sahitya-Ratna.

Acharya was a master of meditation and in the science of sound. His teaching is called "Arhum Yoga". Arhum Yoga encompasses all aspects of philosophy and yogic practice in the Arihant Spiritual Tradition. Arhum Yoga logo highlights the significance of three sounds - Om, Hreem and Arhum. They symbolize knowledge of the external, the internal and the Supreme. They are Right Knowledge (Arhum), Right Faith (Om) and Right Conduct (Hreem). First on the outside is Hreem; this is the universe, nature and the five elements. Embedded in this lies Om whose positive energy moves in one direction to the Supreme, completely and wholeheartedly. In the center there is an unmovable flame of fire burning brightly. This is Arhum, the power of the soul. It is the Arihant, the soul in its perfected state. The meaning is that you are the universe or Hreem. Your entire energy is Om, and your soul realizes its highest state of perfection, Arhum. By this system you can know the world, you can see how energy moves and you can see your self, how all powers awaken. Sound is the base of this knowledge.

Institutions

Acharya Sushilji founded many organizations which include in 1950, World Fellowship of Religions; in 1957, Vishwa Ahimsa Sangh, the Kundalini Science Center; 1978, the International Mahavir Jain Mission; 1979, Arhat Sangh; 1981, World Jain Congress and the World Center of Nonviolence, 1985, Ahimsa Women's Polytechnic.

Acharya Sushil Ashram, Ahimsa Bhawan, Shanker Road, New Delhi was Gurūji’s first ashram and the Karmabhoomi of Gurūji. Foundation stone of this ashram was laid by 1st Prime Minister of India Pt. Jawahar Lal Nehru in 1963 for building an Ahimsa Library.

Overseas Travel: In 1975, Acharya Sushilji undertook his first international tour and visited Boston. The local Jain Community not only welcomed him but also started a public relation campaign with media. As a result, Acharya Sushilji and members of the Jain community were invited to participate in a local television show. Professors from Harvard and Boston universities interviewed Acharya Sushilji. The interview was aired on television on November 18, 1975, in a Sunday morning show called the “Show of Faith.”
Acharya Sushil ji has helped found many ashrams and centers in the East and West under the International Mahavir Jain Mission. His main ashram is Siddhachalam, located in Blairstown, New Jersey. Siddhachalam. The temple on this 108 acre premise houses both Digamber and Shvetambar tradition Pratimas (Idols). It is the first Jain pilgrimage place (Tirth) outside of India which was established in 1983.

The layout of Siddhachalam mirrors the layout of Tirthraj Shri Sammed Shikharji's 30 tons and Jal Mandir of India.

Acharya was a great proponent of Non-Violence and firmly believed that peace and harmony were essential for the survival of mankind. He defined non-violence as the absence of hatred, tension, anger and discontentment. He worked to establish a sense of universal brotherhood amongst the conflicting religious traditions of India. Throughout the years he had organized and presided over a significant number of World Religious Conferences. He was the honorary president of the World Conference of Religions for Peace, director of the Temple of Understanding, a founding member of the Global Forum of Spiritual and Parliamentary Leaders on Human Survival, president of the Punjab Peace and Unity Committee and a founder of the Vishwa Hindu Parishad.

Besides his involvement in inter-faith and global peace movements, he has made contributions to the literature by writing following books and tracts:


He started a slew of journals & magazines viz:- Naya Sahitya, Pariksha, Dharam Bhaskar, Bhaskar Vani, Vishwa Dharam, Non-Violence, Ahimsa, Arham News Letter, Cosmic Science, Siddhachalam, Arhat Jain Times etc.

For over five decades Acharya Sushil Kumanjir dedicated his life to asceticism and self less service in the name of peace, unity and universal brotherhood. He did much to uplift all living beings. Acharya passed away at the age of 68 years, in his Ashram on April 22, 1994. His message to the world "Love, Live and Let all Live, do not take the life of living beings and enlightenment is the ultimate goal", will be a source of inspiration for all time to come.

Gurudev Shree Chitrabhanuji
Opening the Doors of Jain Dharma to the West

Chitrabhanuji was born as Raju Rajendra in Tumkur near Bangalore on July 26, 1922. His father's name was Chogulal, mother's Chuniben and his sister was Megi. He lost three important people, very early in his life; his mom when he was only a child, sister when he was a teenager and his best friend when he was around 19 years of age. These life-shattering incidents drove him towards the spiritual path and he finally took Diksha on February 6, 1942. One of his well-known contributions to the Jain community has been this immortal song, "Maitri Bhavnu Pavitra Jhamu Mujh Haiya Maa Vahya Kare". He wrote the lyrics of this beautiful song when he was in Mount Abu. Another major contribution that Gurudev Chitrabhanuji has made is to reveal Jainism and its principles to the Western World. It was his teachings that motivated many westerners to embrace vegetarianism. His western followers can easily recite the Navkar
Mahamantra and the Mangalik. "The Wave of Bliss- Impact Of Chitrabanu on the Western World" by Dr N.P.Jain (Indian Ambassador to The United Nations) chronicles Gurudev’s work and massive following in the West.

Jainism in the West

As the first Jain Master in more than 2600 years, in the year 1970, Gurudev Shree Chitrabanuji brought to the Western world, Ahimsa and Reverence for Life, the essence of Jain Dharma. His life story is an inspiring account of how he touched millions of lives in a new land. He established the sound principles of Lord Mahavir’s teachings in the West.

Early Years:
The first five years of his of his monastic life, were spent in silence (maun). During this period of maun he also traveled by foot in the mountains, woods and villages and experienced the silence that stills the logic of the mind and awakens from within the deepest intuition of the spirit. It was in 1969 that he was invited to speak at the Second Spiritual Summit Conference in Geneva, Switzerland for the Temple of Understanding. It was not a simple decision for him to take, but in his mind he knew it was time for the world to learn of Lord Mahavir’s teachings of non-violence, multiplicity of viewpoints and the law of karma. The law of karma is the consequence of one’s actions and all are inherent potential souls to be free from demanding desires of mind and its sensuality. He flew to Geneva in 1970 and inaugurated the conference there. His presentation was received with a standing ovation. He also received an invitation to the Third Conference in 1971 from the Dean of Harvard Divinity School, Boston, Massachusetts in the US. The Secretary of the Vatican also extended an invitation to him to have an audience with Pope Paul VI in Rome. His arrival to the United States of America and these events were clearly, what opened the door of Jain Dharma to the West.

Gurudev Shree Chitrabanuji was also the first Jain to celebrate Mahavir Jayanti at the U. N. Chapel. He was the first Jain Master to be an inspiring messenger of Ahimsa and a founding father of a Jain Center in the West. This is similar to building an airport where the plane of Dharma can land. For this cause, he traveled thousands of miles from the East to the West.

In 1973 he founded the Jain Meditation International Center - JMIC - in Manhattan, New York City near the United Nations. This Center became the mother of all Jain centers conducting various activities and events. To arouse people’s awareness of the beauty of Ahimsa, Anekantavada and Aparigraha (the simplicity of life) - the nectar for mankind’s survival - he spoke at various academic and learning institutions such as Harvard, Princeton, Cornell, New York College at Purchase, and United Nations. Today he guides people by sowing in them the seeds of Dharma and then nurtures them like a gardener.

In 1975 he sponsored a dynamic personality from India, Acharya Sushil Kumarji to come to the West. With the tireless efforts of Pujya Gurudev Chitrabanuji and Acharya Sushil Kumarji, Jains today are a vibrant, throbbing community in North America under the umbrella organization of JAINA: Federation of Jain Associations in North America – which now has more than 100,000 members, 67 centers and 12 affiliated associations.

For the last 37 years Gurudev Shree Chitrabanuji has been helping transplant and expound the age-old essence of the Jain teachings on Western soil and because of his vision, thousands of Westerners have become vegetarians and have started practicing the essence of Reverence for Life and Jain Dharma in their daily life.

Further Spiritual Growth
Practicing never stops for a true aspirant. In 1981, driven by inner quest Gurudev Chitabhanuji and Pramodaben left New York and went to San Diego, near the ocean to spend some time in a peaceful atmosphere for silence and deep meditation. There Gurudev attained the enlightened state of self-awareness on a higher level of initiation through further purification of his consciousness. This resulted in renewed vows and in extending Reverence for All Life to a global mission. Pramodaben also experienced light and started sharing the deep insight of peace with aspirants.

Unique Honor:
In 2001, for the first time in the history of the United States of America, Jain Dharma and JAINA received the unprecedented recognition and honor of having a prayer in the U.S. House of Representatives. On May 22, 2001, in celebration of the 2600th birth anniversary of Bhagwan Mahavir, Shree Chitabhanuji delivered the opening prayer in the U.S. House Of Representatives. In July of 2005 in California, at the 25th Anniversary Convention, JAINA honored and recognized Pujyashri Chitabhanuji and the late Acharya Sushil Kumar Muniji for their spiritual leadership, guidance and unwavering dedication to the “propagation of Jain Dharma in North America.”

Gurudev--- “Vishva Manvi”:
Pujyashri Chitabhanuji is known to the Western world as a man of vision and a pioneer. He is the first Jain Master in more than 2600 years who after following 30 years of monastic life in India - brought to the West the essence of Ahimsa Dharma which is the heart of Mahavira’s teachings. The new generation of Jains find Gurudev’s teachings very inspiring and continuously seek guidance from him in their search for spiritual growth and development. The roaring success of YJA - Young Jains of America - an arm of JAINA, gives hope that the seeds have taken roots and are blossoming with fragrant flowers. Today, many scholars are following Gurudev’s footsteps. Gurudev belongs to the entire world and not just to the Jain community. He does not discriminate anyone based on caste, color, creed or country. He is a ‘Vishva Manvi’ – a global citizen and rightfully so. His actions speak louder than his words and we can learn a lot from his teachings.

An Extraordinary Life of Acharya Chandanaji

“Instead of creating temples in a village, Let us make an effort to make the entire village a temple” – Acharya Chandanaji

Veerayatan began as a dream of the great Indian scholar, Upadhyaya Shri Amar Muniji Maharaj. Determined to transform Pujya Upadhyaya Shri Amar Muniji Maharaj’s vision into reality, Acharya Shri Chandanaji ventured into extremely hostile conditions in Bihar, India to establish the first Veerayatan site in 1973. Veerayatan, built near the birth and Nirvana place of Tirthankar Mahavir, is the result of tireless effort of Acharya Chandanaji. She showed to the world that the concept of service was an integral part of Mahavir’s Dharma.

Acharya Chandanaji was born on January 26, 1937, as Shankutala, in a Jain Katariya family in Maharashtra. Her spiritual journey began at the age 14, when she took Diksha. She took a 12 year vow of maun (silence) to study Jain Scriptures, ponder on the meaning and purpose of life, explore the beauty of different religions, and discover a way to connect religion with the life of the common man. Inspired by the vision of her Guru Amar Muniji to uplift the poverty-stricken state of Bihar in India, keeping in mind the qualities portrayed through the life and teachings of Bhagwan Mahavir, Chandanaji took on this challenge with efforts to extend compassion, friendship and love to all humanity. “Veerayatan”, a non-profit, non-governmental registered organization was established in 1972
to uplift and empower humanity through humanitarianism, education and spiritual development.

Veerayatan has centers in Bihar, Gujarat (Kutch), Maharashtra and many other places in India. There are also centers in USA, UK, East Africa, Singapore, UAE, Australia and other countries. These centers provide health care services, education and social services to those who would otherwise not have access to such services. Veerayatan is run by a dedicated team of sadhus, trustees, committee members, professional staff and volunteers.

The humanitarian work at Veerayatan in Bihar includes a 200 bed medical center (offering eye, orthopedic, dental care and general surgery), several schools providing education for 1500 village children, a college with 200 students studying for a B.Ed. degree. At the Rajgiri center, polio corrective surgeries are performed on a regular basis. Over one million eye patients have been treated free of charge and since 1973, over 150,000 successful eye surgeries have been performed in ultra modern facilities. Projects such as KIDS and Shrutam, provide literacy and hygiene education to hundreds of slum and working children.

The Navalveerayatan, established near Pune in the state of Maharashtra in 2000 is devoted to inner development. This holds training courses on yoga, meditation, stress management and new age health therapies. The center at Kutch, Gujarat, provides free education to over 1000 children. Children are also provided free uniforms and food. In fact, the center in Kutch is the offspring of the work done by Chandanaji in the immediate aftermath of the devastating earthquake in 2001. Chandanaji believes "Education is the future of humanity. It is not merely achieving degrees and qualifications but the refinement of the inner world which will bring everyone together."

Some of Chandanaji’s other accomplishments include the task of translating the “Uttaradhyayana Sutra” (a major Jain Scripture) in 33 days. She also hand crafted the panels honoring the themes of non-violence, love and the oneness of humanity which can now be found in Veerayatan Shri Brahmi Kala Mandiram in Rajgiri.

It has been visited by over 4.5 million people to date.

Chandanaji believes that creativity is the best way to fulfill oneself spiritually and therefore she is constantly evolving and re-examining all aspects of her work. She is of the opinion that, “Learning brings out the spirit of creativity and creativity brings knowledge. Knowledge is indeed an asset for the nation. Veerayatan intends to create outstanding individuals with exceptional creative abilities.” A post graduate in philosophy, Chandanaji has a profound understanding of Jain Scriptures and other faiths. Her message of inner development, social responsibility and compassion are espoused as values supplemental to, but not in place of religion. Chandanaji is keenly aware of the untapped potential of the youth of today and is intent on ensuring that programs and lectures are tailored to ensure the inclusion of young people, who she feels have a profound lack of spirituality in their lives.

Chandanaji is the first Jain Sadhvi to be raised to the position of Acharya, but this has, in no way, caused her to confine herself to one religion. Man’s relationship with his fellow man is religion, she says, and to respect other people’s feelings and emotions is a way of worship. “There are no rules that say that taking sanyas means that you only have to meditate and search for God. Service and prayer go together. When I understood this, I felt I’d finally found what I had been seeking as a child”, says Chandanaji. “Everything we do affects us here and now: even the future is too far away, let alone the next life. Every good deed is divine.” She exhorts us to love what we do, do it with happiness, and to take pride in our happiness.

Many awards have been bestowed upon Chandanaji; the Shri Devi Ahilya National Award for her humanitarian service and animal welfare activities; the Mahavir Foundation award; the Sant Balaji Award; Woman of the Year award and many other national and international awards. These awards and her fame have not deflected her from her life of asceticism. She is first and foremost a spiritual leader, whose service to others is part of that spirituality.
## JAINA Committees

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>JAINA Committee Name</th>
<th>Contact Person</th>
<th>Tele.</th>
<th>email id</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Academic Liaison</td>
<td>Mr. Girish P. Shah</td>
<td>408-378-8765</td>
<td><a href="mailto:girish@theshahs.com">girish@theshahs.com</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adhyatmic</td>
<td>Mr. Hasmukh M. Shah</td>
<td>727-934-6141</td>
<td><a href="mailto:hasmukh33@yahoo.com">hasmukh33@yahoo.com</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Calendar &amp; Mini Library</td>
<td>Mr. Rajeev Pandya</td>
<td>718-816-0083</td>
<td><a href="mailto:rajeepandya@ashidiamonds.com">rajeepandya@ashidiamonds.com</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Campus Outreach Program</td>
<td>Mr. Ashok Domadia</td>
<td>510-979-9312</td>
<td><a href="mailto:adomadia@cisco.com">adomadia@cisco.com</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Governmental &amp; International Organizations</td>
<td>Dr. Tanskukh Salgia</td>
<td>614-899-2678</td>
<td><a href="mailto:tsalgia1@netzero.com">tsalgia1@netzero.com</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interfaith Activities / World council of Jains</td>
<td>Mr. Arvind Vora</td>
<td>631-269-1167</td>
<td><a href="mailto:avora@optonline.net">avora@optonline.net</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jain Network Forum (JNF)</td>
<td>Mr. Sunil Jain</td>
<td>630-705-1884</td>
<td><a href="mailto:suniljain99@hotmail.com">suniljain99@hotmail.com</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jaina Education</td>
<td>Mr. Pravin K. Shah</td>
<td>919-859-4994</td>
<td><a href="mailto:education@jaina.org">education@jaina.org</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jaina Exhibition</td>
<td>Mr. Sudhir Shah</td>
<td>203-397-5036</td>
<td><a href="mailto:sudhir@optonline.net">sudhir@optonline.net</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jain Milan</td>
<td>Mr. Gunvant Shah</td>
<td>732-246-4030</td>
<td><a href="mailto:profgaryshah@yahoo.com">profgaryshah@yahoo.com</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jaina Public Affairs Council</td>
<td>Dr. Manoj Dharamsi</td>
<td>703-620-9837</td>
<td><a href="mailto:mdharamsi@hotmail.com">mdharamsi@hotmail.com</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jivdaya</td>
<td>Mrs. Prajodaben</td>
<td>212-534-6090</td>
<td><a href="mailto:chitrabhanuj@aol.com">chitrabhanuj@aol.com</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Chitrabhanu</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Long Term Planning</td>
<td>Mr. Yogendra Jain</td>
<td>781-856-0769</td>
<td><a href="mailto:yokjain@yahoo.com">yokjain@yahoo.com</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Media Production</td>
<td>Dr. Mamta Shaha</td>
<td>516-487-1852</td>
<td><a href="mailto:mshaha8087@aol.com">mshaha8087@aol.com</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Media / Public Relations</td>
<td>Mr. Nitin Talsania</td>
<td>908-306-1406</td>
<td><a href="mailto:ntalsania@gmail.com">ntalsania@gmail.com</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marriage Information Service</td>
<td>Mr. Mukesh Doshi</td>
<td>847-517-2505</td>
<td><a href="mailto:mukusha@sbcglobal.net">mukusha@sbcglobal.net</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North American Jain Families</td>
<td>Mrs. Ila G. Mehta</td>
<td>419-865-2727</td>
<td><a href="mailto:ilamehta@buckeye-express.com">ilamehta@buckeye-express.com</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assistance Program</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North American Jains History</td>
<td>Mr. Jasvant Mehta</td>
<td>780-435-9070</td>
<td><a href="mailto:jvmehta2000@yahoo.com">jvmehta2000@yahoo.com</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Patron Program</td>
<td>Mr. Udai Jain</td>
<td>281-980-0741</td>
<td>uday@<a href="mailto:jain@yahoo.com">jain@yahoo.com</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pilgrimage</td>
<td>Mr. Dilip V. Shah</td>
<td>215-561-0581</td>
<td><a href="mailto:dilipvshah@gmail.com">dilipvshah@gmail.com</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Planned Giving committee</td>
<td>Mr. Yogesh Kamdar</td>
<td>203-288-2350</td>
<td><a href="mailto:bkamdar@comcast.net">bkamdar@comcast.net</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Technology</td>
<td>Mr. Girish P. Shah</td>
<td>408-378-8765</td>
<td><a href="mailto:girish@theshahs.com">girish@theshahs.com</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tirthodhhar</td>
<td>Mrs. Usha Maru</td>
<td>203-775-1906</td>
<td><a href="mailto:hans.maru@gmail.com">hans.maru@gmail.com</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Veerchand Raghviji Gandhi Scholarship Fund</td>
<td>Mr. Akash Jhaveri</td>
<td>201-628-0483</td>
<td><a href="mailto:akashjhaven@yahoo.com">akashjhaven@yahoo.com</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>World Community Service</td>
<td>Dr. Dhiraj H. Shah</td>
<td>716-773-1314</td>
<td><a href="mailto:dhshah1@hotmail.com">dhshah1@hotmail.com</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Young Jains of America</td>
<td>Ms. Vaishali Shah</td>
<td>630-992-1031</td>
<td><a href="mailto:vaishali.shah@yja.org">vaishali.shah@yja.org</a></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>