

Pratishthā Ceremony of Shvetāmbar Tradition for Jain Temples in America

Within next twelve months, the following eight Jain centers of America will celebrate the Pratishthā ceremony (installation of Tirthankar idol) in their new or renovated/expanded Jain temples.

- Jain Center of Greater Atlanta
- Jain Center of Charlotte (North Carolina)
- Jain Center of Tampa (Florida)
- Jain Center of Phoenix (Arizona)
- Jain Center of Southern California (Los Angeles)
- Jain Center of Southern Florida (Miami)
- Jain Center of Cleveland (Ohio)
- Jain Center of Chicago

There are two types of Pratishthā ceremonies performed to install a Tirthankar idol of the Shvetāmbar tradition in a temple.

- Prāna-Pratishthā which includes an Anjan-Shalākā ceremony
- Simple Pratishthā which does not include an Anjan-Shalākā ceremony

This article provides an overview of both the ceremonial processes as performed by Shvetāmbar Murtipujak Jain communities. It also explains the benefits and additional responsibility the members of the society have to fulfill if their centers decide to install the idols with Anjan-Shalākā/Prāna-Pratishthā ritual.

Some of the new temples in America have decided to install (Pratishthā) a Tirthankar idol with simple Pratishthā (without an Anjan-Shalākā on an Idol) ceremony while others are not sure whether to install the idols with Anjan-Shalākā ritual or not. This article may provide some help in your decision.

Basically during Prāna-Pratishthā or simple Pratishthā ceremony, the same rituals are performed except during Prāna-Pratishthā ceremony an additional ritual known as Pancha-Kalyānak (celebrating five great events of the life of Tirthankar) is performed on an idol. An Anjan-Shalākā ritual is a part of the Pancha Kalyanak ritual. The list of rituals which are performed during Pratishthā ceremony is defined at the end of this article in Appendix 1A and 1B.

In Prāna-Pratishthā ceremony, during Pancha-Kalyānak ritual, certain rituals such as Anjan-Shalākā and Adhi-Vāsānā (Vishistha Vidhāna) are performed only by Pujya Shri Āchārya (head monk of the Jain congregation) Mahārāj and thus these rituals are being performed in India on the idols of the Tirthankars and then the idols are transported to America for the final installation in the temple. This is because Jain Āchāryas, who strictly follow five great vows, cannot travel to America from India on bare-feet. All other rituals of Pratishthā ceremony are performed by a pundit who is known as Vidhikār.

On any Tirthankar idol, Prāna-Pratishthā (Pancha-Kalyānak ritual) ceremony occurs only once but the simple Pratishthā (installation of an idol) ceremony may occur several times if the idol is moved from one temple to another temple or from one place to another within a temple. Hence the ceremony we perform in America is generally a simple Pratishthā ceremony of either an Anjan-Shalākā idol or non-Anjan-Shalākā idol. Generally we define our ceremony as a Prāna-Pratishthā ceremony if we install an idol which had Anjan-Shalākā done in India. This is not a correct terminology because we do not perform Anjan-Shalākā ritual here in America. We only do simple Pratishthā meaning installing an idol at its place in a temple.

The status of an idol of a simple Pratishthā ritual can be changed in future to Prāna-Pratishthā idol but one can not change the status the other way.

In the past, two Jain centers of USA; the Jain Center of Northern California (Milpitas CA) Pratishthā year 2000, and the Jain Center of America (New York) Pratishthā year 2004 have established their temples with Anjan-Shalākā Murtis or idols. New York Jain center had shipped its existing (30 years old Murti) non-Anjan-Shalākā murti to India to change its status to Anjan-Shalākā in 2004. All other Jain temples in America do not have any idols which have Anjan-Shalākā ritual.

Prāna-Pratishthā celebration may last from 5 days to around 12 days depending upon whether certain rituals are performed in their mini version or their elaborate version. While simple Pratishthā rituals can be done within two days.

Advantage of Anjan-Shalākā (Prāna-Pratishthā) Idol

It is said that with simple Pratishthā, the idol is considered “Darshaniya” meaning one needs to do Darshan daily and with Prāna-Pratishthā ceremony, the idol becomes “Pujaniya” meaning one needs to do Pujā daily. Voluntarily one can also do pujā on “Darshaniya” idol but on “Pujaniya” idol, one must do pujā daily to respect the “Pujaniya” status of an idol.

Both the idols, with and without Anjan-Shalākā ceremony look the same. However it is believed that during Pancha-Kalyānak ritual many powerful Mantras and Sutras are recited which;

- Invokes the life in the Tirthankar idol during Chyavana (conception) Kalyānak ritual
- Invokes “Divya Chakshu” (Keval-jnān) by Anjan-Shalākā ritual during Keval Jnāna Kalyānak
- Invokes Shāsan Devata (heavenly god) to protect the Tirthankar idol, the temple, and the community associated with the temple.

A Tirthankar attains Keval-Jnān once and then it remains forever and hence on any tirthankar idol this ritual is done once and then its status cannot be changed in the future. However if the idol is physically damaged then there is a special ritual which is performed to uninstall the physically damaged idol.

Once the temple installs “Pujaniya” idol, then it becomes a required duty of the community to do Pujā and Ārti daily. The members of the society must perform certain rituals daily and certain rituals yearly (see the list of required rituals in Appendix 2) under any circumstances unless a natural disaster (earth quake, flood, etc.) occurs which are beyond human control. In summary it must perform an Ashta-Prakāri pujā in the morning and Ārti and Mangal Divo in the morning and evening daily (7 days a week and 365 days in a year) to respect the “Pujaniya” status of an idol.

It is believed that once the Pancha Kalyanak ceremony is performed, the spiritual aura of the idol covers a much larger area of the community. The Jain society and the community associated with the temple significantly progress spiritually and materially. The spiritual progress is attributed to the Tirthankar aura while the material progress is accomplished through Shāsan Devatā, a heavenly god which is believed to be a protector of the Tirthankar idol, the temple, and its community.

Tirthankar is beyond attachment and aversion (Vitarāgi). Hence from the Tirthankar point of view it is immaterial whether we do daily Pujā and Ārti or not. However if we do the pujā and Ārti with a pious reflection then we will progress spiritually. But Shāsan Devata is a heavenly god of Bhavanpati category which is the lowest category of heavenly gods. He will be pleased or displeased with our action. Since it is believed that Shāsan Devata is always present with Prāna-Pratishthā Tirthankar idol, he will be pleased if we do daily Pujā and will provide the material prosperity to the society. However if we do not perform Pujā daily then he will be unhappy and the society will severely suffer. That is why it is absolutely necessary to perform daily and yearly rituals. It is said that the Jain community in several villages of Rajasthan, India suffered severely because they did not follow daily and yearly rituals of Anjan-Shalākā Murti in their temples.

There are no daily or yearly rituals required for “Darshaniya” idols. However it is strongly recommended that we do all the daily and yearly rituals as done on the “Pujaniya” idols. Also it is believed that if a community does daily puja on a “Darshaniya” idol then its aura also expands and its status becomes equivalent to a “Pujaniya” idol without having an Anjan-Shalākā ritual.

Scholars’ Opinion

I have discussed the content of this article with Muni Shri Jambu-Vijayji, Gacchādhpati Āchārya Shri Suryodaya-Suriji via Āchārya Shri Shilchandra-Suriji, and Āchārya Shri Nandighosh-Suriji. All of them recommended that we should not install any murti with Anjan-Shalākā ritual in America. They have good knowledge about the environment we live in. Muni Shri Ajay-Sāgarji of Shri Mahāvīr Ārādhana Kendra (Kobā) recommended that JAINA should request all 18 Gacchādhpati Āchāryas to provide their opinion and then JAINA should make the recommendation to its member centers.

I have also discussed this with Gurudev Shri Chitrabhanuji, Pundit Shri Dhirajlal Mehta (Surat) and Dr. Jitendra B. Shah (Ahmedabad) and all of them indicated that we should not install any murti with Anjan-Shalākā ritual in America. However there are some Āchāryas in India, who strongly recommend that we should install Murtis with Anjan Shalākā in our temple but I am not able to reach any of them to discuss our situation. (If there is any way I can contact and discuss with such Āchāryas, please let me know).

I am of the opinion that we should not install Tirthankar idols with Anjan-Shalākā **without consulting the next generation of young Jains who are now 30 to 40 years of age**. We do not want to pass this type of requirements to our next generation without their approval.

I strongly oppose the idea of hiring a Pujāri so that he will perform the daily rituals in our absence. Our ancient literature has prohibited us to employ a Pujāri because the paid person will not perform the ritual with proper Jayanā (respect) and proper reflection within. In olden times each family of the community used to take a turn to perform daily rituals on such Murtis. If we have to pay some one to fulfill our religious obligations then it is absolutely clear that we do not follow our religious practice in its true spirit and we are in absolute violation of Lord Mahāvīr’s preaching. We can not progress spiritually with this type of the arrangement. On the contrary it will boost our ego that in our temple we have a murti with Anjan-Shalākā in America.

Shāsan Devata will not be happy or pleased to see that a paid person is performing the required rituals mechanically to a living Tirthankar without any pious reflection within himself. It is like we pay some one to do fasting for us so that we acquire virtuous karma or we pay some one to go on vacation for us so that we can enjoy the vacation. I think this arrangement is worst than even if we miss Pujā for some unavoidable circumstances.

I understand that in India every Jain temple has Pujāri to do daily rituals. But such practice violates the true spirit of our religion. Not a single Jain scripture, or any ancient or contemporary Jain literature supports such practice. In fact during the last Muni Sammelan (convention of Jain monks in 1988), a resolution was introduced by Āchārya Shri Omkār-Suriji and passed unanimously that, “A Pujā can not be considered a valid puja to an Anjan-Shalākā idol if done by a paid Pujāri and in case if a town or villages have no resident Jains then only Väskshp puja is considered to be a valid Pujā. There is no system exist among Jain communities to enforce such resolutions passed by the conventions of the Monks which were represented by all Gacchādhpati Āchāryas.

The Story of Shatrunjay Tirtha

Shatrunjay Tirtha (Palitana) is our most popular and pious tirtha. On mount Shatrunjay there are more than 20,000 idols which have Anjan-Shalākā. On any regular day, most of the pilgrims pay homage to the main idol of a main temple and visit few temples near by on a mountain. They hardly do puja to 10 to 20 murtis and hardly do “Darshan” to another 100 to 200 murtis. Less

than 1.00% of the people travel via Nava Tuk route where the majority of idols exist. There are several thousands idols where no pilgrims ever visit them.

However all 20,000 idols require Pujā and Ārti daily. The institution (Pedhi) has hired around 250 Pujāris and other staff for the performance of daily pujā. Almost all Pujāris are non-Jain. You can imagine the quality of the pujā they perform. I visit Palitana often (my close relatives live there) and always take a long (Nava Tuk) route to reach to the main temple because there is so much history associated with the place. One can easily visualize how Pujāris perform the Pujā rituals on these idols. After watching this I am sure that we may loose some respect for our religious rituals.

The payroll liability of Pujāris is about Rs. 1,00,00,000 (\$250,000) per year. Most of the donations received from the pilgrims are used to pay the salary of the Pujāris and the associated staff. The situation is so bad that about 50 to 60 years ago the Pedhi decided not to perform any new Pratishtā on Mount Shatrunjay. We have created a tremendous liability ourselves and there is no practical solution to the problem. In India we have 18 different Jain Sanghas who are independent of each other and each Jain Sangha has one Gacchādhipati Āchārya (head monk). If all 18 Gacchādhipati Āchāryas get together and come-up with a practical unified solution then and only then there is a hope to resolve the situation (I personally do not see any hope for the practical solution).

The Story of Jesalmer Tirtha

(A trusted Jain friend observed this about 10 years ago. I do not have the knowledge of the current situation).

A Jesalmer (Rajasthan) tirtha has 400 to 500 Dhatu Pratimā (metal idols). They all have Anjan-Shalākā but are not installed permanently at one place. It is called Chal Pratishtā where the Tirthankar idols can be moved from one place to another. Every day a Pujāri brings a bucket of water and immerses one idol at a time in the bucket and then put it back on the platform to dry them naturally. After immersing all murtis this way, he returns to perform pujā on the idol. He does it just like a mass production of a commodity in a factory. Please understand that Shāsan Devata is always present at all the times to see this. You can imagine how unhappy and angry he would be.

The Story of Jain Center of Atlanta

I was in Atlanta on a wedding occasion, and visited Jain temple on May 11, 2008. I had a meeting with the president Shri Dipakbhai Shah and past president Madhuben Sheth. They indicated that the society has decided to install Tirthankar idol with Anjan Shalākā in their new temple. I explained the benefits and responsibility they will have to carry on because of Anjan Shalākā idol. Later on both of them independently looked into the subject in detail and called a general body meeting on 22nd June 2008. During the meeting, they invited Gurudev Shri Chitrabhanuji on a conference call. Gurudev explained the benefits and responsibility of an Anjan-Shalākā idol and recommended that it is not suitable for our environment. Our 2nd generation Jain adults will not carry on such types of responsibilities. At the end, the general body had passed the resolution with an overwhelming majority, 'not to install the idol with Anjan Shalākā ritual in its new temple'.

Summary and Recommendation

Prāna Pratishtā ceremony is considered the most pious ceremony of our religion. Before any American Jain society installs such an idol, they must make sure that their members are ready to perform pujā and Ārti daily. Their first generation Jain youth also accepts the responsibility that they will continue to carry on such rituals.

But under no circumstance, hire some one for the daily pujā and rituals. This is not what Jain religion teaches us. This is not we want to teach our children. We can not attain liberation by

paying some one to do a religious act for us. Spiritually we are cheating ourselves because it is impossible to cheat Shāsan Devata or karma.

The Ajnān-Shalākā ritual is not even mentioned in any of our ancient scriptures and literature. Its reference begins about 1500 years later after Lord Mahāvīr Nirvana when Chaitya-vāsi Yatis controlled the Shvetāmbar Jain community. Because of such types of practices instituted in the Jain temples, a layperson name Shri Lonkāshah started movement of non-idol worshipping and established a Sthānakavāsi sect.

I would recommend that if a society wants to install Prāna-Pratishthā murti, please request the Āchārya Mahārāj who performs Anjan Shalākā of your idol to provide a certain Prāyashchitta and Aloyanā to the society if for some reason, the daily puḷā and other rituals are not done by at least one of its volunteer members. Any Executive committee members or any other members of the society can fulfill the Prāyashchitta and Aloyanā or Ālochanā.

I am totally against the practice of hiring Pujāri for daily puḷā but I am not against hiring a person for other jobs such as a care taker who can handle the administrative and maintenance aspects of the temple. Some times we may also need a special vidhikār who can perform certain rituals (such as Siddha-chakra puḷan) because we may not know all Mantras and Sutras to recite. However under these circumstances we are present in the temple to piously reflect upon during the specific puḷan or Puḷā ritual.

In Digambar tradition, during the Prāna-Pratishthā ceremony, the Pancha Kalyānak ritual is also performed. However they do not have any requirement that after the Pratishthā, they have to perform certain rituals daily. Both Darshan and Puḷā are voluntarily done by the community. It is acceptable if for some reason, no one comes to a temple for a particular day. They do not employ Pujāri for such types of the task. Also Digambar Āchāryas do not play any direct role in Pancha-Kalyānak ritual. They believe that, it is a violation of their five great vows if they get involved directly in any types of rituals involving to handle any types of religious Dravya (material).

Almost all American Jain temples are neither Shvetāmbar temples nor Digambar temples. They are just Jain temples. We should be open to accept the best practices from every Jain sect and do not accept any religious practices which are imposed on us on a fear of hell or on a greed of heaven.

Our children will greatly appreciate our action.

This was the most difficult article I have ever compiled. Please let me know if you find any error in the information described in this article. If I have hurt any one's feeling with this article, I sincerely request forgiveness.

Pravin K. Shah,
Chairperson of Jaina Education Committee
Federation of Jaina Associations in North America
919-859-4994

List of Rituals for Pratishthän Ceremony (Appendix – 1A)

- Shri Kumbha Sthäpanä
- Shri Akhand-Deepak Sthäpanä
- Shri Jwara-Ropan in the earthen pot (Kodiyu). Seven types of grains are collected with Mäti-Earth-powder and water is poured every day by an unmarried girl.
- Maneka Sthambha äropana and built a Toran on the Main Gate of a temple
- Shri Nav Grah Patla Pujan
- Shri Dash Diggpal Patla Pujan
- Shri Asta Mangal Patla Pujan
- Kshetrapal pujan either Laghu (mini) or elaborate version
- Siddha Chakra Pujan either Laghu or elaborate version
- Visha Sthänaka Pujan either Laghu or elaborate version
- Nanda Varta Pujan either Laghu or elaborate version
- Shri Devi Pujan (this is for the temples that have Pratimäs of Dev & Devi and if time permits)
- **Pancha Kalyanak Pujä (as defined below – omitted for simple Pratishthä ceremony)***
- Shri Rath Yatra Varghodo (procession)
- Shri Eighteen (18) Abhisheka
- Shri Pratishthä Mahotsav (that includes Pratishthä of Bhagawän's Pratimä, Dev Devi Pratimä, Dhvajä Danda and Kalash etc.)
- Shri Laghu Shänti Snätra Pujan (If the Sangh is large enough then Shri Brahat Shänti Pujan is performed)
- On the day of Pratishthä – Ashta Prakari Puja Aarati Mangal Divo &
- Shänti Kalash

Next day after the Pratishthä

- Dwar opening ceremony
- Sattarbhedhi Pujä

Note - A day before the Pratishthä Day - it is also appropriate to perform Gädi Pujan - the Pujan of the actual place where Pratimä will be installed).

***Pancha Kalyanak Pujä Detail (Appendix – 1B)**

Chyavana (Conception) Kalyanak Ritual

- Establishing Shräväk and Shrävikäs as Tirthankar's parents for the Pratishthä
- Establishing Indra and Indrani (heavenly god and goddesses)
- Establishing other relatives like Senapati, Nagarsheth, mother, father, Mämä, Mämi, Father in law and Mother in law etc.. of Tirthankar
- Perform Chyavana (Conception) Kalyanak Ritual
- 14 Dreams of mother
- Invoking Life in the Tirthankar idol
- Vibrating ritual of Indra's Simhäsan
- Recitation of Shakra stav (Namatthunam Stotra) by Indra in heaven

Janma (Birth) Kalyanak Ritual

- Celebration by 56 Dik Kumaris
- Vibrating ritual of Indra's Simhäsan
- Celebration of Tirthankar's birth occasion at Mount Meru by heavenly gods
- Performing of 250 Abhisheka
- A female servant Priyamvada announces the good news to the father, the king on the following morning
- King celebrates the birth of a Tirthankar
- Name giving ceremony by auntie (Father's sister)
- Other various important occasions in the life of Tirthankar such as 1st day of going to school, Marriage is symbolized by Tirthankar idol marrying to Kumbha (not in case of the idols of Mallinäth and Neminäth)
- Rajyabhisheka – Becoming the king (not in the case of idols of Mallinäth, Neminäth, and Mahävir_swämi)

Dikshä (Renunciation) Kalyanak Ritual

- Request by Lokäntika Deva (heavenly gods) to Tirthankar to renounce the world for the benefit of humanity and all souls of universe.
- Tirthankar donates his/her personal wealth (Charity) for the entire year
- Dikshä celebration and initiation of an ascetic life.
- Leaving the town as a monk on barefeet

Kevaljnän (Realization) Kalyanak Ritual

- Attainment of Keval-Jnäna at midnight
- Adhi Vaasana (Vishistha Vidhana) ritual**
- Anjan-Shaläkä in the eye indicating opening of a Divya Chakshu or realization of Eternal Truth**
- Establishment of four fold order of the Jain Sangh

** Note - Anjan-Shaläkä and Adhi vasana are secret rituals and hence they are performed at midnight by Ächärya level monk and vidhikar.

Nirvana (Liberation) Kalyanak Ritual

On the following morning, Nirvana Kalyanak ritual is performed
Performance of 108 Abhisheka and other rituals as defined in Appendix 1A

These five rituals known as Pancha-Kalyänaks are omitted in a simple Pratishthä Ceremony.

List of Daily and Yearly Rituals for Anjan-Shalākā Idol (Appendix – 1B)

Daily Morning Rituals consist of the following steps

- Take a bath and cleanse the physical body
- Put on Pujā clothes
- Prepare a liquid paste of Sandal wood
- Carry some flowers, fruits, sweets, divo, More pinch (peacock feather), three Angluchhana (three pieces of simple white material for wiping the idol after bathing), Väskshep, water etc.
- Enter the temple by reciting Nissihi and Namō Jinānam at appropriate places
- After entering altar, do cleaning of an idol, bathe with water, and do Chandan Pujā, Pushpa Pujā on the idol as defined in Pujā book.
- Do Dhoop Pujā, Deepak Pujā, Chāmar dance,
- Do Akshat (Rice) Pujā, Naivedya Pujā, and Fal Pujā
- Do Iriyāvahiyā and Chaitya Vandan
- Do Arti and Mangal Deevo rituals

Daily Evening Rituals

- Do Dhoop and Deepak Pujā
- Do Iriyāvahiyā and Chaitya Vandan
- Do Arti and Mangal Deevo rituals

Yearly Ritual

- Changing of a flag ceremony including Astotary Snātra or Laghu shanty Snātra Mahotsav and Sattar Bhedi Pujā
- Adhar Abhisheka Ritual

For simple Pratishthā idol, none of the above rituals are required but suggested to do as many as you can.