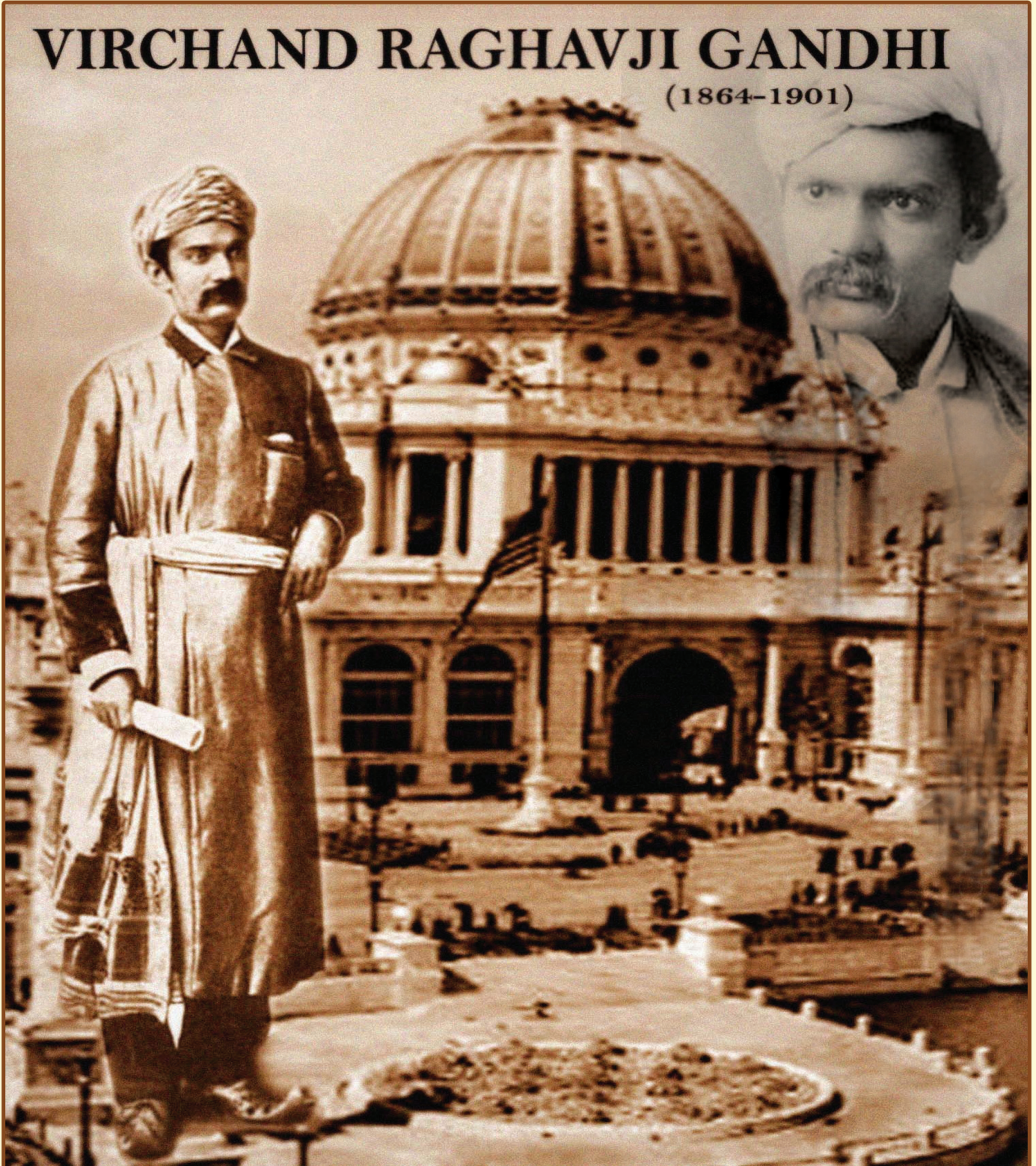


JAIN DIGEST

AUG-NOV 2014 ISSUE

VIRCHAND RAGHAVJI GANDHI

(1864-1901)



A publication by the Federation of Jain Associations of North America



Jain Digest

A publication of the

Federation of Jain Associations in North America (JAINA)

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Contact Number: 510-730-0204



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**.

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Compiled by



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**List if JAINA Committees
For committee activities and contact
information of Committee chairs,
please log on www.jaina.org**

Academic Liaison Committee
Academic Scholarship Committee
Ahimsak Eco-Vegan Committee
Award Committee
Calendar Committee
Constitution Committee
Education Committee
Election Committee
Fund Raising Committee
Interfaith Activies _World council of Jains
Jain Centre Liaison Committee
Jain Diaspora Committee
Jivdaya Committee
Jain Milan Committee
Jain Network Forum
Loan Program Committee
Long Range Planning Committee
Media Communications & Public Relations
Media Production committee
Membership Committee
Patron Program committee
Planned Giving Committee
Public Affairs Council committee
Technology Committee
Upliftment Committee
World Community Services Committee
Yatra99

Disclosure

The Editorial Team endeavors to publish all the materials that are submitted but reserves the right to reduce, revise, reject or edit any article, letter, or abstract 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.



President's Message

Jai Jinendra,

As we look back over the past year, we have many successful events, projects and initiatives to celebrate. Last October, in partnership with the American Jewish Committee (AJC) and Claremont Lincoln University (CLU), JAINA hosted the 1st Annual "Ahimsa Day" conference. Leaders from the Jain community met with members of Congress to discuss initiatives to foster nonviolence. During the conference, the "Ahimsa Award" was presented to Shri Chitrabanuji and Pramodaben Chitrabanu by leaders of AJC, CLU, and Shri Lokesh Muni, for their contributions over decades of service in spreading nonviolence across the globe.

"Ahimsa Day" was the first of three days as part of our new initiative called "JAINA Days", a nationwide effort to celebrate important dates across Jain Centers. In the spirit of bringing our community together around the key principles of Jainism, we implemented "Ahimsa Day" on Oct 2 to celebrate Jainism's message of nonviolence and explore the application and impact of nonviolence in various sectors of life. Next we organized "Jiv Daya / Compassion Day" to be celebrated on or close to Thanksgiving. This year, we will be organizing a national campaign in conjunction with World Vegan Day on Nov. 1, 2014. Lastly was "Forgiveness Day" during the first Saturday after Paryushan / Das Lakshan, as an opportunity to practice our principle of seeking forgiveness from others and forgiving others with friends even outside of our community.

In our commitment to serve all age ranges of our Jain community, JAINA revived Young Jains Professionals (YJP). I would like to share my congratulations to the new YJP Executive Board for all of their efforts in creating local and regional events across the US for those ages 28 – 42. Their most recent event was a "Jain Scholars Series" retreat, which took place at Siddhachalam, in partnership with the Jain Center of America (JCA – NY).

This past February, JAINA hosted the 3rd Annual Jain Leadership Retreat in Florida, led by JAINA's Long Range Planning (LRP) Committee in conjunction with the Jain Education Research Foundation (JERF) and Florida International University (FIU). Over 80 leaders, including youth and young adults, were in attendance where topics of leadership and the future of the Jain community were discussed.

I would also like to congratulate the establishment of two new committees. The first of which is the Eco-Vegan Ahimsa Committee led by Dr. Jina Shah who have successfully created events and projects to spread the value of non-violence and conscious consumption. JAINA's Upliftment Committee led by Dr. Sushil Jain is JAINA's very own "Adopt a Child / Adopt a Family Program", which has supported nearly 100 families and young adults with vocational training in India to support them to rise out of poverty.

In an effort to further our commitment to spreading awareness

of Jainism, we have created the first children's dedicated to the teachings of Mahavira Swami. "Mahavira: The Hero of Nonviolence" is now available through JAINA's website. The children's book will be available to all patshala groups as well as major libraries across the country.

JAINA's contribution is not only recognized across North America, but also internationally. Earlier this year, several members of JAINA's EC attended the "JAINA India Summit" where we worked with the leaders of the Jain diaspora of Tamilnadu in the spirit of unity. We have partnered with various Jain organizations in India and look forward to continued collaboration to bring Jain solidarity to the practice and expression of Jain values.

I would like to extend a special congratulations to Young Jains of America (YJA) and the local Convention Committee who have spent hundreds of hours to organize the 2014 YJA Convention in Washington, DC. Over 700 youth and young adults were in attendance from across North America with speakers from across the globe. During the past year, YJA orchestrated countless events strengthening connections with local Jain Sanghs to re-invigorated youth participation in Jain activities with a focus on education and activism.

This past year also marked the 150th Anniversary of one of the greatest pioneers of bringing Jainism to the West. Sri Virchand Ragavji Ghandhi's (VRG) representation of Jainism at the Parliament of World Religions Conference in 1893 was a momentous occasion. An American newspaper wrote, "Of all Eastern scholars, it was this youth whose lecture on Jain faith and conduct was listened to with the interest engaging the greatest attention." In honor of VRG, our VRG Committee, led by Nitin Shah has created a number of projects including an official stamp and VRG Scholarship Fund of which 52 scholarships have been provided to students, more than 50% of which have been to non-Jains across 20 Universities and Institutions of higher education.

I am pleased to announce that the planning for the next JAINA Convention in 2015 is in full swings thanks to the JAINA Convention Board and Convention Committee. The theme will be "Jainism: World of Non-Violence". Thank you to all of the countless volunteers who comprise the 15 sub committees organizing what will be the largest JAINA convention in JAINA's history.

Looking ahead, JAINA's main objective is to build on the momentum of this past year and continue to transform JAINA from a volunteer-based organization to a professional institution. With your support, we will take the next steps to achieve our shared vision to Evolve and promote Jain practices, Educate Jains and non-Jains to create a strong North American Jain community, Expand an awareness of Jainism as we create a global impact & Energize our community by evoking social change.



CONTENTS

JAINA will continue to work on its existing projects and programs while creating new and innovative solutions that make an impact for Jains across North America. JAINA is your service organization. Please continue to provide your support by either volunteering or donating today.

To learn more about Virchand Ragavji Gandhi, click here:
www.jaina.org/virchandgandhi.

Descriptions of JAINA's projects can be seen here:
www.jaina.org/projects. To donate to JAINA's many efforts, I invite you to click here: www.jaina.org/donate.

Prem Jain

Warmest Regards,
Prem Jain, JAINA President

From the Editor
Jai Jinendra !



In this issue of Jain Digest an effort is made to give tribute to Virchand Raghavji Gandhi, a Jain scholar who represented Jainism at the first World Parliament of Religions in 1893 in Chicago. A barrister by trade, he worked to defend the rights of Jains, and wrote and lectured extensively on Jainism. This year we celebrate VRG's 150th birth anniversary and

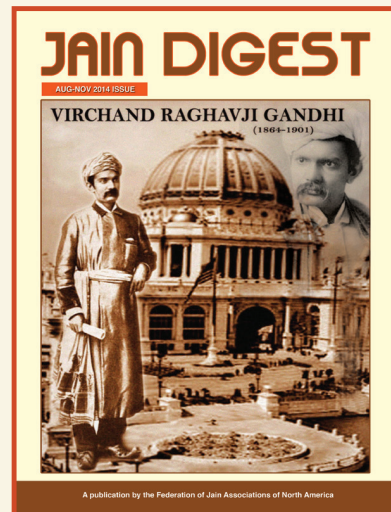
Acharya Tulsi's birth centenary. Acharya Tulsi, a prominent Jain religious leader, founder of the Anuvrata movement and the Jain Vishva Bharti Institute, Ladnun and the author of over one hundred books. We think of Acharya Sushil Muni, he departed from this world twenty years ago. He was the founder of the Jain International Mission, an honorary president of the World Conference of Religions for Peace, founder of the World Fellowship of Religions (1950), and a founding member of the Vishva Hindu Parishad (1964).

Jain Centres all over North America is humming with various activities. Our next issue will be published in December 2014. Deadline for submission is November 5th. We like to hear from you. Please keep sending your feedback. Please write to jaindigest@jaina.org Please write to jaindigest@jaina.org

Lata Champsee

Editor
Lata Champsee

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Design and concept by Pankaj
Chandmal Hingarh



An Introduction to JAINA

The Federation of Jain Associations in North America (JAINA) is comprised of 67 Jain Centers in North America (NA), representing over 160,000 people. We have a long history of success in investing in community efforts in NA and abroad that spans the past 30+ years. Our philanthropists have already invested millions in support of hundreds of programs, benefitting thousands of people.

OUR MISSION

- ✦ To promote religious and educational activities related to Jainism and to promote the study and understanding of Jain religion on a non-sectarian basis.
- ✦ To provide and promote academic and cultural interchanges and cooperation among Jains in North America, India and other countries.
- ✦ To assist and to promote charitable community service in North America, India, and other countries.
- ✦ To promote tenets of Jain religion.

JAINA's vision is to be "the hub" that provides community support, publishes educational materials about Jain values and practices, launches international aid projects, and establishes the Jain community as a powerful force with global impact.

We are beginning to achieve this in hundreds of exciting ways including disaster relief initiatives, academic scholarships, and leadership summits. In order to increase communication and collaboration between our organizations and projects, nationally and globally, we have embarked on the creation of a robust infrastructure and documented process flows for our operations.

Shared Vision:

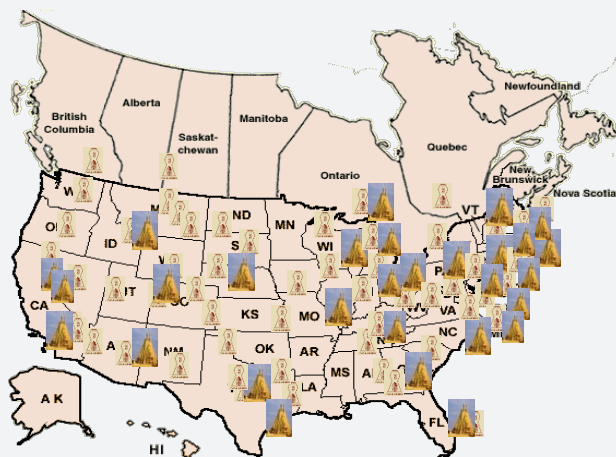
*Leading Our North American Communities
to Live and Share a Jain Way of Life*

Together



We have accomplished a great deal

Representing 67 Jain Centers and over 160,000 Jains!





Why Donate to JAINA?

*"It is the direction of our progress that matters,
NOT where we stand at present."*

As a partner in the shared vision of JAINA, your donation builds tighter Jain communities locally and globally, helps our leadership and service initiatives, and works to make Jainism common knowledge in North America through international projects. Your donation ensures that JAINA adequately equips the next generation with the teachings and values of the Jain Way of Life and provides a vital role in JAINA's continued existence.

We are proud of Young Jains of America (YJA), which serves the youth and young adult generation as well as Young Jain Professionals (YJP) organizations which foster professional development and networking within our Jain community.

Your contribution will have a profound impact on increasing awareness and promoting the values of Jainism with North American - Jains and Non-Jains.



THE PAST

1981: JAINA initiated in Los Angeles and officialized in 1983 with the blessings of Guruji Chitrabhanuji and Guruji Sushil Kumarji.



2014 to 2015: Ongoing Projects, supporting youth and young adults to live the "Jain Way of Life"

Vision 2020

- ☀ 50% Jain kids (5-17 yrs. old) are learning about the principles of Jainism
- ☀ 6 million people know about Jainism and the Jain Way of Life
- ☀ 40 universities to include Anekantvad and Non-Violence in business management teachings
- ☀ 35% of JAINA directors/committee leaders will be under 40 years old



THE FUTURE

2020: A JAINA centraliized office, with 15 full-time staff members





What does my donation do?

Expands JAINA Infrastructure

Makes JAINA Projects Happen

Supports JAINA Committees

Your donation is the **life line** of JAINA. The money you provide helps serve the needs of nearly *160,000 Jains* in North America and funds a number of initiatives designed to manifest our shared vision locally and across Northern America, as well as abroad.

Your donation contributes to three major areas of JAINA's operations: **creation & expansion of JAINA Infrastructure**, **supports JAINA committees** working to continue and evolve the Jain Way of Life worldwide, and **supports global service projects** that allows the community to serve the wider world.

How Will I know The Progress?

On-line! Project plan, status, and progress as well as the content will be on-line and at any time you can view committee's progress.

Who Will Manage My Donations?

The committees are managed by **talented and highly accomplished individuals**. Not only have these Committee Chairs excelled in their own professions, but they have also been active community leaders at local and national levels.

Your Donation Supports these Initiatives:

- ✿ Evolve the Practice of Jainism
- ✿ Educate Future Generations
- ✿ Expand Awareness of Jainism
- ✿ Energize the Jain Community

JAINA Fundraising Committee
www.jaina.org/donations





DONATIONS MADE SIMPLE

How Do I Donate?

MAKE A PLEDGE

(Now there are four easy ways to make a pledge)

BY PHONE

Call JAINA at
(510) 730 0204

BY EMAIL

Simply send an email with
your name and address
and pledge amount
jainahq@jaina.org

BY CHECK

Checks can be made payable to "JAINA"
and mailed to the JAINA Treasurer at:

JAINA

Gunvant Shah, Treasurer
12 Ascot Place,
North Brunswick, NJ 08902

ONLINE

Safe and secure donations can be
submitted via credit/debit card by
going to:
www.jaina.org/donations.

Online payments can be submitted on
a one-time basis or auto payments
for your convenience.

Once your donation is processed, you
will receive an email message
confirming your payment.

JAINA: The Federation of Jain Associations in North America

"Shared Vision: Leading North American Jains into the Next Century"

I am committing to financially support JAINA: The Federation of Jain Associations in North America and entrusting the organization under the leadership of the Board of Trustees to use this donation at their discretion.

A one time gift of \$_____.

And/or a monthly gift of \$_____.

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Email: _____

Phone: _____

Date: _____

All donations are tax deductible and checks can be made payable to :
JAINA [501(c)3 Non-Profit] Mail to: 12 Ascot Place North Brunswick, NJ 08902

HELP US REACH

... OUR GOAL TO SHARE OUR VISION!

We are currently engaged in taking JAINA to new heights through powerfully leveraging technology as a means to build & expand our community, foster connections, and create alliances with various organizations.

Your continued moral support as well as financial assistance is critical at this juncture to our community. Your generosity will help take JAINA to the *next* level and allow us to focus on expanding JAINA's global reach.

Sincerely,
Dr. Jayesh Shah
Fundraising Committee Chair
jayeshshahmd@gmail.com
626 357 9888

Prem Jain
JAINA President
premjain1@gmail.com
408 981 4645





JAINA Financial Summary - 2013

[Unaudited]

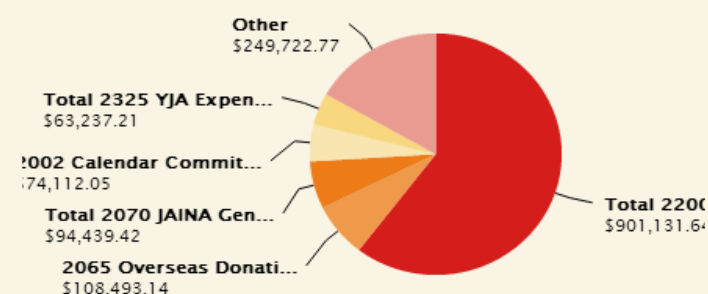
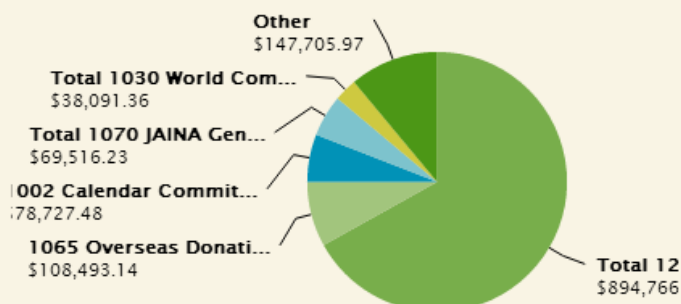
Presented By : Gunvant Shah, JAINA Treasurer

Income

1001 Bookstore Committee and Mahavira Book Revenue	17,050.00
1002 Calendar Committee Revenue	78,727.48
1003 Education Committee Revenue	8,320.00
1006 Long Range Planning Committee Revenue	280.95
1007 Media Production Committee Revenue	5,087.00
1008 Jain Networking Forum (JNF) Committee Revenue	1,901.00
1009 Patron Program Committee Revenue	251.00
1010 Pilgrimage Committee Revenue	1,425.00
1011 Jiv Daya Committee Revenue	22,906.00
1014 Public Affairs Committee Revenue	3,154.85
1017 V.R. Gandhi Scholarship Committee Revenue	1,000.00
1021 Jain Milan Committee Revenue	27,081.04
1022 Jaina 99 Yatra Committee Revenue	571.00
1029 Academic Liaison Committee Revenue	6,000.00
1030 World Community Service Committee Revenue	38,091.36
1055 Academic Scholarship Fund Revenue	16,000.00
1056 Student Loan Program Revenue	100.00
1060 Jain Digest Committee Revenue	1,380.00
1065 Overseas Donation Committee Revenue	108,493.14
1070 JAINA General Fund Revenue	69,516.23
1200 JAINA Convention Revenue	894,766.13
1325 YJA Revenue	33,664.48
1375 YJP Revenue	891.00
8010 Interest Income	642.65
Total Income	\$ 1,337,300.31
Gross Profit (Loss)	\$ 153,835.92

Expenses

2001 Bookstore Committee and Mahavira Book Expense	12,516.78
2002 Calendar Committee Expense	74,112.05
2003 Education Committee Expense	13,279.32
2006 Long Range Planning Committee Expense	6,212.12
2007 Media Production Committee Expense	8,022.61
2008 Jain Networking Forum (JNF) Committee Expense	151.84
2009 Patron Program Committee Expense	7.53
2010 Pilgrimage Committee Expense	30,745.00
2011 Jiv Daya Committee Expense	25,468.06
2014 Public Affairs Committee Expense	10,594.65
2017 V.R. Gandhi Scholarship Committee Expense	6,030.00
2021 Jain Milan Committee Expense	7,038.57
2022 Jaina 99 Yatra Committee Expense	3,700.93
2029 Academic Liaison Committee Expense	6,000.00
2030 World Community Service Committee Expense	59,652.46
2055 Academic Scholarship Fund Expense	14,688.37
2056 Student Loan Program Expense	3.00
2060 Jain Digest Committee Expense	45,580.55
2065 Overseas Donation Committee Expense	108,493.14
2070 JAINA General Fund Expense	94,439.42
2200 JAINA Convention Expense	901,131.64
2325 YJA Expense	63,237.21
2375 YJP Expense	30.98
Total Expense	\$ 1,491,136.23





JAINA UPLIFTMENT PROGRAM

Federation of Jain Associations in America (JAINA)

Non-profit organization Tax ID: IRS code Section 501 © (3) EI #54 1280028

"I am not educated, my daughter is not educated, which is why we are in poverty. All I want is a good life for my grand daughter — a life better than what we have,"
says Shreya & Vidhi's grandfather.



The JAINA Upliftment organization along with other several partner organizations (in India) helped to grow Jain children from poverty to next generation leaders.

We have helped sponsor under-privileged, under-resourced children and so far 60+ sponsors have helped 107 Jain children in different Indian states such as Uttar Pradesh, Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh, Gujarat, Karnataka, and other parts of Southern India.

We are thankful for the financial support and volunteer work that many of our sponsors and partners have provided that helps make all of this happen!!!

"Together we are better" Come and join the uplift mission to make a difference via educating one child at a time.

**GIVE HOPE,
GIVE EDUCATION,
GIVE LIFE TO JAIN CHILDREN**



Looking to get involved, connect with many poor and needy Jain children, and make a difference

Contact:

*Dr. Sushil Jain (Virginia) (240)-277-3039; Mr. Kamlesh Mehta (California) (408)-839-8996;
 Mr. Bhupesh Mehta (Maryland) (240)-455-4524; Mr. Kamal Shah (Wisconsin) (414)-795-3558*

www.jainauplift.org | info@jainauplift.org



JAINA CALENDAR COMMITTEE REPORT

The JAINA Calendar & Mini Library Committee was formed in 1999 by past JAINA President, Dr. Mahendra K. Pandya. The first JAINA Calendar was introduced in the year 2000. The Goal of the JAINA Calendar & Mini Library Committee was to produce a well-made Calendar that would be freely distributed to all the JAINA Members throughout North America and other parts of the world.

The first JAINA 2000 Calendar was distributed to over 8,500 Families. Since the Year 2000 to 2014, the JAINA Calendar Committee has distributed over 180,000 Calendars and received over \$895,000 in donations. The JAINA 2014 Calendar was distributed to over 14,500 Families.

The Purpose of the JAINA Calendar Committee is the following:

- To have a Calendar that could be freely distributed to all the JAINA Members throughout North America and be self-sufficient in terms of funding
- To Expose the JAINA Members of all age groups to the religious, cultural and historical heritage of the Jains
- Aid the JAINA Members to view the activities and projects that JAINA, Local Jain Centers, and JAINA Committees are engaged in
- Brand JAINA in the minds of the recipients as an organization that is working for them and to enhance the image of Jains in North America

The JAINA 2014 Calendar takes us through a journey of 12 Jain Temples across North America. These Jain Centers and places of worship represent the sacrifice and hard work of the Jain Diaspora to preserve, practice, grow, and pass on our rich heritage and traditions to future generations.

We felt it was important for the Jain Diaspora to see what our small community has collectively accomplished in these last few decades. As you browse the JAINA 2014 Calendar, we encourage you to take a look at the progress that many Jain Centers in North America have made in building or expanding their local Jain Centers.

Jainism has contributed significantly to Indian Art and Architecture. The JAINA 2014 Calendar includes a brief description

of Jain Temple Architecture, in which various types of architectural designs across different regions of the Indian Subcontinent are described.

As per members' request we have created a JAINA Google Calendar for Jain Holidays & Tithis. Just go to Google Calendar and under Other Calendar's - Add a friend's calendar and enter jainacalendar@gmail.com.

The JAINA Calendar Committee is comprised of about 10 volunteers. It takes about 4 months to produce and involves over 15 people and over 1,500 Man-Hours. Volunteers coordinate work in 4 different cities - New York, Ahmedabad, Indore and Bombay - and have their own functions and responsibilities. Some of the functions involved are: design, layout & production; temple photography & write-Up, dates, holidays & tithis, JAINA Write-up & Committees, printing, packaging and distribution and fund raising & donation collections.

To fund the free distribution of the annual JAINA Calendar, we have many Donors who donate anywhere from \$21 to \$501 dollars, as well as the Calendar Sponsors that donate from \$1,001 to \$2,001 per year. 100% of your donations are used to fund this non-profit project and activities of JAINA – no funds are used for volunteers' time or travel expenses.

If you received the 2014 JAINA Calendar and enjoyed the presentation of the 12 temples across North America, please take a few minutes to send a small tax deductible donation to fund this JAINA project. If you have already sent in your donation - our sincere gratitude for your contribution. Work on the 2015 JAINA Calendar has already started.

Jai Jinendra,

Rajeev Pandya
Chairperson
JAINA Calendar & Mini Library Committee



Jain Center of San Diego

A MileStone Celebration

May 10-11, 2014, was a joyous weekend for the Jain Sangh of San Diego. The Sangh celebrated Chal-Pratishtha of Bhagwan Aadinath with joy. Approximately 300 bhaviks joined for the two day celebration, including a bus full of bhaviks from Los Angeles. Vidhikar Shri Shrenikbhai Gala performed the Pujas and Vidhis for the pratishtha.

Saturday started with 18 Abhishek Puja and Sattar Bhedi Puja, followed by Gadi Pujan. Sangh members enjoyed Bhavna on Saturday evening. Sunday started with Laghu Kumbh and Deepak Sthapna, followed by Rath Yatra (Varghodo). Sangh members joyously performed Prabhu Pravesha and Pratishtha and everyone got a chance to perform Pujans. The weekend culminated with Dwar Opening Ceremony and Puja on Monday Morning.

The event was a major milestone in the journey of San Diego Sangh to construct a permanent Jinalay at the facility. The Sangh acquired current facility in 2011 and has been working diligently to update and transform it. Plans are in works to construct permanent Derasar in the near future. The Chal-Pratishtha now will allow the Sangh members to perform Puja in the interim. Please visit www.jssd.org and definitely visit us when you are in San Diego.



Jain Center of Las Vegas

A MileStone Celebration

Under the auspicious of Hindu Temple & Jain Center of Las Vegas, we celebrated the Bhagwan Mahavir Janma Kalyanak on April 6, 2014. On this occasion, a play depicting the life of Chandanbala was presented. This was very first time in the history of the temple since its inception in 2001 that a play to celebrate the birth of Bhagwan Mahavir was enacted. Best of all, it was presented by the young members of the Jain community who put their hearts in it. The play was conceived and choreographed by Chandraben Mehta. This play was well received by the local community of Las Vegas. With the success of this program it is hoped that it will inspire Jains as well as non-Jains to take part in the future events at our Center. The next major events scheduled to take place at the Center are the celebration of Fourteen Dreams of Trishala Mata and Mahavir Janma Kalyanak during the Paryushan Parva in August 2014, and 18 Abhishek on November 9, 2014.



Jain Milan 2014

Jain Milan 2014 Annual 3 Day Convention is on September 19, 20, and 21st, 2014 at Jain Center of New Jersey, NJ.



As the next generation of Jain Americans begins to assimilate into western culture, it becomes increasingly challenging to meet those that hold similar beliefs and values. Though websites and e-mail communication help to a certain extent, nothing comes close to meeting potential suitors in person. Jain Milan is organized to encourage our Jain youth to meet other Jains for the purpose of matrimony and to facilitate a face-to-face meeting. We have witnessed many other Indian organizations holding similar successful events and we felt it was time to create a forum for the Jain youth. With this in mind, we planned first Jain Milan, a three-day convention, in NJ in August 2006. It was a tremendous success. Over 170 Jain youths participated from many states in America, Canada, India, Europe and Singapore.

Jain Milan was started with a vision "Jain merry Jain" and that vision has turned to reality for many many Jain youths. Jain Milan is instrumental in creating a platform for Jain youths to meet many Jain youths in person and ultimately in finding a life partner.

Jain Milan provides an opportunity for Jain youth (age 21 and older) all over the world to meet in person, to make friends, to engage in networking, to develop business contacts and to possibly find a life partner. With events like Jain Milan, we hope to achieve our goal to preserve Jain traditions and values in our next generation and strengthen our community.



First Jain Milan organized in August 2006 was a benchmark for the Jain community in North America. In last eight years hundreds of youths from all over the world have participated. Jain Milan has organized six conventions in NJ, one in Long Island, NY and one in Huston, TX. These conventions are not only beneficial to the area youths but also to the youths from all over world. From last eight years, many success stories are reported year after year since 2006. Since last year, Jain Milan has also started providing the service to an age group of 40 to 70+.

For more information: Visit www.jainmilan.org OR www.jaina.org (Under marriage and committees) or send an e-mail to prof.garyshah@yahoo.com for any information.

Gunvant Shah

GUNVANT SHAH
Chairman, JAIN MILAN
and JAINA Treasurer



Gandhi before gandhi

Dr. Bipin Doshi , Smt. Pritiben Shah & Pankaz Chandmal Hingarh (Co-authors of Book - Gandhi Before Gandhi)

We are dedicating this article to Indian Legend Virchand Raghavji Gandhi who as a friend used to help Mahatma Gandhi in understanding Indian law by telling him stories of Vakils and Stalwarts (Ref: Story of My Experiments with Truth) . One who was admired by Swami Vivekanand for his strict code of conduct, vegetarianism and patriotism. Swami Vivekananda had received his recognition primarily for his speech in the first ever World Parliament of Religions in 1893, where he had represented Hinduism. But we hardly know that one more Indian legend at the same event boldly expressed his patriotism by defending Indian culture and Hinduism and represented Jainism - he was the charismatic and captivating Virchand Raghavji Gandhi. His captivating speech had received rounds of applause. A true patriot is someone who feels or voices expressions of patriotism, love, and devotion to one's country. VRG had displayed his patriotism, love and devotion for mother India and its spiritual heritage. His speech echoed the true spirit and culture of India. He received equal attention as did Swami Vivekananda.



Historical background: Today in western countries, many are familiar with Jain religion. But things were different in 1890's, when majority of western people were unaware about existence of any such religion. Then India was ruled by British Raj and sailing outside India was a challenge. In 1893 to celebrate the 400th anniversary of the discovery of America by Christopher Columbus, magnificent World's Columbian Exposition was organized. In 1880's Chicago, St. Louis, New York and Washington, D.C. all had submitted bids to host the 1893 exposition and finally Chicago had won same. A number of congresses were held in conjunction with the exposition. The World's Congresses were outlined by Mr. Bonney who was incharge of working committees.

The World's congress of religions was the largest of the congresses held in conjunction with the Exposition. In 1891, committee of The Parliament of religions had globally sent invitation to selected distinguished representatives of all faiths, to bring together in conference, for the first time in history, the leading representatives of the great historic religions of the world. It was promoted that main aim of such conference was to promote human brotherhood among religious men of diverse faiths. From Jain community originally well-known and highly respected **Munishree Atma Ramji** alias **Acharyashree Vijayanandsuriji** was invited to represent Jainism and whole Jain community. He was then highly revered as high priest of Jain community worldwide. Muni Atma Ramji could see centuries ahead of time and was highly revered by non Jains too. He had written several Jain treatise. Many eminent western scholars like Dr. A. F. Rudolf Hoernele were impressed by him. Muni Atmaramji was then appointed as a member of Advisory Council of the Parliament of the Religions to be held in Chicago in 1893. On the 21st page of "The World's Parliament of Religions," published in London, there is a photo of the Muniji Maharaj bearing the following eulogy.

"No man has so peculiarly identified himself with the interests of the Jain Community as Muni Atmaramji. He is one of the noble bands sworn from the day of initiation to the end of life to work day and night for the high mission they have undertaken. He is the High priest of the Jain community and is recognized as the highest living authority on Jain Religion and literature by Oriental scholars."

The principles of right conduct for a Jain monk prevented him from going abroad. On humble request of William Pipe, Rev. John Henry Barrows (Parliament's committee members) & suggestion of his own disciple Acharya Shree Vijayvallabhsuriji, Muni Atmaramji trained and deputed 28 year old Shri Virchand Raghavji Gandhi as his representative to represent Jain religion and Jain community. By then VRG had successfully resolved important issues for Jain Tirths like Shatrunjay Teerth, Sammet shikharji Teerth and Makshi Teerth and was Secretary of Jain Association of India.

The 1893 World's Parliament of Religions, was held on the shore of Lake Michigan, Chicago. For East Indian Delegates a dinner was arranged by Rev. J. Henry Barrows and William Pipe before commencement of 1893's parliament which was attended by Virchand Gandhi and other Indian delegates

Exposition's centre of attraction was first Ferris wheel and other was Congress of World religions. The parliament was held at the Columbus Hall of the Art Institute of Chicago with more than 7000 delegates of different nations and religions participating. The conference lasted 17 days. Parliament had commenced on 11th September, 1893. It was dominated by English speaking Christian representatives, who delivered 153 of 194 speeches. Opportunity for the leaders from other religious traditions was limited, although significant. Twelve speakers represented Buddhism, 11 Judaism, 8 Hinduism, 2 Islam, 2 Parsi, 2 Shintoism, 2 Confucianism, 1 Taoism and 1 Jainism. Christianity dominated. Many Christian leaders declared theirs as the best religion and that one can't have entry in the kingdom of heaven unless one is a Christian. Faith in one God and the sacrifice of Jesus to wash the sins of man was highlighted often. To this extent it was fine but many speakers in an over-enthusiasm attacked the beliefs and traditions of other religions. However, there were many Christian speakers like Prof. Robert, Wolivunski, Henry Infield, George Hood Don Boardman who appreciated the oriental religions and also the depth to which they have reached. The organizers had even expressed a desire to hold the next parliament at Varanasi in India. Rev. Chepin admitted, "We want to learn, sitting at the feet of those gentlemen, full of wisdom, who come from the East".

In Rev. J.H.Barrow's & Richard Seager's book on such parliament, Virchand Gandhi's following speeches are recorded:

- Welcome speech on Opening Day in afternoon session* (September 11, 1893) (Applause)
- Speech on the philosophy and ethics of the Jains.*
- A patriotic speech in reference to the allegations of the previous day against the morality of the Hindu religions* (audience applauded on his every word) and same was followed by speech on 'The History and Tenets of the Jains of India' (September 25, 1893)
- a closing speech whereby Virchand Gandhi was greeted with much applause as he came forward to speak on last day.





From our original researches we learnt that 3 captivating heroes had captivated in 1893's this event. An authentic book Old Diary Leaves by Henry S Olcott (Co-Founder of Theosophical Society) mentions "...Besides those who represented our society and religions, especially Vivekananda, VR Gandhi, Dharmapala, captivated the public, who had only heard of Indian people through the malicious reports of interested missionaries, and were now astounded to see before them and hear men who represented the ideal of spirituality and human perfectibility as taught in their respective sacred writings. Said one Chicago editor: 'We have been for years spending millions of dollars in sending missionaries to convert these men, and have had very little success; they have sent over a few men, and have converted everybody.'"

Apart making impressive presentation on Jainism, Virchand raghavji Gandhi had vigorously displayed his patriotism by defending Indian culture and Hinduism at parliament which had received huge applause. Many may not be knowing that in absence of Indian delegate Shree Manubhai Dwivedi, Virchand Raghavji Gandhi had impressively read his one paper on Hinduism too. Hence VRG played role of patriot as well as of an able shrvak at parliament. And because of same many western persons became fan of VRG and insisted him to prolong his stay in West, as they wanted to learn from him more about Jainism, Indian Culture & various oriental subjects.

Before Virchand Raghavji Gandhi's presentation at parliament many were unaware about existence of any religion called Jainism, some thought it was branch of Buddhism or Hinduism. In USA, he was first to introduce Jainism as independent & ancient religion through his captivating presentation. And hence today he is also addressed as father of American Jainism.

In our other important research we had discovered that apart

Virchand Gandhi teaching Jain Philosophy to a Lady in America



Later VRG had delivered 535 speeches in USA and Europe on plethora subjects like Indian international trade system, Indian economic and industrial outlook, real estate, ancient history of Indian civilization, science of eating, yoga, concentration, hypnotism, astral vision and astral body, occultism, vegetarianism, world religions and won many medals.. His immense success was covered by the leading newspapers and periodicals of the USA: New York Times, St. Joseph Gazette, The Jamestown New York, Editors Bureau, Chicago Daily Sun, Chicago Herald, Chicago Suburban Star, Light of Truth, Cincinnati, Buffalo Times, The Illustrated Buffalo Express, Morning Star, Buffalo Evening Times, Buffalo Express, Buffalo Courier, The Evangelist, Evening Post, Rochester Democrat and Chronicle, The Rochester Herald, Rev. R. A. White, Chicago, Addison Parker Pastor of leading Baptist Church. VRG had originally translated a rare book 'Unknown life of Jesus Christ' from French to English which was appreciated specially for its scholastic translation & lucid explanation. He had attained Bar at Law at Britain.

Virchand Raghavji Gandhi was a national hero and will remain source of inspiration for young generation because of his versatile traits and achievements at young age. We request various smaller & bigger Sanghs / Organizations to come ahead and celebrate 150th Birth anniversary of this legendary personality who was an Indian patriot, a humanitarian, early Indian economist, early Indian real estate expert, reformer who promoted female education. This year on eve of his 150th Birth Anniversary, we have plans to come out with Gujarati and Hindi version of our most awaited book "Gandhi before Gandhi". VRG's great grandson Shree Chandresh Gandhi has been delivering lectures on his great grandfather Virchand Raghavji Gandhi. And due to efforts of Sulekhji C Jain, Dilipji V Jain, Pravinji C Shah, Dr. Nitinji Shah, Munishree Lokeshji & few others a VRG chair has been proposed at Claremont Lincoln University at California.

Virchand Raghavji Gandhi (Time Line)

(Note: Some years could be approximate indications for better understanding)

1863-64: Goddess Padmavati appeared in dream of Mahuva NagarSheth Shree Raghavji Tejpalji Gandhi and conveyed that his wife Manbai will give birth to narkesari son (Virchand) whose fame will spread worldwide and as an auspicious sign an ancient Lord Parswanathji idol will be discovered from his house. It happened accordingly.

August 25, 1864: Virchand Raghavji Gandhi was born.

1879: Gets married to Smt. Jiviben

1880: Passed Matriculation examination from Alfred High School, Bhavnagar. Stood first in Gohilwad district and obtained

Sir Jashvant Sinhji Scholarship. Same year family shifted to Mumbai, erstwhile Bombay for higher education of VRG.

1884: Passed B.A. with hons. From Elphinstone College. He mastered 14 languages and had become scholar in all world religions, Indian economics, trade and commerce.

1885-86: Joined as an article clerk in the firm of Govt. solicitors Ms. Little, Smith, Friar and Nicholson. He and Mahatma Gandhi were together for their experiment on dietetics. And then Virchand Gandhi used to help Mahatma Gandhi understand Indian Law (Reference: Mahatma Gandhi's 'Story of My Experiments with Truth, part 2, chapter III, First Case) (Exact year / period of meet of Mahatma Gandhi and Virchand Gandhi is unknown)

1886: He succeeded in getting the tax per head abolished for pilgrims to Shatrunjaya Tirth. Later he also played instrumental role in resolving dispute of Shree Makshi Teerth.

1891: Played instrumental role in winning legal battle against an English man's tallow factory & getting tallow factory closed from Sammet Shikhar Tirth

1893: Originally Muni Atmaramji invited to represent Jainism at the 1893 Parliament of Religions. But as he couldn't visit, he deputed his disciple Virchand Gandhi.

1893: Captivated in 1893's Parliament of world religions. Same year also acknowledged as interesting speaker from India at the world's first Real Estate Congress.

1894: From Chicago, Swami Vivekanandji wrote a letter to the diwan of Junagadh, Shree Haridas Desai and praised Virchand Gandhi. Same year VRG translated a rare book 'Unknown life of Jesus Christ' from French to English.

1893-95: (1) Lectures in various American cities on Jainism, Hinduism and Buddhism under the aegis of 'School of Oriental Philosophy'. (2) Publication of the book 'An unknown Life of Jesus Christ' in Chicago. (3) Came to London - Lecture on Indian Philosophy in a meeting chaired by Lord Reay. In between attained Bar at Law at Britain but date and year is not known.

1895: Returned to motherland, lectured under the aegis of Arya Samaj, Buddhiwardhak Sabha and other organizations. Founded the Hemchandracharya Class.

1896: (1) Represented Mumbai province in Indian National Congress's Poona gathering. 2) On January 25th, accompanied Mark Twain on his visit to Mumbai and visited Byculla Jain temples. 3) Established Society for the Education of Women in India (SEWI) under whose banner several Indian women went to the USA for higher studies 4) Second trip to America along with his wife upon an invitation. Later on hearing in America about the drought in India organized a Drought Relief Society and collected Rs. 40,000 and arranged for a shipment of food-grain to India.

1898: Returned to India for short time, was felicitated at a meeting where Justice Mahadev Govind Rande was the president. Till 1901 delivered 535 captivating speeches in USA and Europe on a plethora of subjects.

1901: Mysteriously health deteriorated, resulting lung hemorrhage. In July returned to Mumbai. On August 7 passed away at early age of 37.

The New York Times, 3rd September, 1893 edition under heading 'VISITORS FROM MANY LANDS; EAST INDIAN DELEGATES TO THE CONGRESS OF RELIGIONS'

2 *The Sociology of Religious Movements* - By William Sims Bainbridge

3 *In New essays in religious naturalism, Volume 1990* By Creighton Peden, Larry E. Axel

4 *In the gospel of Buddha according to old records* - dr. Paul carus, Martin Verhoeven





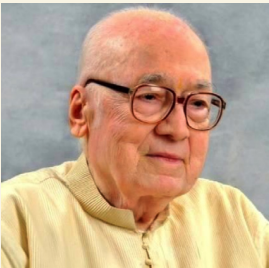
People In News



Dr. Kumarpal Desai

Well-known Gujarati writer, reporter, thinker, trustee of Gujarati Vishvkosh (Gujarati Encyclopedia), international, Scholar of Jain Dharma Padma Shri Kumarpal Desai has written 80 books in Hindi and Gujarati on Jainism. He has lectured on Jainism in many countries and has guided 20 students (including some sadhus and Sadhvis) for their thesis for Ph. D. He was the Dean of Gujarat University for many years.

Recently, Jain Vishva Bharti in Ladnu, Rajasthan has recognized his many achievements and accorded him special honors by naming Dr. Kumarpal Desai as the Professor Emeritus of Jainology Department of Jain Vishva Bharti. He is the first person to receive such recognition by Jain Vishva Bharti. Jain Vishva Bharati is the only institution



Shrenik bhai Kasturbhai

Leading Jain philanthropist and head of Anandji Kalyanji Pedhi Shri Shrenik Kasturbhai, son of Shri Kasturbhai Lalbhai passed away on June 19th, 2014. He suffered diverticulitis rupture a year ago and was operated in emergency. But he was in good health during last year and was working from home.

Gandhian values, simplicity and service to society was his main motive. He worked a lot for Jain community. He is known as prominent leader of Jain community. Shrenikbhai was into social work for last fifteen years. Prior to that he was contributing in the areas of finance and overall strategy. All present companies of Lalbhai Group – Arvind, Atul, Anil Starch were started by his father Kasturbhai Lalbhai, and now they are prospering with fourth generation.

His activities contributing to education, religion, art and museums, charitable institutions will be continued.



Jain Community accorded minority status: On January 27th, 2014 the Jain community was accorded minority status by the central government which will enable them to avail of benefits in government schemes and programmes. The Jains became the sixth community to have minority status after Muslims, Christians, Sikhs, Buddhists and Parsis. Once recognised as a minority, Jains would get a share in central funds earmarked for welfare programmes and scholarships for the minorities. They can also manage and administer their own educational institutions. The community is already enjoying minority status in some states like Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Chhattisgarh and Rajasthan but the new decision extends that status across the country. Numerically, the Jain community is small, with a population of about 50 lakhs. Eminent Jain Acharya Dr. Lokesh was present on the historical moment in the Indian Parliament House in New Delhi, along with India Cabinet minister for minority affairs Shri K. Rehman Khan, Cabinet minister Shri Shriprakash Jaiswal, MP Shri Jai Prakash Agarwal and other prominent Jain leaders were present. In the program nine Dikshartis inspired by Munishri Namramuni ji were also honored. Honoring nine Diksharthi Acharya Ji said that felicitating Diksharthi in Parliament house is a wonderful event for India and the world this will inspire youth to adopt self controlled life style preached by Jain religion.



Patriotic Speech of V. R. Gandhi at the First Parliament of world Religions

Mr. Gandhi prefaced his paper "with remarks in reference to the allegations of the previous day against the morality of the Hindu religions. He said:

I am glade that no one has dared to attack the religion I represent. It is well they should not. But every attack has been directed to the abuses existed in our society. And I now repeat now, what I repeat every day, that these abuses are not from the religion but in spite of religion, as in every other country. Some men in their ambition think that they are Pauls, (humble) and what they think they believe, and where should these new Pauls go to vent their platitudes but India?

Yes, sir, they go to India to convert the hearts (Person does not belong to widely held religion) in a mass, but when they find their dreams melting away, as dreams always do, they return back to pass a whole life abusing the Hindus. Abuses are not arguments against any religion, or self-adulation the proof of the true of one's own. For such I have the greatest pity. There are a few Hindu temples in Southern India where women singers are employed to sing on certain occasions. Some of them are of dubious character, and the Hindu society feels it and is trying its best to remove the evil. These women are never allowed to enter the main temple, and as for their being priestesses, there is not one woman priest from the Himalayas to Cape Comorin.

If the present abuses in India have been produced by the Hindu religion, the same religion had the strength of producing a society which made the Greek historian say, **"No, Hindu was ever known to tell an untruth, no Hindu woman ever known to be unchaste"** And even in the present day, where is the chaster woman or milder man in India?

In the last place, I am very, very sorry for those who criticize the great ones of India, and my only consolation is that all their information about them comes from third hand, fourth hand sources, percolating through layers of superstition and bigotry. To those who find in the refusal of the Hindu to criticize the character of Jesus a tacit (understood without being stated) acceptance of the superiority of fanatical nil-admirari cult they represent, I am tempted to quote their old fable of Espo and tell them "Not to you I bend the knee but to the image you are caring on your back": and point out to them one page from the life of great Emperor Akbar.

Ascertain ship full of Mohammedian pilgrims was going to mecca. On its way, Portugues vessel captured it. Amongst the booty were some copies of Koran. The Potuguees hanged these copies of Koran round the necks of dogs and paraded these dogs through the streets of Omrmuz. It happened that this very Portuguese ship was captured by the Emperor's men, and in it were found some copies of the Bible.

The love of Akbar for his mother is well known, and his mother was a zealous Mohammedian. It pained her very much to hear of the treatment of the sacred book of the Mohammedian in the hands of the Christians, and she wished that Akbar would do the same with the Bible. But this great man replied:

"Mother, these ignorant men do not know the value of the Koran, and they treated it in a manner which is the outcome of Ignorance. But I know the glory of the Koran and the Bible both, and I cannot debase myself in the way, they did."

Mr. Gandhi's remarks were followed by expressions of sympathy from among the audience

GUIDING LIGHT

I want to wash the stains, rather than the dirt - **Munishri Namramuni**

Dirt gets washed everyday.

The dirt from the body, of those who have a bath everyday, gets washed off daily. Hence that person appears clean and neat. Similarly, sins that we commit daily is called dirt.

This dirt can be cleansed by small repentances and atonements. Then, what are stains? What is the difference between dirt and stains?

Stains means which have blended with the cloth...

That which can not be removed by ordinary soap and water.

A special technique has to be used to remove the stains.

Dirt means anger. It is momentary and quiets down by saying Sorry or Michchami dukkaddam. Stains means Hatred.

It is easy to wash the dirt but difficult to remove the stains.

You will have a feeling of hatred only for those who are close to you.

You will have a feeling of hatred only for those with whom you have frequent contact. You will have affection for those who are close to you. Because of affection there will be expectations. When these expectations are not satisfied, affection turns into dislike.

Anger may perhaps, spoil only this birth, but hatred will have adverse effects in many many births. Anger will spoil a few moments but hatred will spoil the relationship. Check yourself....

And find out where is the dirt and where are the stains?

It is easy to wash a dirty cloth even if it is full of dirt, however it is very difficult to remove a stain.

Dirt can be removed easily by small aaradhanas and repentances. But, to remove a stain, one must seek Sadguru's shelter.

Hatred can be removed only by seeking refuge and doing sadhana of gaining knowledge. Make efforts to remove the stain....inevitably dirt will be washed off.



An Exponent of India's Priceless Cultural Heritage

Padmashri Dr. Kumarpal Desai

When the dawn breaks over the eastern horizon, the faint light begins to slowly encompass the earth and the living organisms experience the nourishing effect of the morning sun. Similarly, Virchand Gandhi too soaked the people of America and England into in-depth analysis of Jaina Philosophy and the Indian cultural and spiritual values. Apart from being a scholar of Jainism, he was an ardent votary of Buddhism, Sankhya, Vedanta and Nyaya.. Virchand Gandhi also talked about science of Yoga, Botany, nutrition and myriad other subjects.

First World Congress:

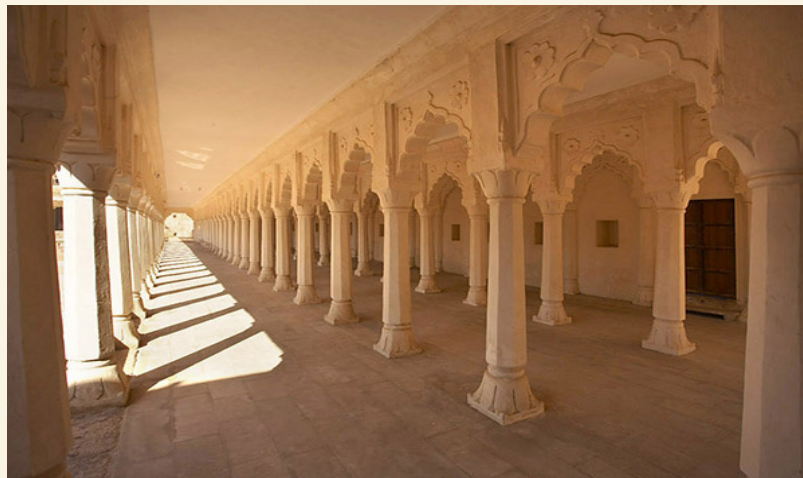
On 11th September, 1893 the World Religions Conference was inaugurated in the Hall of Columbus of Chicago's Art Institute. The representatives of different religions and sects, attired in their traditional costumes, assembled in the hall. The World Religions Conference comprised ten religions and Jaina religion did not find place in it. But Virchand Gandhi, representing Jaina religion, delivered the 17th lecture. He acknowledged the debt he owed to his Guru Munishri Atmaramji Maharaj and then expostulated on the tenets of Jainism.

Swami Vivekanand began with an invocation to Goddess Saraswati, addressing the congregation saying 'Brothers and Sisters' and then everyone bathed in the cascading flow of his words. The brief but eloquent addressed touched the hearts of one and all.

Gandhi's treatment of Jaina philosophy is authentic and rational. His is the non-sectarian approach. His lectures reflected his close acquaintance with the tenets of Jainism, his keenness of arriving at true conclusions, his constructive ingenuity, his insight into the essentials of religion, his power of comprehension and expression, his knowledge of Western philosophy as well as of other systems of Indian philosophy. Gandhi was a formidable champion of Jaina philosophy.

Philosophy of Karma:

He said that Jaina religion looked at things from two points of view — dravyarthika naya and paryayarthika naya. According to the former, the world is without beginning and end and according to the latter it is born every moment and dies every moment. *He talked about nine types of real (tatva), six types of living beings (jiva), and four types of existence (gati).* He first explained the Jaina theory of reincarnation and then the parallel philosophy of karma. He analyzed minutely this philosophy and asserted that it was a seminal principle in Indian ethos. Defining 'Jaina' as one who has won over the enemies within, he went on to talk about the importance of Jaina Tirthankars in Jaina Philosophy.



Jain Tirthankara:

Virchand Gandhi explains that "Jaina" means a follower of Jina, which is a generic term applied to those persons (men and women) who conquer their lower nature (passion, hatred and the like) and bring into prominence the highest. There lived many such Jinās in the past and many will

doubtless yet are to be born. Of such Jinās those who become spiritual heads and regenerators of the community are called Arhats (the deserving ones), or Tirthankaras.

Regarding dharma he observes: Dharma means the body of rules of conduct. It does two things : it prevents a living being from falling down spiritually and it helps him to go up spiritually. These rules apply to all living beings, not only to man. The basis of these rules is pity, compassion, love, doing good, benevolence, kindness etc. All these qualities are expressed through one word, *daya*.

Gandhi's following words are noteworthy. "The person in the state of Samyaktva is convinced that only a body of rules which is based on *Daya* is true dharma or true conduct rules, true religion, or the right law of life and that no other body of rules, such as one that is based on killing animals for sacrifices, can be a right one. And it is a strong conviction about which there is no wavering. Thus Samyaktva amounts to the conviction that ahimsa is the supreme religion."



Ahimsa: Daya is a positive aspect of ahimsa (non-violence). R. William in his book 'Jaina Yoga' remarks that the central position and pervading character of ahimsa separates the Jaina ethic sharply from Hinduism as well as from Islam and Christianity.

In his lectures Virchand Gandhi establishes the antiquity of Jainism, describes the nine 'real' which one should know to attain liberation, enumerates the six substances, gives an account of the six kinds of living beings (Jeevas) and four kinds of existence, treats of transmigration and karma and also of Jaina ethics.

For the Jaina thinkers both the substance and its modes are real. The one without the other is an impossibility. He explains at length the Jaina view of the phenomenal and the noumenal aspects of existence. At this juncture, he contrasts the Jaina position with that of Kant's.

He observes : "In brief, the Jaina position is: First, that right knowledge is the only test or measure on our part of the existence of a reality; secondly, that knowledge is always the knowledge of relations; thirdly, that reality is never out of relations (a particular reality may not be in physical relation with another reality, it may be in the relationship of subject and object, knower and known); and fourthly, that the relations are constantly changing. 'To' be is to be in relation.

Virchand Gandhi answers Sankaracharya's criticism of Syadvada in the following words : "The inherence of contrary aspects in a single idea or object seems impossible to the unseen noumenal hectic mind. Sankara, the well-known Vedanta scholar, has fallen into error when he states that the Jaina doctrine should be accepted, because it is being and non-being should, at the same time, belong to one and the same thing, just as observation teaches that a thing cannot be hot and cold at the same moment.

The Jainas do not teach that a thing can be hot and cold at the same moment, but they do teach that a thing cannot be hot absolutely, and cannot be cold absolutely; it is hot under certain definite circumstances, and cold under others. The Jainas do not teach that being and non-being (of itself) should at the same time belong to one and the same thing. What they teach is that in a thing there is being of itself and non-being of other things, which means that a thing can be fully known only by knowing what it is and what it is not. Shankara, in fact, creates a man of straw, imputes to him imaginary doctrines and by refuting them, he knocks him down. That is his glory."

Virchand Gandhi observes : "The Jainas, on the contrary, consider being and becoming as two different and complementary ways of our viewing the same thing. *Reality in the Jaina view is a permanent subject of changing states.* To be, to stand in relation to, to be active, to act upon other things, to obey law, to be a cause, to be a permanent subject of states, to be the same to-day as yesterday, to be identical in spite of its varying activities - these are the Jaina conceptions of reality. Mere becoming is as much an abstraction as

mere being. In short, being and becoming are complements of the full notion of a reality".

He explains the two basic views : The substance view (*dravyarthika naya*) and the modal view (*paryayarthika naya*). Each view carried to the extreme denies the reality of the other. Each view then accepts the one at the expense of the other. One puts emphasis on the universal and the external aspect to the exclusion of the particular and changing aspect. The Shankara Vedanta represents the extreme form of the substance view and Buddhism represents the absolute modal view. The Jaina system reconciles these two opposing views by according equal status to the substance and its modes.

His erudite, spirited and lucid lectures captured the hearts of the audience. He realized that Americans were eager to know Jaina philosophy. So he stayed in America for nearly three years. He made it his mission to disseminate and spread the knowledge of Jaina philosophy. He delivered lectures in important cities like Chicago, Boston, New York, Washington etc.

He was cordially received everywhere and his speeches left a very powerful impression upon the minds of the American public. Then he left for England. There too he delivered many lectures at different centres. The credit of initiating many into the study of Jainism goes to Virchand Gandhi. He made the American and the English people realize the sublimity of Jaina philosophy.

Gandhi's contribution to Jainism is varied and unforgettable. He interpreted Jainism in its true spirit. He rendered yeoman service to Jainism. He died at an early age of 37. Had he lived longer, lovers of Jainism would have gained even greater benefits from him.

He also critically evaluates Vedant and Jainism and responds to Shankaracharya's criticism of syadvad, and later enumerates the stages from the theory of Karma to kevalgyan. While in Chicago for the conference, he met Herbert Warren who tried to get acquainted with the Jaina philosophy systematically from Virchand Gandhi. After his meeting with Virchand Gandhi, Herbert Warren became a votary of Jaina religion and practised its rituals. He also wrote a book on Jaina Religion and resolved to gift to the world what he had received from Virchand Gandhi. He had noted down the lectures of Virchand Gandhi in shorthand. He got interested in the vows (vratas) of a shravak and out of 12 vows (vratas), he practised 7 vows (vratas) in consonance with his own religion. He gave up meat-eating and later brought out a book entitled 'Jainism'. There is a reference to the fact that Jaina sadhus do not have their own abodes and they move from place to place. Jesus Christ also wandered from one place to another and according to Virchand Gandhi, many Christs were born in different countries and that there was not only one Christ.



He devoted his talk on 'Jaina philosophy' and 'philosophy and psychology of the Jainas' and talked about the nature of Jaina Tirthankara and the origin of the universe. He said : *Jain philosophy, therefore, is not the doctrine of illusion, nor of emanation, nor of creation. It is rather the doctrine that teaches the inexpugnability of various properties inextricably combined in a thing.*

In his 'The Occult Law of Sacrifice', he has shown five types of 'sacrifices' expected of people. He believes that animals are conscious but humans are self-conscious and this must be reflected in his sense of sacrifice. He puts people into three categories. The lowest are immoral and ignorant. In the middle category are the ones who try to indulge their senses and love to enjoy good food and clothes. Those in the higher class are the ones who spend their time and energy for spiritual good.

The first sacrifice to be made is of the sensual pleasures. The second for the ancestors and parents, the third for the needy and the deprived class, the fourth for the welfare of the animals and the fifth sacrifice is of time, money and energy for study and spiritual benefit. These five types of sacrifices will transform animal man into a true human being, he averred.

Virchand Gandhi's address on 'Have Christian Missions to India been successful' before the members of the Nineteenth Century Club of New York, established him as a powerful exponent of Indian culture. To attack Christian beliefs and practices on American soil in the presence of Christian community was an act of rare courage. It showed that he could be blunt in telling the truth and was an ardent patriot who castigated the activities of missionaries in India. He pointed out in a forthright manner the glory that is India and asserted most eloquently that India is not a country of tigers, cobras, lions and jugglers but it has a rich culture, spiritual heritage, literature, science and a vibrant soul. He vehemently deplored the vicious campaign to defame this ancient country by those influenced by western culture. He also dwelled upon the profound Indian philosophical precepts and tenets and its ancient system of education and thundered: "My brothers and sisters of America, there is not a shadow of hope of Christianizing India." What an assertion on American soil and in front of Christian audience!

"In one sentence, the method I advocate is that of 'Self-recognition' — the education of all the faculties of body and of soul, devoutly recognizing responsibility to the Infinite or universal good. Such propagandism, whatever it may be supposed to lack, would never want success, would never fail to meet with responsive co-operation in all lands among all people and would from the start and for ever make the world better and better."

Jain Symbols: The talk on 'Symbolism', by Virchand Gandhi in Washington D. C., reflected his deep study of the subject coupled with his erudition. He interpreted the religious symbols of Persian, Greek, Roman, Egyptian and

Parsee (Zoroastrian) religions but the main focus was on Hindu and Jaina religious symbols which he analyzed in great detail. He tried to relate symbols to religious traditions. Explaining the significance of the symbols, he enumerates four reasons and then through a diagram explains the meaning of Jaina Swastika. Swastika is not, as is believed by the Westerners, a symbol of good luck in the Indian tradition; but it stands for a 'free soul'. There are many scholars who interpret the Vedas but it is he who explains the meaning of an eight-petalled lotus with the help of a picture.

There are other symbols of the Jainas : *the sacred thread*. Virchand Gandhi illustrates that we Jainas say that the three rounds represent the three sets of prophets that have flourished in all ages. There have been innumerable prophets but we take three sets-immediately connected with our time-the past, the present, and the future. In the immediate past we had 24, in the present 24, and in the near future there will be 24. Therefore, the three rounds of the sacred thread represent three sets of prophets who have left their sublime teachings as our heritage. It means we carry these teachings on our shoulders and practise them every day. It is a symbol of our willingness to practise and obey the teachings given us by our prophets.

There is another symbol of the Jainas, and that is the picture of the elephant. The picture is symbolic. The great forest is the world. The man in the well is the ordinary worldly man. The well with its dangers is the life of that man, over which all men are suspended who care for nothing beyond the present life. The elephant after him is death. The great serpent at the bottom of the well is the lowest existence to which those go, who will not make an effort to escape and who waste their forces in a useless or evil life with no effort or desire to rise to a higher life—who live for the present life only. The four snakes in the walls of the well are the symbols of Anger, Vanity, Deceit and Greed.

The trunk of the tree represents the short duration of our earthly life. The two rats, black and white, represent time (our month is divided into the light half and the dark half) which exhausts our earthly duration. The bees in the honey-comb are the organs of senses — the honey drops, represent the sensuous pleasures, and the monk represent the Truth — Religion. So the whole symbol means this that the ordinary man of the world thinks he will not be cut off from life at once, satisfies himself by enjoying the sensuous pleasures derived from the senses, and does not care to receive the truths offered by true philosophy; he being influenced by sentiments of anger, vanity, deceit and greed represented by the four serpents.

Anekantvad: The other symbol is that of seven blind men and the elephant. The seven blind men wanted to know what kind of an animal an elephant was. In that symbol the Jainas show that no one should preach that a certain religion is the whole truth. There is a Jaina saying which means that the six schools of philosophy are part and



parcel of one organic whole, but if one is taken by itself, it becomes a false doctrine.

The Symbol common to all religions in India is “OM.” Instead of dividing this symbol into three letters, we Jains divide it into five: A. A. A. U. M. Of these five letters, four are vowels, the fifth being a consonant. The whole combination is sounded OM. These five letters are the first letters of five generic names of great personages. The first letter A, is the first letter of Arhut, the highest and perfected prophet, the living human being in the perfected state. While living in this world he acts as the spiritual master of his order. The second letter is the first syllable of another generic word. It signifies bodiless, liberated souls. While the Arhut is living, acting as spiritual master, these are liberated beings after human existence. (Not earth-bound spirits). These are liberated souls. The third is the first letter of a class of religious masters who do not stand on as high a level as the others, but are leaders of an order who may reach a higher state. The fourth is the first letter of the class who are disciples, students under religious masters, who are going to reach that higher state. The fifth is the first letter of the class which means holy men or holy women. It is sounded OM. When we sound that word we bring before our minds these five classes of beings. We attach spiritual meanings to this symbol.

According to Virchand Gandhi, Jaina philosophy is a perfect system and it teaches how to develop memory and sharpen it. He cites the examples of Kalikalsarvajna Hemchandracharya, Shrimad Rajchandra, Pandit Gatulalji and others who possessed phenomenal retentive memory. Hemchandracharya, it is reported, would sit with forty scribes early in the morning and dictate a sentence on grammar to the one, then go to the other scribe dictating a line on prosody and by turn dictate a line or a sentence to each of the forty scribes. Within a short span of time all the forty works would be ready. Virchand Gandhi also mentions Satavadhani – being attentive to 100 people at a time – Shrimad Rajchandra and Pandit Gatulalji, a Vaishnavait, who was blind and could not read, but would remember word by word what he had heard.

The image of India in those days in western countries was that of a backward country steeped in orthodox customs and its people being uncivilized. At that time, Virchand Gandhi portrayed India differently as an enlightened nation of glorious traditions. Later in his talk, he discusses the basic tenets and principles of Hinduism, Jainism and Buddhism and explains the principles of atma, karma and reincarnation from the point of view of each of those three faiths. In the introduction to his article ‘Essential Philosophy of Hinduism, Buddhism and Jainism’, he draws attention to a ‘madhubindu picture’ which he had seen in an upashraya when he was eight-year-old and which represents man’s quest for desires. Later, he discusses the six systems of Hinduism in a very lucid, easy-to-understand style. ‘The True Laws of Life’ is about the divergence between oriental and occidental ways of life. He dwells upon four basic principles of maitri (friendship), karuna (compassion), upeksha (being ignored) and

mudita (being happy) and these four explain the relationship between body and soul. The east and the west both pursue happiness but the east relates the idea of happiness to the soul and which is, therefore, spiritual, while the west relates it to the body and which is material or physical.

Doctrine of Karma: Virchand Gandhi, for the first time, made the western world aware of Jaina doctrine of Karma. According to western scholar of Jainism, and especially of Jaina doctrine of Karma, V. Glasenapp himself had admitted that the lectures of Virchand Gandhi had shed new light on the doctrine, and were an authoritative source of enlightenment. This German Scholar wrote his doctorate dissertation on the theory of karma in Jaina religion. It is very unfortunate that not many knew about Gandhi’s scholarship or profound knowledge about principles of Jainism and those interested in Indian ethics too did not seriously study the principles he enunciated and interpreted. He was equally at home in the Vedic, Buddhist and Jaina philosophy. He knew and understood the finer nuances of karma as they underwent changes during different times and the volume ‘Karma Philosophy’ is a testimony to his profound study of the subject. In the fourteenth chapter ‘Karma’, he has discussed the Jaina point of view about karma.

He was an ardent vegetarian and perhaps he was the first vegetarian to set his feet on the American soil. He had obtained special permission from the captain of the ship for a separate kitchen while on his way to England. The magician Nathu Manchha of Mahuva accompanied him as a chef on the ship. Emphasizing on vegetarianism, Virchand Gandhi says that after considering all these things, our philosophers have given us the rule that it is not the best plan to eat animal food. There are minor objections to all these rules; one is that all persons cannot live on cereals; but there are other vegetables and fruits, and in the case of fruits almost all of these are in such a condition that they can be digested at once and do not require such work of the stomach, and fruit would be one of the best foods as it has the first quality of matter passivity, purity and quietness. These qualities are to be found to a large extent in almost all fruits and substantial foods like wheat.

He explains systematically that even among the vegetables we have certain reasons for objecting to certain kind of vegetables. While these rules are not to be found among the Brahmins, the Jains observe them strictly. With us no vegetable is eaten which is grown underground, because it takes its quality from the minerals, without contact from the sunlight, and so it would belong to the third class, and of course have the third quality. We do not encourage such food on that account.

Live and Let Live: The universe is not for man alone, but is a theatre of evolution for all living beings. ‘Live and let live’ is their guiding principle. Ahimsa paramo dharma – Non-injury is the highest religion. Their ceremonial worship, institutions, manners and customs (purely Jaina) all rest on this grand fulcrum of Ahimsa. Man, in his desire to continue his



life forces so that he may do the highest good while living here, is obliged to destroy life; but the less lower form of life he destroys, the less harmful Karmas he generates. This is the basis of the strict vegetarianism of the Jainas. Acting on that idea, they have built homes for maimed or old animals in many cities and towns of India, where they are fed and taken care of until they die.

In 'Ancient India', he has discussed the Aryan race, Vedic literature and social structure of that age. In an article 'Contribution of Jainism to Philosophy, History and Progress', published in Asiatic Quarterly of July 1900, he sheds light on the essential facets of Jaina philosophy and the literary currents.

His efforts resulted in a compromise between the Jainas and the Thakore of Palitana who had levied tax of Rs. 2/- per person. Lord and Lady Reay visited Palitana and this was the first official public presentation to a British representative. Even Lord Curzon, the British Viceroy in India, had also met him. The note about the Jaina delegation reads as follows :

"Among the various communities which have addressed me since my arrival in India there is none whose words of welcome awaken a more responsive echo in my breast than the Jainas. I am aware of the high ideas embodied in your religion, of the scrupulous conception of humanity which you entertain, of your great mercantile influence and activity, and of the ample charities that have characterized your public and private dispensations. Previous travels in India have also familiarized me with many of your temples, in whose architectural features I have observed a refinement that reminds me of the great days of Asiatic art." (p. 250).

Virchand Gandhi delivered a talk on 'Man's relation to the Universe' in Washington and he explained the different forms of 'soul'. 'India's Message to America' is an important article which reflects his anguish at India's slavery to the British. He told the Americans that if they had Washington, India had Ashoka and if they boasted about Lincoln, India had an enlightened king Vikramaditya. He, thus, tried to dispel the misconceptions about India created by missionaries and uphold India's glory and pride. In 'Impressions of America' he described his experiences about America, while in 'Some Mistakes Corrected', he has dispelled misconceptions about the Hindus. Some in the west believe that India has no history, but it is a lie, he asserted. There are the Vedas, he said. He also explained the rationale behind the caste-system. He is not defending it, he said, but one must know how it originated. There was no mention of it in the Vedas and hence it is not an integral part of our ancient religion or philosophy. It has, therefore, no religious sanction and is simply a part of the social system.

"Thou shalt not kill, thou shalt not covet, thou shalt not commit adultery, thou shalt not lie", are commandments with us as with you, and 'thou shalt practice

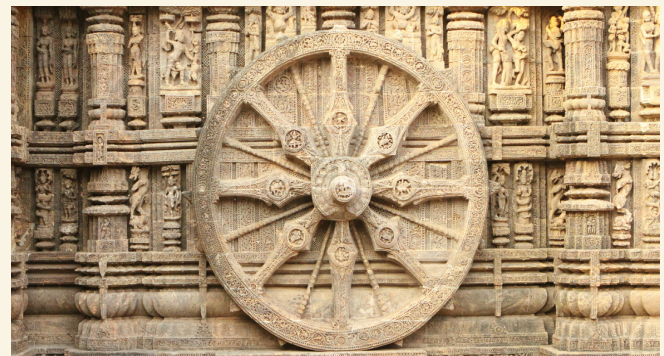
virtue, good will, right conduct, not toward men only, but toward all living beings', are also parts of our moral code, which no Hindu can forget or deny without bringing down upon him corresponding evils and retribution".

(p. 312) The sheer ignorance about India and its people is the convenient target of Gandhi's barbs. At times he speaks as a Jain, at times as a Hindu, but all the while he is an Indian to the core. India, he tells the Americans, offers you 'old sweet life', 'old hospitality' and 'dear old mother's unbounded, unselfish love.'

Virchand Gandhi faced two problems while addressing the Americans: his audience was ignorant of the subject and secondly the subject itself was so abstruse that it required use of specific terminology. But he succeeded eminently and presented his views in a lucid manner. He emphasized the study of Sanskrit and said it was necessary to understand ancient India. He criticized the activities of the missionaries and at the same time praised what was good in England and America. He fondly recalled some British and American friends whom he held in great esteem.

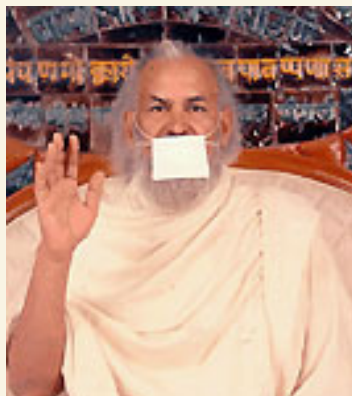
His command of English was superb and he made use of works in Sanskrit, Prakrit and Pali translated into English by western scholars. Wherever necessary, he presented his own point of view very cogently in consonance with the spirit and essence of the ancient volumes. In short, he was an ardent advocate of Indian philosophy and a powerful defender of Indian culture.

It is surprising to know that during his life-time only two books were published : 'Saviryadhyana' in Gujarati (1889) and 'The Unknown Life of Jesus Christ' (1894), which he had translated from French into English. Shri Bhagu Karbhari, editor of 'The Jaina' and 'Patriot' endeavoured to collect his speeches and articles and consequently the volume 'Jaina Philosophy' was brought out by N. M. Tripathi of Mumbai in 1911. It consists of the lectures he delivered in America and England. Bhagu Karbhari deserves all the credit for bringing into light the multi-faceted personality of Virchand Gandhi, who died at a very early age of thirty-seven years on August 7, 1901 in Mumbai.





REMEMBERING GURUJI



By Jaipat Singh Jain

Twenty years ago, one of Jainism's most revolutionary monks left for devlok. Jains outside India owe him a deep debt of gratitude. Below is his brief story, as narrated by a follower.

THIS is a story of a boy. His name was Sardar Singh. He was born in the year 1926 in a small village in Punjab, the land of five rivers, in undivided India. When he was a child, he began living with his aunt. One day, when Sardar Singh was 8-years-old, a Jain monk visited his home. The monk was Muni Chotelalji Maharaj and the family knew him well. The muni initiated Sardar Singh into meditation. Sardar Singh was so carried away by meditation that he obtained his aunt's permission to accompany the monk.

For the next six years thereafter, Sardar Singh wandered with Maharaj Saheb. During this time, Sardar Singh learned to meditate on the Namokar Mantra. A life-saving incident disclosed that Sardar Singh had learned to use of Namokar Mantra to ward off danger and heal the wounded and ill. His powers were magical. Mindful of their potential, at one point, Chotelalji Maharaj restrained the boy from using his powers. Sardar Singh used the restraint to intensify his study of the Mantra and to immerse himself in meditation.

Soon, Sardar Singh was privately in communication with another Jain monk. He had long conversations with the monk and followed the monk's instructions dutifully. He even began addressing him as his Guru (teacher). That Jain monk, Roop Chandji Maharaj Saheb of Jagraon, Punjab, had in fact left the world several decades before Sardar Singh was born; yet, Sardar Singh regularly met with him in his meditations.

One day, when Sardar Singh was 15 years' old, Roop Chandji Maharaj prompted Sardar Singh to become a Jain monk. Sardar Singh, as was his practice, dutifully reported that to Muni Chotelalji and expressed his desire to become a monk. Muni Chotelalji, however, advised Sardar Singh that he could not be given deeksha (ordination as a monk) without the express consent of Sardar's parents.

At about that time, Sardar Singh's older brother died. Sardar Singh was now the eldest son of the family and his mother wanted Sardar to end his wanderings with Muni Chotelalji and return home. She approached Muni Chotelalji. The Muni asked her to identify her son from two boys of near-equal age that were accompanying him, one of whom was her son. She confidently identified one of the two boys as her son. As

it happens, the boy she identified as her son was not Sardar Singh (that boy later became a Jain monk and came to be called Pujoyashri Sobhag Muni Maharaj Saheb). The incident inspired her to consent to giving Sardar Singh to monkhood. Thus, on April 21, 1942, Sardar Singh took deeksha as a Jain monk of the Sthanakwasi order and came to be called Muni Sushil Kumar. The name Sushil Kumar comes from being an obedient disciple.

Soon, India savagely broke into two parts. A million men, women and children were butchered in Punjab alone. A religious zealot killed Mahatma Gandhi, the symbol of hope, peace and awakening. The country plunged into a decade of faithlessness in ahimsa.

In such a dismal setting, a young Jain muni drew attention. He had the unusual practice of addressing followers of different faiths on the values of ahimsa found in their own scriptures. One day, he approached India's political and religious leaders and invited them and leaders in other parts of the world to an all-faith conference. Thus, in 1957, there was held under this young monk's leadership, the first World Religions' Conference. It was held at Delhi's Red Fort and was attended by more than 100,000 people, including India's prime minister, president, vice-president and education minister. It had a healing effect on a traumatized country.

That young Jain monk was Muni Sushil Kumar and ever since then, he came to be regarded by successive prime ministers, presidents, religious leaders and common men as a perennial source of wisdom and one to whom all communities – Hindus, Muslims, Sikhs, Jains and others – could and did turn to time and again in times of personal and national disharmony. He was a much sought monk by Jains and non-Jains and traveled hundreds of thousands of miles barefoot across the length and breadth of India.

Amidst all bustle, Muni Sushil Kumar remained intensely engaged in his private practice of meditation. A favorite place for him for meditation was the forest near Dadabari in Mehrauli, New Delhi, where he frequently secluded himself in deep meditation for days at a stretch. Dadabari is the site of the Samadhi of the legendary Jain monk Manidhari Jinchandra Suri Dada Guru (1140-1161 A.D.).

One day during meditation there, he met with Dada Guru. Dada Guru admonished the young monk from engaging in meditation solely for his personal salvation. Your job, said Dada Guru to the monk, was to be a global missionary of



Lord Mahavira; personal salvation must wait. Thus was born the idea of traveling outside India and of organizing missionaries to promote the message of Lord Mahavira (the principal organization he founded after coming to North America was unsurprisingly called International Mahavira Mission, later renamed as International Mahavira Jain Mission).

While evidence had begun to emerge that Jain monks at the time of Bhagwaan Parsvanath and Bhagwaan Mahavira likely had traveled outside India, the idea of a Jain monk traveling outside India by use of mechanical means was abhorrent to many in the Jain community: such a step had not been taken in at least two millennium by anyone who vowed to remain a monk. Yet, on June 17, 1975, the dutiful disciple took the unprecedented step of boarding an aircraft to travel outside India. Monkhood, after all, is a personal quest in pursuit of one's mission in life. It is not leaving one community to merely join another.

The decision of Muni Sushil Kumar was so significant and momentous that members of India's federal legislature convened at the Parliament House to give the monk a ceremonial send-off, even as thousands lined up near the Palam airport in India's capital to denounce the step. Jain religion, as customarily known, was being shaken to its roots.

Muni Sushil Kumar traveled, among other places, to America. Here, he inspired the founding of many institutions, temples, courses on Jainism in American universities (for example, in Columbia University in New York City), and representation at the United Nations. Many disciples of his from Main Street America were not Jains by birth and had never heard of Bhagwaan Mahavira. They followed him joyously like a band of missionaries when he used his powers of meditation to transform an abandoned, haunted campground in rural, northwestern New Jersey, into the place we now know as Shri Siddhachalam Jain Tirth. Siddhachalam means a mountain in homage to the siddhas. Jains regard it as a place of pilgrimage; for many among the thousands who visit it each year, it continues to be suffused with Muni Sushil Kumar's sacred vibrations and energy. In 2012, in his honor and inspired by his teachings, there was dedicated at Siddhachalam's 121-acre hilly terrain, the world's first, to-scale, complete replica of



GURUJI WITH CHILDREN

Guruji and children loved each other's company. His birthday (June 15) is celebrated as Children's Day at Siddhachalam. Picture shows children in a camp held at Siddhachalam, an animal and nature preserve that Guruji founded as an ashram in 1983 in Blairstown, NJ.

Protection of the environment for the benefit of all beings, not just humans, was a cause he dearly held.

Shikharji, the most important place of pilgrimage for all Jains.

Like Mehrauli in New Delhi, Siddhachalam has large forest areas. In it, Muni Sushil Kumar engaged in deep meditation. Since 2008, there is a life-size statue of the Muni in one of the forest areas close to where he engaged in meditation. Every year in the third weekend of April since then, his followers come together to unveil that statue (the statute is veiled every year after Deepawali). That weekend is significant: on April 21, 1942, Sardar Singh became a Jain monk; on the same date in 1986, he was publicly conferred the title of a Jain Acharya in an event attended by the President of India. Also, on April 22, 1994, he left for his heavenly abode.

Muni Sushil Kumar envisioned that in the 21st century, Jains in America would rekindle the light lit by Bhagwaan Mahavira and be exemplars to the world of a more enlightened form of religion. One that is free from the divisions of sects and rooted in its essential principles of ahimsa (restraint from intentional or careless injury to all living and non-living beings) and anekantvad (recognition that no person has a monopoly on truth).

Then, as now, we and our children, and their children, and all those in search of the soul within will find her or his way to Siddhachalam to commemorate the colossal life of the Sardar Singh we lovingly call Guruji.

An earlier version of this article was published by Siddhachalam on April 22, 2014, to mark the 20th anniversary of Guruji's devlok. Guruji also inspired the founding of JAINA. To read more about Guruji and Siddhachalam, please visit www.siddhachalam.org.



PICTURES OF SHIKHARJI AT SIDDHACHALAM

Inspired by the teachings of Guruji and in his honor, his devotees recently replicated Teerthadhiraj Shikharji at Siddhachalam in Blairstown, NJ. Shikharji in Jharkhand, India, is the sacred place where 20 of the 24 Tirthankars of the current avasarpini attained moksha. The last Tirthankar to attain moksha there was Bhagwaan Parsvnath, our 23rd Tirthankar.

Acharya Tulsi

Birth Centennial of an Engaged Spiritualist

Samani Unnata Pragya

Instructor Professor Florida International University

We celebrate the birth centennial of the harbinger of morality, His Holiness Acharya Tulsi. Legacy of this day dreamer, converting impossible to inevitable, starts in the soil of India, born in small town, Ladnun, Rajasthan in 1914. This gifted child, at a tender age of eleven, committed his entire life to nonviolence, the path of Jain asceticism. Very soon he won over the trust of Acharya Kalugani, his Guru. Tulsi grew up into a brave, brilliant, intellectual and spiritually vigilant monk. At the young age of 22, Tulsi's infringing vitality coronated him as the 9th Acharya of Terapanth order in 1936. Acharya Tulsi, an epitome of spirituality was an engaged spiritualist. Engaged spirituality means, a spiritual effort which yields not mere self-realization for the person himself or herself but impacts the other in escalating the other into spirituality. Like Gandhi fasted. Gandhi's fasting was far more fetching for the country's peace and nonviolence. Acharya Tulsi's passion for Jain Unity was so high that he resolved to quit sugar until Jain Unity is fetched to some extent. Our pride, one Jain flag was a spirited inspiration of Acharya Tulsi.

Such was the might of Gurudev Tulsi that his golden jubilee celebration was but a movement of empowerment and cultural destigmatization. The struggle and passion of Gurudev Tulsi was his engaged spirituality which unveiled women, empowered with courage and enlightened for cultural uplift by nayamoda (1960) i.e. movement for social reformation. These women now efficiently and magnificently are enterprising projects like save girl, adopt villages, adopt child education, donate limbs and more.

Anuvrat movement: Acharya Tulsi's dynamic leadership exposed the un-trodden path of social progress. In 1948, Anuvrat movement emerged, with the watchword of purifying socio political structure. The audacious endeavor to resonate the voice of "religion beyond religious dogmas, spirituality without religion, propounding universal religion was a paradigm shift in the sectarian frenzy world. He marched to President's residence to farmer's field with the slogan, "Self-restraint is survival". Humanitarian Tulsi breathed Anuvrat, to liven every slumber soul of the immoral world.

Samans and Samanijis: With the conviction of empowering the verdicts of ahimsa, Acharya Tulsi commenced the training for a spiritual life, an ascetic trained for asceticism by establishing the institute Parmarthik

Shikshan Sansthan in 1948. He sought to rediscover Jain meditation with Acharya Mahaprajna which led to evolve the scientific technique of Preksha Dhyani or Meditation in 1975 for self-realization. The essence of humanity, unshackled from the sectarian clutches was presented on academic platform as Jeevan Vigyan (1978) i.e. Science of Living. A value based education, with the mission of education for enlightened citizens; an integrated balanced personality.

Samans and Samanijis: Envisaging the need of the future, in 1980, commenced a unique milestone in the entire history of Jain tradition; the Saman order, a modern asceticism to spread the preachings of Jainism worldwide. Saman and Samani's reached far and wide, states and countries, universities and organizations to echo the voice of Mahavir. This group is established in the society rendering its multi-dimensional services in the field of education, administration (as Vice chancellor, Head of Departments, Principal and Director and on other academic and administrative posts with the pursuit of spiritual realization and ascetic rules in the personal life.

Jain Vishva Bharati: Jain values and cultural survival was aimed at by a seven point program which includes education, service,

penance, Jain values, research, literature, and harmonious living as a mission of Jain Vishva Bharati organization founded in 1970. Jain Agama, the infinite treasure of pristine knowledge was explored by convening a council under the erudite guidance of Acharya Tulsi. An arduous venture of exploring the gem of Jain Agama; unraveled the academic world of research, translation and annotation in oriental studies. This foundational step turned into an edifice as UGC recognized Jain Vishva Bharati



University, as a deemed University in 1991.

Resistance never stopped him, nor did he walk alone. To carry the crowd with him was his prodigy. Acharya Tulsi travelled 1 lakh kms from Kashmir to Kanyakumari, embarking un-trodden places sowing the seed of Jain values. Acharya Tulsi's detachment soared new heights. Gurudev Tulsi renounced his Acharyaship enthroning Mahaprajna as the successive Acharya. Coronation of the successor by his own Guru, was a splendorous unique history making sight.

Gurudev Tulsi's endeavor crossed the boundaries of self and paved the way for enlightening, empowering and enriching the humans, society, nation, culture and everything. Every Spiritual effort of Tulsi was his engaged spirituality modeling society for a brighter future. The work and contribution to society, religion, literature, art and philosophy made him immortal.

His life, a lamp to light lamps

His life, a living message

His life, an edifice of better future

Let us enlighten our selves

Let us live him, to revere him

As he says, "Seek not my physical autograph but let the message shine in your life as an eternal signature."



Shiksha, Seva and Sadhana come together at Veerayatan International(USA) Global Conference

By: Dilip V Shah; Philadelphia



supporters, volunteers had gathered at ki Shah in NJ to attend nual General Body of the mill meeting. Not dent Shri Abhay Firodia meeting but Acharya Shilapiji, Sadhvi Shri hmitaji were also going that something great – to take place.

pectations in the room to unfold – Acharya to present a vision – the giant leap forward for Veeraytan that will

transform for the better, lives of thousands of young and poor villagers of India and in the process improve rural health and environmental conditions that will also change the face of Jainism in India.

The benevolent and ambitious plan envisioned by Acharya Shri Chandanaji called for building 200 model primary and secondary schools each for 500 students at various Jain Tirthdham. All schools will be named Tirthankar Mahavir Vidyalya providing value-based education without regard to cast, creed or religion of students. After the phenomenal success of such schools built and operated by Veeraytan since 2001 in Lachhwad, Pawapuri and Kutch, Veeraytan has seen multitude of benefits of school projects undertaken in small impoverished villages. For details, go to <http://veerayatan-intl.org/projects/completed/> Value based academic curriculum not only provided quality education to thousands of poor children but spe-

cial attention on nutrition, health, sanitation and environmental conditions has provided demonstrable benefits to the whole village. Education not only promises path out of cycle of poverty for the students, but also creates solid and decent citizens for a brighter future for India and for humanity.

A town with a Tirthdham eventually develops a culture of dependency – dependence on pilgrims for their generosity in absence of major industry or commerce providing job opportunities. Furthermore the pilgrims arrive in high spirits with charity in their heart but they have no attachment to the town or the town's population. The local population views pilgrims only as targets of opportunity to make some money and waits for new pilgrims for the same purpose. To break this deplorable situation at every Tirthdham perhaps for years, a new approach is needed. All of our Tirthdhams, without exception are a hotbed of poverty. Many Jains left the towns for cities and remaining Jains slowly converted to other religions. So much so that many of our Tirths have no local Jain population. Abandonment of these towns by Jains has proven to be a great loss to the community. Many of the families living in these areas have Jain ancestors but "Jainism" is forgotten. In Bihar, you could meet a person named "Jin-das" or Sarak (Shravak) but does not even know where his name comes from.

Veeraytan's focus on Jain Tirthdhams is very instructive. By creating opportunities for their new generation to be educated, prosper, be healthier and becoming a useful member of their society, Veeraytan sees this as our duty to the town hosting our Jain Tirth providing an opportunity to practice Mahavir's message of compassion and service to the needy. Gradual transformation/ betterment of a town by establishment of an ideal school is not just a theory. Veeraytan has shown again and again that such a school can be an instrument of change. The schools in Bihar and Kutch built by Veeraytan over the last 12 years have proved to be an exemplary laboratory for this social and educational experiment. Now is the time to expand our horizon and make every one of our Tirthdhams an ideal village, by providing decent education, will help in decline of poverty, life expectancies of children will rise and Jains will be seen as protectors of their town. By following Bhagwan Mahavir's message, we can bring these towns to their former glory and revive Jainism the places where Jainism was once a dominant presence.

The proposal to build schools at our Tirthdhams by Acharya Shri Chandanaji received overwhelming support from those who were present at the meeting – one after another, 20 individuals stood up – each pledging to sponsor

one school. The power of the idea, spirit of giving and the opportunity to be an agent of change so appealed to these generous souls that no one asked how much they would have to contribute! After the lunch break, Acharya Shri Chandanaji proposed a Global conference of Veerayatan family be held in 2014 to work out details of how a massive project of 200 schools will be carried out. Various committees for detailed planning and financial controls will have to be formed and awareness will have to be raised for the dream to become a reality. Dr. Vinod Shah of MD proposed the name of Dr. Kiran Patel of Tampa, FL (Past President of AAPI) to be the Convener of the conference in July of 2014. It is expected that one hundred international delegates and 100 US delegates will gather to brainstorm and propose a plan for implementation at the 2014 Veeraytan Global Conference.

Last speaker of the day was the one everyone was waiting to hear from. Veerayatan President Abhay Firodia, made a detailed presentation on issues ranging from acquisition of land, budget, construction, government permits, corpus funds for sustaining the schools after the construction, hiring of staff and the teachers etc. He said that in each of these components, Veerayatan's vision should be the central philosophy. His presentation was so thorough that it answered all the questions there were on this ambitious and visionary project. Lastly, Abahy Ji proposed that Sadhvi Shri Shilapiji be the overall manager of the entire project with divine guidance from Acharya Shri Chandanaji. Everyone applauded the idea as Sadhvi Shri Shilapiji graciously accepted the responsibility.

In the past 8 months, Acharya Shri Chandanaji has held meetings with educators, community leaders and government officials throughout India to gain their perspectives on such an ambitious project. From the villages of Bihar, to the deserts of Kutch and hundreds of places in between, since 1973, Veerayatan has been applying its motto of Seva, Shiksha and Sadhana and has availed an opportunity to make a positive difference and transform the lives of hundreds of thousands of individuals. She has repeatedly stressed "While one could build temples in town, why not turn the entire town into a temple by building the Vidya Mandirs". The "Vidya Mandir" where along with the best education we teach children the merits of family values and the emphasis is given on the purity of thoughts and actions. Along with Seva and Sadhana, it has always focused on the immense power of education and has contributed to the advancement of our great nation. She firmly believes that "Gyaan Daan", an educational opportunity is the best mode of benevolent giving. Inspirational presentations by Acharya Shri Chandanaji have prompted one Singhvi family near Solapur to offer their family built school to Veeraytan. The school that is a creation of Pradeepji and Pramila Singhvi family in loving

memory of their daughter (Rupali) who had succumbed to a life threatening disease. It was her last wish that the family find a way to help underprivileged children. The family did just that – "SNEHALAYA" A school dedicated to rehabilitating sex workers and their children. Today, Snehalaya is a home, family and future for children and women in distress. But after running the school for the past 15 years and seeing the school grow to 700 students it was time to turn school management in capable hands. Once they learned of Veeraytan's new initiative to build 200 schools that will provide value-based education without regard to cast or religion. In Veeraytan, Shinghvi family saw fulfillment of their daughter's last wish and decided to turn over the entire school complex to Veeraytan.

Acharya Shri expressed her vision of Snehalaya becoming a training center for providing teachers, administrators and workers for Veeraytan's project of creating 200 new schools. Veeraytan could take over the entire Snehalaya and its activities once the proposal was studied and approved by the Trustees of Veeraytan. If this experiment of family run school becoming part of Veeraytan family does become a reality, it may open door for other family run schools to join Veerayatan project of 200 new Schools.

This project, known, as "Jaha Jinalay Vaha Vidyalay" will seek to uplift the lives of thousands of people that surround these sacred yet challenged areas by providing quality education to over 1 lakh (100,000) children.

If you would like to participate in the Veeraytan's school project, write to admin@veerayatan-intl.org And If you wish to get more information on this or other Veerayatan activities on monthly basis, please join our mailing list by signing in at <http://www.veerayatan-intl.org/join-vi>



Veerayatan Institute of Engineering, Management and Research, Kutch, Gujarat



Elementary & Secondary Schools at Jakhania, Kutch, Gujarat

At present 800 children are studying in the school to receive elementary and secondary school education. The first time experience of formal education for many children and the first time many girls have ever gone on to secondary school.



Elementary School at Rudrani, Kutch, Gujarat

The commuter Veerayatan Vidyapeeth Elementary School at Rudrani Village is a short distance outside of the city of Bhuj. The individual classroom buildings were architecturally designed, by a local Bhuj architect, in oval shape to be complementary with the round village houses.

- Started by providing free education for the children of families migrating from the border areas of Kutch immediately after the earthquake in 2001
- Students are provided uniform, books and stationery free of charge
- This school in Rudrani Village is for the village children, many of whom are the first in their families to experience formal education
- Free transport, a nutritious breakfast and midday meal are also provided
- The school has become a focal point and place of hope for the community
- Since its inception, there has been a vast increase in the number of girls at the school as local people are recognizing the importance of education for girls and women
- The Elementary School goes through 7th grade.
- The number of students has grown from 250 to 600 (with another 100-150 on the waiting list.). The plan is underway for accommodating up to 1000 students by 2015



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2014 YJA CONVENTION

Daytime Programming

Over 90 inspirational speakers, who keep Jainism and its values alive in the hearts and minds of youth, presented almost 150 sessions at this convention. Included in programming were diverse sessions on Jain education, interfaith cooperation, social justice, environmentalism, lifestyle, college, career development, and much more.

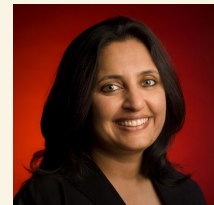


Keynote Speaker: Nimesh "Nimo" Patel

From Wharton Business School to Wall Street, to fame and fortune as a MTV Rap star, at some point Nimo realized he was walking a path of suffering and that the only path to light was through selfless service to others and his own internal purification. He currently works with slum children in India and is the founder of Empty Hands Music.

Keynote Speaker: Sonal Shah

Sonal Shah is Professor of Practice and the founding Executive Director of the Beeck Center for Social Impact & Innovation, and co-founder of Indicorps. She was the Deputy Assistant to the President and founding Director of the White House Office of Social Innovation and Civic Participation.



Jain Networking Forum Keynote Speaker: Masum Momaya

Dr. Masum Momaya has been working for social change and social justice for more than twenty years. Currently a Curator at the Smithsonian Museums, her most recent exhibition "Beyond Bollywood: Indian Americans Shape the Nation" is showing there until March 2015 and will travel around the country for 5 years afterwards.

Jain Academic Bowl

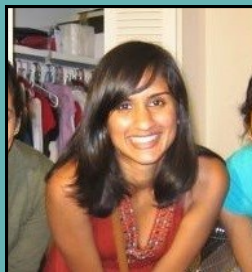
YJA hosted its first ever Jain Academic Bowl. 16 semifinalists who passed a rigorous preliminary test were randomly placed into four teams to compete at the convention. The winning team was the Jain Jewels: Akhil Ajmera (MD), Parshva Vakharia (NJ), Saagar Shah (NJ), and Vishwa Shah (FL).

Speakers and Sessions

In addition to fantastic speakers within the Jain community, many speakers came from the local D.C. area, including prominent social activists, interfaith workers, and White House and government affiliates. For a full list of speakers and sessions, please visit convention.yja.org/daytime and convention.yja.org/jnf.

YJA Gives Back

In the spirit of the convention theme, "Today's Learners, Tomorrow's Leaders", YJA youth took part in a volunteer activity. During a session, almost 400 hygiene kits were made for the homeless community in Washington, D.C.



Sneha Parikh, Jinen Shah, and Charmi Vakharia
2014 YJA Convention Social
Committee Co-Leads

Social Success at #YJA14

During each convention, YJA hosts nighttime social events to accompany the daytime educational sessions. These social events help attendees relax and have fun after a rigorous day of educational sessions and classes. The 2014 YJA Convention's social committee planned a multitude of events which provided a safe and Jain environment for all of the attendees to enjoy themselves as they made new friends and reconnected with old ones.

After the attendees introduced themselves through ice breakers, they all participated in a traditional garba, entitled Garba in the Gham. The garba featured Washington, D.C.'s very own, Arpan Group. Following the garba, the high school and college attendees transitioned over to the Candyland Mixer where they were able to mix and mingle while enjoying a variety of vegan candy as well as other healthier snacks. The second day of social activities started with the Jain

Factor: Talent Showdown. The Jain Factor included a variety of talents (from group dances to solo special talent performances) who were judged by Manan Jobalia, Purvi Shah, and Saagar Sheth. The three judges chose the first and second place winners of the talent show; whereas, the attendees were able to submit their vote via text message for the Viewer's Choice Award. Following the Jain Factor, the high school and college attendees made their way to the Boardwalk Afterglow. This event included a boardwalk atmosphere full of games and prizes. The boardwalk then transitioned into a dance party that featured many lights, balloons, and glow sticks. Each convention holds a formal on the last night. This year's formal was the Starry Night Gala where attendees were able to dance the night away under the

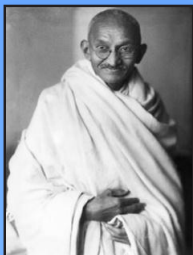
stars. The attendees were able to make a paparazzi entrance into the ballroom and enjoy the music by DJ Ahimsa. After the formal, all of the attendees spent time together at the slumber party where they were able to play games and exchange contact information while saying their goodbyes.

The social committee played a big role in ensuring that all of the Jain youth enjoyed their time at this year's convention. Although the main objective of convention is to expand the youth's knowledge in Jainism, the social events allowed them to have plenty of fun while creating long lasting memories. It is because of the social events that the youth can come together and create friendships that last a lifetime.





18th Biennial JAINA Convention July 2-5, 2015 in Atlanta



- The first JAINA convention held in Atlanta representing the South East Region. Atlanta is headquarters for many major corporations including Coke, CNN, Home Depot, UPS, and Delta Air Lines.
- Georgia International Convention Center (GICC) is being considered as Convention venue with state of the art décor. GICC is conveniently located a mile from the airport with free monorail.
- Several hotels in vicinity including Marriott hotel next to GICC.

CONVENTION HIGHLIGHTS:

Theme - "Jainism: World of Nonviolence"

Religious and Spiritual discourses by prominent Sadhus, Sadhvisis & Scholars to inspire the audience on Nonviolence

- Multiple tracks and interactive sessions
- Opportunities for professional networking and entrepreneurship
- Alumni, Community and Family reunions
- Excellent Youth and Kids program
- A variety of exciting Bollywood Entertainment and Cultural Programs in the evening
- Delicious Jain and Vegan Food

PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

- Opening ceremonies will include a grand procession and many floats
- Keynote Speeches on "Jainism: World of Nonviolence"
- Distinguished speakers for Plenary Sessions
- International Jain Leaders Forum
- Participate in Yoga and Meditation
- Jain Networking Forum and Jain Milan
- Exciting Youth Activities
- Supervised activities available for children
- Browse through interactive Exhibits and Vendor Booths
- Test of your knowledge of Jainism at the Jain Academic Bowl

For more information visit <http://convention.jaina.org>





18th Biennial JAINA Convention July 2-5, 2015 in Atlanta, GA



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- Jain Got Talent: \$2,001
- Jain Academic Bowl: \$2,001
- Travel Expenses For Speakers: \$2,001

For the sponsorships listed above as well as the associated benefits
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ADVERTISEMENT OPPORTUNITIES

A souvenir book will be published to commemorate the Convention.

The advertisement rates are as follows :

Full Page (8.25" x 10.5") \$ 1,300

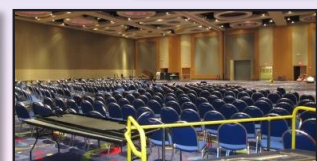
Half Page (8.25" x 5.25") \$ 700

Quarter Page (4 " x 5.25") \$ 375

If you are interested, please reserve your place by contacting:

marketing2015@jaina.org. **THE DEADLINE is APRIL 30, 2015.**

Please visit <http://convention.jaina.org> for more information



JainDIGEST

A publication by the Federation of Jain Associations of North America

APPEAL

JAINA invites you and your family to actively participate in the Jain Digest, which is a quarterly publication by JAINA. Jain Digest is mailed to over 12000 Jain families all over North America. Digital version is also available on www.Jaina.org

The objective of Jain Digest is to keep the community well-informed about the happenings in the Jain world. It also aims to promote unity, bring awareness, and be proactive with political authorities to voice the concerns of the community. It is the united voice of the Jain community, and meant to strengthen the whole Jain community. It will also enhance the Jain way of life by accommodating the progressive changes of the 21st Century.

Jain Digest features news, interesting articles, tirths, profiles, events, heritage news, along with information on our culture and history. It contains captive reading material for youth, adults, as well as for ladies. It is thus a complete magazine for the whole family.

We request you to support the Jain Digest by:

- Submitting news
- Contributing articles on Jain Study
- Sharing achievements of youth
- Giving matrimonial advertisements
- Business advertisements
- Donations and Sponsorship

We are committed to serve the Jain community better with this Digest.

Your support, feedback and suggestions are welcome. Please write to jaindigest@jaina.org

Thank you, with warm greetings, Editorial Team, Jain Digest

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