

24.04.24 – Mahavir Janma Kalyanak – House of Commons

Members of the Parliament, Jain Organisations, IOJ Patrons and my fellow Directors of the Institute and FRIENDS

Jai Jinendra

Like any child, the Institute of Jainology has needed a lot of love and nurturing from its birth to the ambitious, determined and enterprising organisation it has now become.

Like any proud father, after 36 years I am confident that it is in good hands with a strong culture and direction, and I can retire peacefully.

Today I announce my retirement from the day-to-day activities of the IOJ and am delighted to accept instead the title and duties of 'Chairman Emeritus'.

The IOJ's Journey commenced in 1988 when the International Herald Tribune announced the launch of the translation of scriptures from the World's Faiths into contemporary English at the United Nations by HRH Prince Philip. Jainism got included in the programme after a joint request of the two large Jain Organisations in the UK (Oshwal and Navnat Vanik Association). This planted the seeds of Jain Unity and two projects were earmarked to commence, firstly the Jain declaration on nature, and secondly the translation of central Jain Scripture - Tattvarthasutra.

Several spiritual and community leaders blessed the projects, most notable amongst them were

Pujyashri's ; Atmanandji of Koba, Parampujya Bapuji and Bhaishri of Sayla, Pujya Gurudevshri Rakeshbhai of Dharampur, Acharya Tulisiji, Acharya MahapragyaJi, Acharyashri Mahashramanji, Munishri Samandbhadr Maharaj of Khumbhoj, Munishri Amarmuni of Veerayatan, Padmashri Acharya Chandanaji Maharaj, Sadhvi Shilapiji Maharaj, Pujyashris Vidyasagarji Maharaj, Vidyanandji Maharaj, Acharya Padmasagarji Maharaj, Nay Padmasagarji Maharaj, Bhattarak Charukirti., Munishri Shilchandra Maharaj, Bahenshri Sunandaben Vohora

Royalty & National Leaders who also encouraged IOJ's projects were;

- Her Majesty the Queen as joint in Patron-in-chief with President of India Dr Shankardayal Sharma of Jain Art *from* India exhibition at V&A,
- HRH Prince Philip who graced several IOJ events with his presence, and presided over the launch of Jain Manuscripts Catalogue at Buckingham Palace in the presence of the global Jain community and other faith leaders.
- Dr. Manmohan Singh – Former Prime Minister of India attended the launching of Jain Manuscript catalogues at Vigyan Bhavan in presence of over 1,000 guests.
- Atal Behari Vajpayee – Former Prime Minister of India as Patron in Chief of the IOJ Manuscripts project.
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I can't forget special support from several Jain Sanghs, the Government of India and Heritage Grants in the UK for completion of the Manuscripts project.

Amongst the Scholars who blessed the IOJ with their support were; Dr. Nathmal Tatia, Prof. Padmanabh Jaini, Prof. Nalini Balbir, Dr. L.M. Singhvi & Kamla Singhvi, Dr. N.P. Jain, Drs. Kanubhai and Kalpanaben Sheth, Madame Caillat, Dalsukhbhai Malvania, Dr H C Bhayani. Dr. Esther Solomon, Debbie Swallow, Kerry Brown, Nick Bernard, Manzo Pasquale

Eminent Jain Community members who we have had the pleasure to work with were; D.P. Chandaria, Ratibhai Chandaria, Manu Chandaria, Navin Chandaria, Vijay Shah, Kamlakant & Girish Joshi, Dr. Harshad Sanghrajka, Kanti Devraj Shah, , Drs Ramanbhai and Taraben Shah, Vinod Udani, Gulachand Chindalia, Uttambhai & Shardaben Mehta, Arvind Panalal Sheth, Naginbhai Doshi, Nemchand Khajanachi, Dr. Tanskuh Salgia, Dr Sulekh Jain, Dr. Vilas Sanghave, Somchandbhai Shah, Girish & Sushila Shah, Dipchandbhai Gardi, Shrenikbhai Kasturbhai, Manubhai Shah Ruby, Ashok & Indu Jain of Times of India Group, Pravin Punjani, Sahsikantbhai Mehta, Bhartiben Mehta, Raj Kumar Jain, R.P. Jain, Rasikbhai Doshi, H C Parekh, Manish Modi, S.L. Gandhi, Sarayu Daftary, Sharayu Doshi, Harsukhbhai Mehta, Rati Shah, Rati Dhanani, Prem Shah, Zaverchand Haria, Dr. Natubhai Shah, Dr. Vinod Kapashi, Mahesh Gosrani, Kirtibhai Mehta, Hulaschand Golchha of Nepal and several others
and

Support by IOJ TEAM Past & Present UK & INDIA as well as IOJ Patrons, Nirmalbhai Sethia, Dr. Kumarpal Desai, Shriyak Arvind Panalal, Kaushal Desai, Raj Shah of second image and Ramniklal Jivraj Shah.

MILE STONE ACCOMPLISHMENTS

1. 34 Jain Scholars produced a **Jain Declaration on Nature** which was presented to HRH Prince Philip at the Buckingham Palace on 23 Oct 1990. 21 Jain delegates from all continents of the world attended the event. First time ever, Navkar Mantra and Manglik was recited at the Buckingham Palace. Thus Jain faith was repositioned as the eight faith on the map of the world.
2. **'THAT WHICH IS' Tattvarthasutra** translated into contemporary English by Dr. Nathmal Tatia was launched by HRH Prince Philip at St. James Palace in august presence of Jain and other communities and interfaith delegates.
3. **Jain Art from India Exhibition in 1995.** Global Jains contributed about £500,000, over 51,000 people visited.
4. **Jain Manuscripts collection** at the British Library, V& A and British Museums were catalogued, published and launched by Prime Minister of India Dr Manmohan Singh at Vigyan Bhavan Delhi and HRH Prince Philip at Buckingham Palace.
5. **Virchand Raghavji Gandhi** was the first scholar to travel to Chicago in 1893 to participate in Parliament for World's Religions. The Institute celebrated the centenary in 1993 by placing his bust at the Chicago Jain Centre and created a perpetual trust to support his descendants.

6. **AHIMSA AWARD** – annually this award is given to a person who meets the criteria and the recipients include HM The King Charles III, HH The Dalai Lama, HH Acharya Mahapragyaji, Prof. Padmanabh Jaini, Prof. Nalini Balbir, Nitin Mehta and others.
7. **TIRTHANKAR MAHAVIR - video** was created from the paintings of Gokuldas Kapadia in three languages English, Gujarati and Hindi and distributed. It was launched in London at Sangam Centre Edgware by Vice President of India Shri Hidaytulla.
8. **Jain presence at Multi Faith** events at national and international levels including audiences with the President of India, Parampujya Pramukhswami Maharaj, HH The Dalai Lama, HH The Pope and others.
9. **We are celebrating this year's tenth** anniversary of creation of OneJAIN bringing together over 35 Jain Organisations under one roof to work together on matters of common interest.

These are some of the important milestones in history of the Institute of Jainology. Finally I can't forget my wife Meena and my children Asha, Rony and Amit and the extended families who stood by me at all times supporting the work.

I wish to thank you all for your presence today and the Life Time Achievement Award accorded to me which I accept in all humility on behalf of past and present teams of the IOJ.

Best wishes

Jai Jinendra Jai Mahavir