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JAINS MAKE HISTORY IN THE U. S. - GURUDEV CHITRABHANUJI, OFFERS OPENING PRAYER IN HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVE

(Washington, DC May 22, 2001) Jains of North America made history when a Jain spiritual Leader, Gurudev Chitrabhanuji, became the first Jain Guru to offer the opening prayer in the House of Representative in celebration of 2600th birth anniversary of Lord Mahavir. On behalf of Federation of Jain Associations In North America (JAINA), Gurudev Chitrabhanuji of International Meditation center in New York was invited by Representative Frank Pallone, Jr., a founding Chairman of India Caucus and strong supporter of India. In over two hundred years old history of House of Representative, this was the third time that a non-Judeo Christian delivered the prayer. A Hindu priest from Ohio delivered the prayer last year.

After the prayer, Congressman Pallone paid tributes to the Jain philosophy of non-violence and to the Jain community in North America for organizing this event. He Stated Jains all around the world celebrated the 2600th Birth Anniversary of Lord Mahavir, the last of the revered 24 Jinas who spread the Jain message. I guess you could say in a way, Lord Mahavir was ahead of his times, once proclaiming all human beings are equal whether male or female, rich or poor. The Jain religion, which places heavy emphasis on personal and societal non-violence in thoughts, speech and actions, has flourished in India for over 3500 years". He congratulated Dr. Sushil Jain for organizing and thanked House Chaplain Coughlin for allowing Jains the opportunity to celebrate the Jain spirit on the House floor.

The prayer was delivered in English and said, "Let us all join our hands, heads and hearts together and bow to all perfect and liberated souls, and to all spiritual teachers. Let us pray that all elected representatives of the people of this Nation be guided in their thoughts, words and actions to achieve the greatest good for all. Let them have a high sense of responsibility and be free from temptations of selfish interests". The prayer ended with "May the entire universe attain bliss. May all beings be interested in one another's well being. May all faults be eliminated. May people be happy everywhere. Om Shanti! Shanti! Shanti!".

Present in the house Gallery were current President of JAINA, Dr. Mahendra Pandya, accompanied by all the past presidents of JAINA (Drs. Manoj Dharamsi, Tansukh Salgia, Sulekh Jain, Jagat Jain, Manibhai Mehta, and Dhiraj Shah), and over 140 delegates from all over USA, Canada, and representatives from Indian Embassy. JAINA as an Umbrella organization consisting of 57 Jain organizations in North America was established in 1981.

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In North America there are nearly 40 Jain temples and more than 80,000 Jains. JAINA will be holding its 11th Biennial Convention in Chicago from July 5-8, 2001. Nearly 10,000 Jains are expected to participate. The theme of this convention is Practicing Jainism in 21st Century.

This big event was initiated and guided by Dr. Sushil Jain, Medical Consultant to The White House, also JAINA's Public Affairs Council Chairman and Dr. Manoj Dharamsi, Chairman of the 2600th Birth Anniversary Celebrations of Lord Mahavir. A similar prayer is being planned in later part of this year in the US Senate.

After the ceremonies, Congressman Frank Pallone held a reception for all the attendees. Father Daniel Coughlin, Chaplain for the House also participated in the reception and thanked the Jain community for taking the initiative. JAINA representatives also presented a set of books on Jainism to Mr. Pallone, Chaplain Coughlin and their staff.

The day before, the Jain Center of Metropolitan Washington, D.C. held a reception at the Jain Center in honor of all the out of town visiting dignitaries.

After the prayers, the Jain Delegation met with Senator Hillary Rodham Clinton to follow-up on the invitation for 11th Biannual JAINA convention as Chief Guest. She expressed a strong desire to accept the invitation. The delegation also met with Senator George Voinovich to co-sponsor similar prayer in Senate.

As part of the yearlong celebrations of the 2600th Janma Kalyanak of Lord Mahavir, a big event is being planned in September 2001 in New York. Bhartiya Vidya Bhawan and the Jain Community will organize these celebrations. This function is expected to be presided over by the Prime Minister of India Shri Atal Bihari Vajpayee. Similarly, all the Jain organizations in North America (nearly 80) have been holding many such programs throughout the year in 2001. Several mayors and Governors have declared year 2001 as the year of Non - Violence to commemorate these celebrations. In Maryland, the State assembly also conducted prayer earlier this year.

A Senior Staff member of Representative Pallone also gave an extensive tour of the Capitol Buildings to all attendees. By Dr. Sulekh Jain, Houston, Texas, USA.

JAIN SAMAJ LOSES TWO PROMINENT JAINS IN HELICOPTOR CRASH

Ita Nagar (Agency) With profound sorrow, it is brought to the notice of all the Jain community that Shri S.K. Jain, Deputy Secretary in The Ministry of Human Resource Development, Government of India and Ms. Nandita Jain, Deputy Managing Director, Times of India Group of Newspapers expired in a helicopter crash which occurred minutes after taking off from Ita Nagar, capital of Arunachal Pradesh in the morning of 9th May, 2001. They were accompanied with the Education Minister of the State, Mr. Natung and Education Secretary of the State, Mr. Sange Lahden. The pilot and co-pilot of the helicopter also lost their lives in the crash. Dead bodies of all the persons have been recovered. The helicopter was on a special flight arranged for the Minister and others to inspect some of the on-going projects at different places in the State

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Shri S. K. Jain was the original resident of Kota in Rajasthan and was in the Government Services for over 30 years. He was also the Vice-President of the apex body of Mahavir International and several other social and charitable institutions and was an active social worker, having arranged several eye camps, blood donation camps and other programmes for helping the poor.

"Ahimsa Foundation offers condolences on this tragic accident."

ACHARYA RAJ KUMAR JAIN REWARDED

The Govt. of India, Ministry of Health & Family Welfare has rewarded Acharya Raj Kumar Jain, Rs. 20,000/- for his book "Yoga Aur Ayurveda". The award was given by the Health Secretary Sri Jawed Choudhury on 29.01.2001 in a simple and well-organised function. Acharya Raj Kumar Jain is a learned writer and proficient physician in Ayurveda.

Source: MLBD Newsletter, May 2001 Published by Narendra Prakash Jain, 40 U.A., Bunglow Road, Jawahar Nagar, Delhi-110007.

KEWAL GNAN KALYANAK AT LUCKNOW

As a part of the celebrations for the 2600th birth centenary of Lord Mahavir, Kewal Gyan Kalyanak was organised in the Ravindralaya Auditorium at Lucknow. The programme was arranged by the National Integration Department of the Government of Uttar Pradesh. Shri Vishnukant Shastri, Governor of the State was the Chief Guest on the occasion. The main speaker of the function was Dr. Narendra Prakash Jain. Shri Nirmal Kumar Sethi, President of All India Digambar Mahasabha, as well as representatives of Moortipujak and Sthanakwasi sects were present on the occasion. Dr. Narendra Prakash Jain in his speech said that Lord Mahavir not Jain but he was Jin, meaning thereby that he belonged to all castes and communities. He belonged to entire humanity and so people from all sections came to hear his discourses. It is believed that even the birds and animals joined these congregations and listened to him intently. We, therefore, should not keep him closed within the four walls of temples. On this day, the 2nd May, when this Kalyanak is being celebrated, Lord Mahavir had attained Kewal Gnan, after observing austerity (Tapasya) for a long period of 42 years.

BHAGWAN MAHAVIR AND AHIMSA IN THE 21ST CENTURY

An International Seminar was organised by Bhogilal Laherchand Institute of Indology, Delhi-36 at the Indian International Centre from 10th to 12th April, 2001. Many eminent personalities from within the country and abroad took part in the Seminar. About 40 invited guests spoke at the seminar on the topic. From amongst those from overseas, four were from USA, two from Germany and two from Japan. Dr. Lakshmi Mal Singhvi inaugurated the seminar. Shri Rikhab Chand Jain, President, 2600th Birth Centenary Celebrations Committee, presided over the function.

JAIN STORIES TO BE TELECAST AS T.V. SERIAL

A series of stories from Jain mythology will be telecast on Astha channel of T.V. with effect from 24th June, 2001. The telecast will be made in the afternoon from 1.00 to 1.30 P.M. and again from 8.00 to 8.30 P.M. The producer of the serial is Shri Manindra Jain and Music Director is Shri Ravindra Jain.

For any communication regarding the serial and its telecast, the address is Kamal Jain/ Hathi Shah, Jay-Jinendra Audio and Video, 85, First floor, Kailash Hills, New Delhi- 110065. Phone: 6620874.

SADHVI PRIYABHAYANJANA EXPIRES IN ROAD ACCIDENT NEAR BARODA

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Sadhvi Priyabhayanjana from the sect of Upadhyay Shri Maniprabha Sagarji and Acharya Shri Kailash Sagarji met with a road accident on 29th April at 7.00 a.m. near Baroda and expired on the spot due to severe head injuries. Sadhviji was on her way to Bharuch from Baroda, when a truck driven recklessly hit Sadhviji. and caused spot death. The news of death spread like a wild fire in the whole Gujrat. Jain devotees from nearby cities immediately rushed to the accident site and expressed their grief and condolences.

Various bids for the last rites were completed by the Jain devotees by 3.00 p.m. on 29th April , 2001. The bid for the first Agnidan (Fire) went to Shrimati Laxmibai Fojmalji Jhabak of Baroda. Other bids like Kamly

Ka Labh went to Shri Nareshkumarji Shantilalji Parekh of Baroda, first shoulder bid went Mahandarbhai Ladhuramji Parekh of Baroda, second shoulder bid went to Paras Kumar Gainmalji Bhansali of Khatiya, third bid to Rajandar Kumar Champalalji Jhabak of Baroda and fourth shoulder bid to Motilalji Fojmalji Jhabak of Baroda. The bid for Handi benefit went to Bhuvan Kumar Shantilalji Parekh of Baroda. Similarly, several other bids were auctioned and the benefits were received by several noted Jain devotees.

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