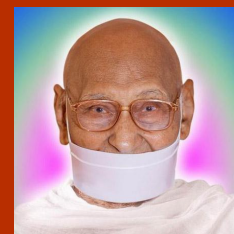




Ahimsa is Protector

Timeless Wisdom...

JVB Preksha Meditation Center Houston



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Akshay Pragya ji



Vinay Pragya ji

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New JVB Preksha Meditation Center opens its doors (Grand Opening Celebrations)

The new JVB Preksha Meditation Center opened its doors to the public over a three day opening ceremony. The event commenced on Friday, October 9th and ended on October 11th, 2009 which included meditation and acupressure sessions, cultural programs, various poojas (prayers), & community meals. This new 11,600-square-foot facility consists of two buildings, of which one is a specially designed pyramid shaped meditation hall, and is located at 14102 Schiller Road, Houston, TX 77082.

With the infinite blessings of HH Acharya Mahapragya ji, the new center has taken great shape to serve mankind. Celebrating 10 years since its inception, the center has shown tremendous progress under the continuous spiritual guidance of Samanijis— Madhur Pragya ji, Akshay Pragya ji, Pratibha Pragya ji, Jayant Pragya ji, Sanmati Pragya ji, Charitra Pragya ji, Jagat Pragya ji, Parimal Pragya ji, Vinay Pragya ji and Unnat Pragya ji. Their time, vision and efforts cannot be forgotten.

The opening celebrations were of historic significance for the city of Houston because of the auspicious congregation of eight Jain Samanijis' in Greater Houston area for the very first time. Houston Mayor Bill White and Harris County Judge Ed Emmett proclaimed October 10th, 2009 as **"PREKSHA DAY."**

The festivities began on Friday, October 9th afternoon, with Kumbha Sthapana, Akhand Dipak Sthapana, & Jwar Ropan. The highlight was the Jwar Ropan ceremony, which was performed by five young girls aged 6-10 years.

Among other highlights was a cultural program on Friday evening, which included recitation of Jain prayers and demonstration of yogic postures by children. These children have been attending the Gyanshala which is operated by JVB. This Gyanshala offers Hindi classes, yoga and meditation lessons to youngsters in the Houston area, and classes are taught by samanijis, teachers, parents and guest speakers. The Friday program also featured performances by kids - Mile Sur Mera Tumhara; a 'Silent Skit' on Anekantvaad by youth, and adults closed the program for the day with a beautiful & invigorating song celebrating the completion of the new center.



Kids demonstrating Yoga, Anekantvaad skit, Mile Sur Mera Tumhara & song by adults

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Grand Opening Celebrations

By: Shashank Jain

Newsflash

First Preksha Meditation Camp
at
Preksha Dhyam Pyramid Hall
November 14 & 15 2009

Contact Us
JVB Houston
14102 Schiller Rd
Houston TX, 77082
Phone: 281-596-9642



Grand Opening Continued.. (2)

Acharya Mahapragya ji dedicated the new facilities to the city of Houston & the USA on Saturday, October 10th 2009 and in a video message had the following to say—

“There is no such era which does not have any predicaments and we have to admit that the world at present is full of problems. Man is interfering with nature and in turn nature is also displaying its might. As such, there are natural calamities. Even greater is humanity’s strong ambition and issues generated by these ambitions. And this has made the whole environment chaotic. In this situation, a solution is expected. I believe there cannot be any better solution than spirituality.

A new center of Jain Vishwa Bharati Preksha Meditation has been built in Houston. Its goal and work should be the inspiration for awakening of increasing spiritual consciousness in people; and the working for the development of ethical values. In the words of Acharya Tulsi – Anuvrat (small vows), Preksha Dhyani (Preksha Meditation), and Jivan Vigyan (Art of Living), these three are one.

The principle of Anekant established by the Jain philosophy, which is the most effective in providing the answers to the world today. Along with these [there should be] the teaching of non-violence and detachment from excessive consumption. Lord Mahavir gave one principle – the control of consumption. Consume less. The center should work while keeping in mind all these principles and keep the goal that the problems of society and the world decrease and people live in peace and happiness.

I am confident that not only in Houston, but also in all of America, this center will act as a guide and will contribute to providing a solution in such a way that will help America free itself from the entangles of materialism and become more spiritual.”

Prof. Gary Francione was invited as the keynote speaker for the inauguration ceremony on Saturday morning. He is a noted animal rights activist and scholar, and Distinguished Professor of Law at Rutgers School of Law-Newark. Prof. Francione was highly impressed with the new facilities at JVB Houston and delivered a thought provoking keynote speech on the preservation of Ahimsa. He summed up his visit by saying - *“The Jain Vishwa Bharati Center is going to provide a marvelous opportunity for the Houston community to learn meditation and to learn more about the principles of Non-Violence that is at the core of Jainism.”*

Prof. Gary Francione delivering the keynote speech with 8 Samanijis on stage



Saturday morning also included a recognition ceremony of JVB Board Members for their financial and physical contributions to the building project and the dedication of its members towards the fulfillment of its goal. Plaques of appreciation were given to Hasmukh and Chandrika Doshi for their devotion in overseeing the construction of the new center. Sunil and Rita Mehta were honored with the title and plaque of Kalyan Sewaks for their selfless commitment to the center. Bimla and Swatantra Jain were honored for pioneering the development of the new center in Houston. Vijay Goradia – Chairman of Vinmar Group, founder of Pratham, and a well known philanthropist presented appreciation plaques to all of the recipients.



The master of the ceremony was Alok Jain, who as chairman of the JVB Houston construction committee has made tireless & limitless contributions along with construction project manager Hasmukh Doshi and JVB President Hasmukh Patel towards the conception and timely completion of the building project. In attendance were many local dignitaries including Consul General of India - Sanjeev Arora, Dr. Prem Chand Shridhar – Resident Priest at Arya Samaj of Greater Houston. Past JAINA & past JVB Houston President – Dr. Sulekh Jain, who has been recently conferred with Jain Ratna by JAINA was also present.

Dignitaries from the JVB family came from all over the USA and India. President of JVB, Ladnun— Surendra Choraria was at hand to deliver the message from Acharya Mahapragya ji, and Swami Dharmanand Ji from Adhyatma Sadhna Kendra, New Delhi delivered lectures on acupressure techniques for the heart. Kamlesh Shah, President of JVB Orlando along with his board members, and Sanjay Jain, President of JVB New Jersey were also distinguished guests at the ceremonies. Choraria ji remarked – *“Houston Centre has come out very well, I can say that it has become a model centre for us. We should think and plan further on this line. Once again my heartiest congratulations to the entire team of JVB Houston.”*

Chairman – Swatantra Jain, along with JVB Board Members (l-r) - Sampat Rampuria, Hasmukh Doshi, Sunil Mehta, Jugal Kishor Malani, Raman Patel, Alok Jain, Ila Patel, and Samanijis





Grand Opening Continued.. (3)

As mentioned previously, on this auspicious occasion JVB Houston was fortunate enough to have the blessings of 8 samanijis — *Mudit Pragya ji, Param Pragya ji, Akshay Pragya ji, Charitra Pragya ji, Amit Pragya ji, Shukla Pragya ji, Vinay Pragya ji & Unnat Pragya ji*.

Samani Charitra Pragya ji, lead the first ever meditation session in the newly built Pyramid hall, and attendees expressed having a delightful, awe-inspiring and unique experience. Samanijis' also presented an inspiring skit '*PREKSHA SPACE JOURNEY*', which was about the journey to the inner world through Preksha Meditation. They taught many exercises in a fascinating way to augur peaceful life.

Samanijis presenting—Preksha Space Journey Anter Yatra

Saturday evening witnessed the enactment of '*Shalibhadra*' – a historical play in Hindi about transformation of 'rags to riches to renunciation'. The performance had a cast of over 30 characters enacted by local amateur actors, but left the audience spell-bound with their amazing performance. At the conclusion of the play *Hasmukh Patel*,

President of JVB Houston offered a vote of thanks to the Inauguration Committee and the large group of volunteers whose hard work made this event a resounding success. Mr. Patel recognized *Ila Patel*, Board Member of JVB Houston, and her team –*Kalilash* and *Jas Patel* for doing an excellent job with the food arrangements during the three days of ceremonies.

Stills from Shalibhadra—a play in Hindi





Grand Opening Continued.. (4)

On Sunday, October 11th morning, a Vargodha (procession) was carried out that began at the Arya Samaj of Greater Houston premises, led by ladies dressed in colorful traditional attire each carrying a 'Kalash' on their head. This was followed by Bhagwan Mahavir Pratima Pratishtha & poojas.



Ladies dressed in colorful traditional attire each carrying a Kalash (brass pot) on their head taking part in the Vargodha (procession)

The JVB Preksha Meditation Center, Houston (under the auspices of Jain Vishwa Bharati, Ladnun, India) is dedicated to instilling physical, mental, emotional and spiritual health by utilizing Preksha Meditation techniques. Two Samanijis are resident at the Houston center almost throughout the year. *Samani Akshay Pragya ji* and *Samani Vinay Pragya ji* are currently stationed at the Houston center, and *Samani Akshay Pragya ji* has the following to say - "We are Acharya Mahapragya's disciples, trained with his energy and blessing to serve our community. We serve as a spiritual guide teaching the Jain philosophy of living a healthy, positive, and peaceful life. We believe in social harmony in all races, religions, and walks of life. Our aim is not to convert, because we respect all other views. Our aim is to change the nature, and change the heart of those who practice so they can feel peace and get other benefits from their learning."

Ashok Dhingra, President of the Board at India House, Houston commented that "Houston now has unique place to receive healthy and spiritual blessings."

Swatantra Jain, Chairman of the Board at JVB Houston feels that the Houston community should consider the new JVB Preksha Meditation Center as a gift to everyone, and should serve as a channel – to spread the message of Bhagwan Mahavir of non-violence, peace and harmony, as envisioned by Bhagwan Mahavir. He expressed a desire that everybody should feel free to utilize the new facilities to achieve inner peace and harmony. He congratulated the President *Hasmukh Patel*, members of the Board and the Executive Committee, the event chair & JVB Houston Secretary – *Pramod Bengani*, his co-chair – *Nikhil Jain* along with their dedicated team of volunteers for an outstanding job during the opening celebrations.

Text by Shashank Jain; Pictures by Navin Mediwalla

