

A REPORT ON

FOURTH BHAGWAN MAHAVIRA PRAKRIT FELLOWSHIP 2023-24

The International School for Jain Studies 'ISJS' proudly completed its fourth Bhagwan Mahavira Prakrit Fellowship Program. This annual program is being conducted by ISJS with the financial support of the Vardhman Charitable Foundation, USA (www.jvcf.org) to equip the scholars of Jain studies with proficiency in the ancient language of Jain canonical literature and enable them to read Jain scriptures.

➤ **COURSE CURRICULUM AND FACULTY MEMBERS**

In the nine-month-long program, which begins in September, the participants study the iconic Prakrit text *Siddha-hem-shabdanushasan* in which the 12th-century Jain monk Hemachandra compiled 1119 sutras that comprise vowels, simple consonants, conjunct consonants, indeclinables, declensions, conjugations, numerals, verb substitutions covering many tendencies like metathesis, anaptyxis, etc. of Maharashtri Prakrit. Besides, it also includes Shauraseni, Magadhi, Paishachi, Chulika Paishachi, and Apabhramsa dialects of Prakrit. The teachers also cover Ardhamagadhi for a comprehensive understanding of Prakrit.

The complete program has been taught at Pune itself. Dr. Ashok Kumar Singh along with two other faculty members Ms. Pragya Jain and Ms. Megha Kadhe teach and train our participants at the ISJS. In the current academic year, ISJS also introduced a short course on Brahmi script by ISJS faculty member Dr. Mukesh Mehta which helped the participants in reading the Prakrit inscriptions written in Brahmi script.

➤ **PRACTICE AND EVALUATION**

Other than word games, class exercises, and constant revisiting of the sutras, excerpts from various Jain and other literary texts were employed by the faculty members for teaching translation from Prakrit to English, like Acharanga, Uttaradhyayana, Dravyasamgraha, Bhagavati Aradhana, Abhijnana Shakuntalam, Karpuramanjari, Gathasaptashati, and

many more. To evaluate the progress of the participants, monthly tests were organized and at the end of the course, a final evaluation was done through three written exams and a viva voce.

➤ CERTIFICATION

After successful completion of the course, participants were awarded a PG Diploma by ISJS in association with Deccan College Postgraduate and Research Institute (a deemed to be university), Pune.

➤ THE PARTICIPANTS

1. Anahita Hoose

- Based in: Los Angeles, USA
- Affiliation: Developing a course in Jainism at the University of California, Los Angeles
- Achievement: Can read and decipher Prakrit texts

2. Leonardo Stockler

- Based in: Sao Paulo, Brazil
- Affiliation: Pursuing PhD from the Pontificia Universidade Catolica de Sao Paulo, Brazil on the relationship of monks and householders; Has received a fellowship from the government of Brazil to pursue a six-month internship at the University of Birmingham
- Achievement: Learned Devanagari, built up a Prakrit vocabulary

3. Samyak Modi

- Based in: Mumbai, India
- Affiliation: Hindi Granth Karyalaya, Mumbai
- Achievement: Selected as a research scholar at the University of California, Riverside, USA

4. Harshit Mishra

- Based in: Delhi, India
- Affiliation: MA in Sanskrit from Delhi University

- Achievement: Published a paper on the difference between Vararuchi and Hemachandra's treatment of Conjunct Consonants, interested in Jain studies and has enrolled for the ISJS Summer Program 2024

Testimonial

“The students of ISJS studied Prakrit grammar in a very detailed manner. An extensive questionnaire was prepared by me for the better judgement of the students. All the students were well prepared, and their level of understanding was quite good. I wish good luck for their bright future and congratulate ISJS for their sincere efforts for encouraging the young generation in the field of Prakrit and Jainology.”

~ Dr. Nalini Joshi, Chief Editor, Prakrit Dictionary, Sanmati Tirth Research Institute of Prakrit and Jainology, Pune & Examiner for Final Viva-Voce held on May 27, 2024, at ISJS

Shrinetra Pandey, PhD

Director (acting), ISJS