

Third National Annual Research Seminar on Jain Art, Architecture and Archaeology

Like the past two years, the Bhagwan Shitalnath Chair for Jain Archaeology, Department of Ancient Indian History, Culture and Archaeology, Deccan College Post-Graduate and Research Institute (Deemed to be University), Pune organised the Third National Annual Research Seminar on Jain Art, Architecture and Archaeology on the 14th August 2026. The seminar was attended by an array of scholars and an equally enthusiastic group of students and researchers. More than 120 people participated in the seminar, which tells us about the outreach that this seminar which was organised on a unique theme had.

There ceremony started with Namokara Mantra and lightening of lamp by the dignitaries. The inaugural ceremony was presided over by Prof. Prasad Joshi, Hon'ble Vice Chancellor (A). Prof. Shahida Ansari, Head, Department of AIHC and Archaeology delivered the welcome address and talked about the academic legacy of the institution. Dr. Shrikant Ganvir, Coordinator, Bhagwan Shitalnath Chair for Jain Archaeology, gave the introduction of the seminar and laid stress on the need to undertake more multi-disciplinary researches. Dr. Shrinetra Pandey, Director, International School for Jain Studies, was invited as the Guest of Honour, where he appreciated the activities of the Chair in the field of Jain Art and Archaeology. Dr. A. P. Jamkhedkar, Former Chancellor, Deccan College PGRI (Deemed to be University), Pune and Prof. K. Paddayya, Professor Emeritus, were also present for the inaugural ceremony. Memento of a replica of ayagapatta from Mathura's Kankali Tila Jain Stupa were given to the guests and the presenters as a memory of this seminar.

The keynote address was delivered by Prof. Shrinivas Padigar, eminent art-historian and epigraphist and Director (Academic and Research), Mythic Society, Bengaluru, on the topic 'Some insights into the Jain Art and Architecture with special reference to the Deccan'. He emphasised the interpretation of religious art in the philosophical lights with examples from Mathura's Kankali Tila. Special exhibitions on Jain Paintings (Arhat) by Boski Kubadia and on Jain Postal Stamps by Dr. Devadatta Pokharkar were inaugurated. Both the exhibitions were appreciated by the guests and the participants of the seminar.

The first technical session titled 'Exploring the World of Jain Iconography' was chaired by Dr. Manisha Puranik, Assistant Professor, Shri Balmukund Lohia Centre of Sanskrit and Indological Studies, Tilak Maharashtra Vidyapeeth, Pune. Oshin Bamb presented his paper titled 'The 'Not-So-Perfect' and 'Not-So-Ideal' Images of the Perfect Victorious Beings: Case Study of Jain Images from Vidarbha', highlighting the anomalies and other aspects in Jain iconography. Unique Saraswat presented on 'The Kathanaka Programme at Bhandasar Jain Temple: Narrative, Iconography, and Donor Agency in a Living Sacred Space', where she talked about the narratives from this specific temple and the guild of artisans who work on them.

The second technical session titled 'Jain Texts and Inscriptions: An Important Source of History' was chaired by Dr. Rajashree Mohadikar, Former Faculty, Department of Sanskrit and Prakrit, Savitribai Phule Pune University, Pune. Chaitanya Sathe presented his paper titled 'Shasanadevi Jvalamalini of Tirthankara Shri Chandraprabha in Southern Indian Jainism', where he spoke on the cult of this Yakshini as gleaned through texts and

iconography. Archit Jain spoke on ‘Sculpted Stones and Etched Histories: Archaeological and Epigraphical Study of Jain Remains from Chandrawad, District Firozabad’, focusing on the need of scientific documentation and preservation of this heritage. Chaitanya Ashtekar presented his paper titled ‘Mahasamanta Nimbadevarasa: A Twelfth Century Shilahara Feudatory and Jain Patron through Epigraphic and Literary Sources’, where he critically analysed the texts, archaeology and narratives to understand this patron’s contribution to Jainism. Amol Bankar presented on ‘The Concept of Dhyana-Chatusthaya in Jainism vis-à-vis Early Medieval Shaiva-Shakta Tantric Texts’, where he unveiled various aspects of religious studies through comparative methodology.

The third technical session titled ‘Understanding the Nuances of Jain Art and Architecture’ was chaired by Dr. Pranoti Meghal Lad, Head, Department of Architectural Conservation, Sinhgad College of Architecture, Pune. Prashant Goyal presented on ‘Guril Pahad: An Early Medieval Jain Sacred Landscape in the Chanderi Region, Madhya Pradesh’, where he presented various issues related to the future of Jain heritage and the challenges which the upcoming times hold for the heritage. Dhananjay Khandare presented on ‘Reinvestigating the Anjaneri Jain Temple Complex: Archaeology, Shared Sacred Landscapes, and Medieval Religious Interactions’, and analysed the co-existence of the multiple religious traditions and their sacred spaces within the larger sacred landscape of Anjaneri. Devadatta Pokharkar spoke on ‘Philately as a Medium of Religious Heritage: The Representation of Jainism on Postage Stamps’, giving due credits to the postal stamps which yield interesting way of commemorating heritage of Jainism. Suvarna Jain presented on ‘Jain Basadi of Kerala: A Vernacular Temple Architecture’, where she elaborated on the adaptation of vernacular architectural styles and material for the construction of Jain basadis in Kerala.

The fourth technical session titled ‘Interpreting the History of Jainism’ was chaired by Dr. Anahita Hoose, Research Fellow, International School for Jain Studies and Former Faculty at University of California, Los Angeles. Ludvis Jenomo Benzer A. presented his paper titled ‘Reassessing the Historicity of Samanar Kazhuvveram (Implaement of Jains) in the 7th century CE: An Archaeological Study’, where he critically analysed the impalement narrative and gave various interpretations. Dheepika K. presented her topic titled ‘Jain Sites as Centre of Learning and Education in Medieval Times- with special reference to Jain Monuments in Pandya Country’, where she highlighted the role of Jain sites as centres of education. Nelson Menezes spoke on ‘Beyond the Basadi: Documenting Reinterpreted, Relocated and Endangered Jain Sculptures in the Vernacular Landscape of Gujarat and Madhya Pradesh- A Preliminary Field Report’, where he presented a fresh perspective of looking at Jain remains which have lost their original context.

The parallel session titled ‘Recent Researches in Archaeology and Heritage of Jainism’ was chaired by Mr. Rupesh Madkar, Head, Department of History, Government College of Arts and Science, Chhatrapati Sambhajinagar. Parth Thakkar presented his paper titled ‘From Jain Manuscripts to Early Rajputa Miniatures: Stylistic Continuities in Western Indian Painting’, where he talked about the features of continuities in painting tradition with special reference to Jain paintings. Rahana R. A. spoke on ‘From Jain Monastic Centre to Bhagavathi Shrine: An Archaeological Study of Different Phases of Occupation and Modification at Chitharal, Knayakumari District’, where she analysed the changing biographies of the monument. Pinal Jain talked on ‘Kesariya Baba: Multiple Images, Myriad

Devotions', and made an attempt to understand the various communities and their narratives regarding the sacred pilgrimage site of Kesariya.

This was followed by a special lecture titled 'Decoding the Paintings of Jain Caves from Ellora' was delivered by Mr. Ravindra Borawake, Bhandarkar Oriental Research Institute-Infosys Fellow. He used modern technologies to recreate, reinterpret and understand the various paintings from Jain caves of Ellora, which otherwise lay neglected to the bare human eyes of the tourists.

The valedictory ceremony had guests such as Dr. Shubha Majumder, Superintending Archaeologist, Vadodara Circle, Archaeological Survey of India. He spoke on the importance of understanding patronage pattern through portraits, inscriptions and minute analysis of the archaeological remains. Mr. Deepak Shah, Owner and Director, Maharashtra Paper Company, Pune, was the special guest of this ceremony. He assured a continuous support for the research activities related to Jainism. Certificates were given at the hands of the guests.

Compering of the seminar was done by Oshin Bamb, Assistant Professor, Bhagwan Shitalnath Chair for Jain Archaeology. Gurvendra Kushwaha, Aman Kumar, Khushi Pasad, Ahalya K. N., Sahima Sinha acted as the rapporteur of the sessions. Dhananjay Khandare, Research Assistant of Bhagwan Shitalnath Chair for Jain Archaeology, presented the formal vote of thanks, followed by the Khamemi Savve Jiva Stotra and the National Anthem.

The seminar was successful in not only bringing all the young scholars working on Jain Studies, especially Art, Architecture, Archaeology and History, but also in creating an academic platform which is specifically dedicated to bridging the gap between academia and the enthusiasts. Interested people, scholars and young researchers interacted and discussed various aspects of Jain heritage during the question-and-answer session after every paper. The participants gained a lot of insights from the seminar and gave positive feedback.



Inaugural function of the Third National Annual Research Seminar



Prof. Shahida Ansari delivering
welcome address



Prof. Prasad Joshi, Hon'ble Vice Chancellor (A),
delivering the chairperson's remarks



Dr. Shrinetra Pandey, Director, ISJS, sharing his
thoughts on the occasion



Dr. Shrikant Ganvir delivering
introduction of the seminar



Prof. Shrinivas Padigar delivering the keynote address



Dr. Rajashree Mohadikar sharing her insights



Dr. Pranoti Meghal Lad sharing her insights



Dr. Manisha Puranik sharing her insights



Dr. Shrikant Ganvir felicitating Dr. Anahita Hoose



Mr. Rupesh Madkar sharing her insights



Mr. Ravindra Borawake delivering special lecture



Dr. Shubha Majumder delivering valedictory speech



Mr. Deepak Shah delivering special guest speech



Participants of the Third National Annual Research Seminar