

**BHAGWAN KUNTHUNATH ISJS AWARDS CEREMONY
AND
BOOK RELEASE CEREMONY**

A Report

Date: January 21, 2026

Venue: Abhay Prabhavana (with virtual participation via Zoom)

The Bhagwan Kunthunath ISJS Awards and Book Release Ceremony was conducted on January 21, 2026, at Abhay Prabhavana, was a distinguished event that brought together scholars, dignitaries, and enthusiasts of Jain studies. Organized by the International School for Jain Studies 'ISJS' (A Division of Amar Prerana Trust), the ceremony celebrated academic excellence, scholarly contributions, and the vibrant community dedicated to Jain philosophy and culture.



The evening began with a warm and heartfelt welcome by Ms. Pragya Jain, ISJS Research Associate, and the compere for the event. She extended greetings to the dignitaries, esteemed guests, and participants who were present both in-person and virtually. The session opened with the auspicious Mangalacharan (invocation), during which ISJS Research Associate Mr. Harshit Mishra recited verses in Prakrit and Apabhramsa, setting a solemn tone for the evening. Following this, the ISJS President, Dr. Shugan C Jain, delivered a welcome speech emphasizing the vision and dedication of ISJS towards promoting Jain studies and culture.

The President's welcome was followed by the felicitation of distinguished guests including Dr. Jasvant Modi, Dr. Meera Modi, Dr. Bhupen Mehta, and Dr. Manish Mehta who

were honored with ISJS ceremonial stoles and flowers as a mark of respect and appreciation. Dr. Modi is renowned philanthropist from the USA and a well-wisher of ISJS.

An inspiring address was delivered by the Chairman, Dr. Abhay Firodia, who shared insights and encouragement with the attendees. His speech was followed by the presentation of a memento to Dr. Jasvant Modi, symbolizing gratitude and recognition for his contributions. The session concluded with ISJS Director Dr. Shrinetra Pandey highlighting the mission and significant contributions of ISJS, reinforcing the institution's role in advancing Jain scholarship.

Book Release Ceremony

The book release ceremony featured the launch of two significant works recently published by ISJS. The first book, *Jains in India and Abroad*, authored by Dr. Prakash C Jain, was introduced by ISJS Senior Research Fellow Dr. Ashok Kumar Singh. This work explores the diaspora and cultural presence of Jains beyond India, offering valuable insights into their global impact.

The second book, *Applications of Anekantavad*, edited by Dr. Shugan C Jain and Preeti Rani Jain, was introduced by ISJS Associate Director Dr. Navin Srivastav. This volume delves into the philosophical doctrine of pluralism in Jainism, presenting its applications and relevance in contemporary contexts. The dignitaries, including Dr. Abhay Firodia, Dr. Jasvant Modi, and Dr. Shugan C Jain, formally released the books amidst applause and celebration, marking a moment of scholarly achievement.

ISJS Awards Ceremony

The centerpiece of the evening was the Bhagwan Kunthunath ISJS Awards, which recognize outstanding contributions to Jain studies. Dr. Shugan C Jain began the segment by explaining the awards' sponsors, criteria, and historical significance, providing context for the honors being bestowed.

Prof. Kanti Mardia was honored with the Best Book Award for his book, *Destructive Emotions: A Jain Perspective*, which offers a profound exploration of emotional states through the lens of Jain philosophy. Prof. Claire Maes received the Best Paper Award for her compelling paper titled *Sallekhana and the End-of-Life Option of Voluntary Stopping of Eating and Drinking: An Ethical Argument to Consider the Jain Practice of Fasting to Death as Different from Suicide*.

The Best Book Award citation was presented by Dr. Shrinetra Pandey, and the Best Paper Award citation was presented by Dr. Navin Srivastav. These citations highlighted the scholarly merit and impact of the works being recognized.

Towards the end of the event, Dr. Jasvant Modi addressed the audience with words of encouragement and wisdom, inspiring continued dedication to Jain scholarship. He praised and applauded the efforts made by ISJS throughout the past years which is visible

in the advancement of Jain studies around the globe. The ceremony concluded with a Vote of Thanks proposed by ISJS Co-founder Dr. Sulekh C Jain, who acknowledged the dignitaries, awardees, and participants for their valuable presence and contributions.

The formal program concluded with evening's social activities, including dinner at the Food Court and an outdoor visit to the museum guided by Dr. Abhay Firodia. These activities provided an opportunity for attendees and special guests to engage informally, fostering community bonding and celebration.
