

## **Celebrating the Legacies of Two Prominent Scholars : Prof. Padmanabh Jaini and Pandit Dhanya Kumar Bhore**

**Dr Medhavi Jain**

### **Introduction**

A two-day International Conference was organised at Shri Mahaveer Brahmcharyashram and Gurudev Samantabhadra Centre for Jainism, Karanja (Lad), Maharashtra, to commemorate the 100<sup>th</sup> birth anniversary of two great personalities who were classmates during the gurukul time — Prof Padmanabh S Jaini, a renowned scholar of Jain and Buddhist studies, and Pandit Dhanya Kumar Bhore, a respected spiritual leader and expert on Jaina scriptures. Scholars, spiritual leaders, and institutions came together to honour their contributions to philosophy, Indology, and religious studies. Dharma for Life, a unit of Tulip Foundation, also participated in the celebrations and highlighted the relevance of Prof Jaini's and Pt Bhore's work in today's world. This article highlights the event's key moments, including lectures, discussions, and cultural activities.

### **The Legacy of Prof Padmanabh S Jaini**

Dr Jaini was a globally recognised and respected scholar. His significant works, such as “The Jaina Path of Purification” and “Gender and Salvation”, connected ancient ideas with modern studies. He contributed to the understanding of karma theory, ascetic practices, and the comparative religions. This conference celebrated his legacy with various presentations. Dr Vijay Kumar Jain<sup>1</sup> discussed Dr Jaini's Contributions to Jain and Buddhist Literature and Dr Srinivas Reddy<sup>2</sup> shared personal memories of him as a Guru. Shri Manish Modi<sup>3</sup> examined many scholarly masterpieces of Prof Jaini, and Shri Amal Prabha Chaware gave an in-depth analysis of The Jaina Path of Purification. Aarti Gulgulia<sup>4</sup> presented Dr Jaini's contribution to understanding of Karma and Moksha in Jaina Philosophy. Online presentations were also given by Professor Dr Alexander Von Rospatt<sup>5</sup> and Dr Kristi Wiley<sup>6</sup>.

### **The Vision of Pandit Dhanya Kumar Bhore**

Late Pandit Dhanyakumar Bhore ji was a renowned scholar of Jaina philosophy and the science of logic (Nyayashastra). His scholarly contributions include the Marathi translation of the following works -

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<sup>2</sup> Brown University, USA.

<sup>3</sup> Publisher, Hindi Granth Karyalay, Mumbai.

<sup>4</sup> Visiting faculty, Amity University, Noida.

<sup>5</sup> University of California.

<sup>6</sup> University of California.

1. Mokshamarg Prakashak of Pandit Todarmalji
2. Sanskrit commentaries of Ācārya Kundakunda's work
3. Jain Tattva Mimansa of Pandit Phoolchandra Siddhantashastri

Through multiple editions, these publications reached thousands of homes and had a lasting impact on the Marathi-speaking Jaina community. At the conference, notable scholars also recognised his contributions. Pandit Shri Alokji Shastri (Karanja) discussed the subject Spirituality as described in the Panch Paramagama. Similarly, Pandit Ashok Luhariya (Mangalyatan, Aligarh) highlighted his Contributions to the Jaina Tattvagyaan.

### **Dharma for Life's Contribution**

As an active participant, team Dharma for Life played an important role in enriching the celebrations. Dr Medhavi Jain, Founder, Dharma for Life, was the Chief Guest of the first session and delivered an insightful address. Dr Palakh Jain, Joint Secretary, Dharma for Life, actively participated in the proceedings, and Ms. Aarti Gulgulia, Associate Editor, Dharma for Life, also presented a scholarly paper in the conference, throwing light upon the contributions of Prof Jaini.

### **Cultural and Academic Highlights**

The event was an amalgamation of intellectual discourse and cultural celebration. Some of the main highlights included:

1. Academic Papers: Scholars presented research based on the works of Prof Jaini and Pt Bhore. They discussed important topics such as Karma, Omniscience, Women's Salvation, the theory of relative pluralism, and the path to liberation.
2. Exhibitions: The attendees were shown the process of manuscript preservation, and rare photographs, as well as related artefacts, were displayed.
3. Cultural Performances: The sitar performance by Dr Srinivas Reddy brought a soothing energy to the event.
4. Interactive Sessions: Pujya Āryika 105, Shri Shuddho Aham Mataji, blessed the sessions with her online discourse. An inspiring interview with Pandita Vijyatai Bhisikar provided insight into Jaina philosophy and spiritual practices.

### **Conclusion**

The work of Prof Padmanabh S Jaini and Pandit Dhanya Kumar Bhore has significantly shaped our modern understanding of Jainism. Their contributions will continue to inspire scholars, as well as seekers of truth and knowledge, in the years to come.