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Special Commemorative Issue: JAINA Convention 2019

JAIN DIGEST
A Publication of the
Federation of Jain Associations in North America (JAINA)
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JAINA is an umbrella organization of local Jain Associations in U.S.A. and Canada. The purpose of the organization is to preserve, practice, and promote Jain Dharma and Jain Way of life.

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Editor's Note



Om Shri Veetragay Namah

Jai Jinendra,

It is with immense pleasure that we bring you the First Online issue of the Jain Digest! However, since a few of you have requested for a print version, we are printing a limited number of copies. As you know from the past ten issues, we choose a different theme for each issue and publish several articles on the topics under that theme. After the amazing, astounding success of the 20th Biennial JAINA Convention 2019, it should be no surprise that the theme for this issue is "JAINA Convention"!

Since the theme of this issue is JAINA Convention, we start out with four articles that give you a closer and deeper view into the events at the convention. These authors tell you about their own reflections at the convention to give you a feel of how extra-ordinary the experience was. We have also included a full convention report along with several pictures.

Over the past several months, hundreds of volunteers from JCSC, JCLA and all over world have worked together towards a common goal – to make this convention the best ever. The collaboration among 40+ committees was wonderful. The friendliness, the enthusiasm and the smiling faces of the volunteers were noted by everyone. More than anything else, we wanted to make sure our dignitaries and speakers had the best experience. The Sevaks in the Hospitality committee, under the leadership of Hamendra Doshi, Dr. Mahendra Shah and Raju Shah, did a wonderful job. One such Sevak, Shami Shah wrote about her experience with this Seva and the speaker that she was taking care of – Sharmila Oswal – also wrote about how grateful she was! Read about this in the article "Giving and Receiving Seva with Grace".

Although we had received a lot of verbal and written compliments during and after the convention, we knew that there were a few things we could have done better. Hence we requested the attendees' feedback in 30 categories as well as comments about what they liked and what we could improve upon. We received responses from 502 people within a week. You can read all about it in the convention survey section and see how well we did in the 30 categories through pie-charts and tables. My sincere thanks to Sameer Shah of Los Angeles for his help with this.

In the Online version of the magazine, we had included 41 essays by the pathshala students across USA. The essays are on the topics chosen from the convention logo: Seva, Samarpan and Sadhana. Due to space limitation we have not included these in the print version. If you are interested in reading those, we suggest you go to the online version at: <https://jaindigest.partica.online/magazine/responsive>

We certainly hope that you enjoy reading this issue of Jain Digest. Please send us your feedback by filling out the short form at: tinyurl.com/JainDigest-July2019 or send an email to jaindigestpublication@gmail.com

To those who could not attend the convention, hope you get a glimpse of it through these articles. And to those who did attend these articles are sure to bring back your own wonderful memories. Personally, my fondest memory is of the morning of July 6th. As I listened to the Keynote Speaker Nipun Mehta talk so eloquently and passionately about Grace, it was obvious that Grace was flowing – not just during the 4 days of convention, but right from the time Maheshbhai Wadher became the convener.

Let the Grace continue to flow in all our lives and keep us connected to the Lord !

**In Seva,
Dilip Parekh**

JAINA President's Message



Jai Jinendra,

Welcome to the first online issue of Jain Digest! As announced in February 2019, JAINA Executive Committee and Jain Digest Committee had been exploring the possibility of not distributing the Jain Digest magazine in the print format. In addition to saving trees and going Green, we are also interested in enriching your reading experience by utilizing multimedia and interactivity. We certainly hope to meet your expectations with this issue focused on JAINA Convention 2019.

As a new president of JAINA, I am humbled by the trust invested in me by the community. I promise to work diligently to make JAINA even more relevant in the lives of Jains of North America and throughout the world. I ask for your blessings so I may succeed in delivering a stronger, vibrant and more useful JAINA to over 100,000 Jains in our part of the world!

As you have seen by wide coverage provided by the media, the 2019 Convention was successful beyond our wildest dreams. I cannot thank enough the 600 volunteers who made the convention so enormously successful. The two co-conveners, convention board and 45 committee chairs; all functioned with vigor, in harmony, and with complete dedication towards the convention theme of Seva, Satsang, Sadhana, Samarpan and Self-realization. They all worked 24/7, day and night, and gave their best with smile, pride and poise! The survey filled out by 500+ people overwhelmingly praises all the volunteers. On behalf of all, I thank all the volunteers for their relentless pursuit and flawless execution

I also convey my sincere respect and appreciation to scholars and dignitaries for their blessings. The scholars, speakers, performers were the stars that recharged everyone's spiritual batteries and made this convention a memorable event. More importantly, I thank all 3,450 convention attendees who came from all over the world for their enthusiasm and generosity.

Let us commit to bringing zeal, energy and wisdom of the volunteers and various committees that contributed to the 2019 Convention to work towards making JAINA a distinguished member of Jain Jagat.

Sincerely,

**Mahesh Wadher
JAINA President**

<https://www.youtube.com/embed/htrsMMHLvss>

Preview YouTube video Convener's message during 2019 Convention

MY REFLECTIONS ON THE 2019 JAINA CONVENTION

By Anop R Vora, Rochester, NY



Anop Vora is involved in Community services and Promotion of Professional Education in the Jain Community. His current interests include: Listening to the Spiritual Discourses, Meditation, Reading and Writing on the religious topics. e-mail: vora5000@yahoo.com

Since year 1991, I have attended all JAINA conventions except one. This means the 2019 JAINA convention was the 14th convention I attended. What is my honest opinion about it? I would like to respond in just two words: "BEST EVER". I have never seen the convention management so well-integrated, so well-coordinated, so disciplined and so motivated. It represented the culmination of everything that was "good" in every one of over 600 volunteers from the local Sangh and many Jain centers from North America. My hats off to the vision of the Convener-Maheshbhai Wadher, Co-Conveners-Dr. Jasvantbhai Modi and Dr. Nitinbhai Shah, and the Convention Board. They have raised the bar so high that it could serve as an ideal, a beacon, and a source of inspiration for organizers of the future JAINA conventions for years to come. They brought out the best from the people and showed us what the Jain Community is capable of achieving when we are united and all march to the same tune to achieve a worthwhile goal.

I would like to highlight some of the important things I observed:

Registration

I walked into the Registration room on July 4th, Thursday around noon and was greeted by the enthusiastic volunteers with a big smile. Although I did not have a registration code, they were able to find it and gave me the registration material (wrist band, souvenir etc.) very quickly. The whole process took less than 3 minutes. I also noticed the lines were moving fast. Everything seemed to be going seamless and orderly.



Food Area

The convention organizers had set up a giant tent next to the convention center. It was fully equipped with dining tables, chairs and a large number of serving stations - all nicely laid out to minimize the waiting time. The food lines were a bit long during peak hours but they were moving smoothly without any commotion. There were volunteers all over, always ready to help. The food quality was excellent; so were the food supply chains. I never saw a serving station without adequate amount of food. Vegan as well vegetarian food was available, giving the attendees a choice. Boiled water was also provided. The convention organizers must have realized that the food management is very critical to the success of any social or cultural event and made careful plans in line with this important insight.

Morning Sessions

The morning sessions were packed with enlightening talks from many spiritually elevated people. The acoustic was superb. So was the huge screen in the middle and a couple of large screen on its left and right. Even the person sitting way on the back in the main hall could hear and view the speakers/artists on the stage without any problem. From the sessions I could attend, I felt that the talks from Sadhguru, Rahul Kapoor Jain, and Gaur Gopal Das were quite impressive as well as speeches from the well-known scholars such as Gurudevshri Rakeshbhai and others in the main auditorium.

Afternoon Breakout Sessions

The breakout sessions followed the great convention theme of Seva, Satsang, Samparan, Sadhana, and Self-Realization through parallel tracks. These provided ample choices for the attendees. Class room

sizes were quite satisfactory. Each class room was equipped with a screen, a projector, mikes, technical equipment supported by a competent technical person. Everything seemed to be well-planned.

This was the first time the concept of pre-registering for the break-out sessions was introduced to ensure orderly separation of the attendees to prevent chaos in popular sessions and of course to honor the safety regulations. The concept seemed to work in most cases. In some cases, although the sessions were marked full, some people did not show up, leaving empty spots. This was not fair to the people who had interest but could not get in because the system told them that those sessions had no more space left. We as a community need to make sure to show up when we register so that this does not happen in the future.

Evening Programs

Garba program was organized on July 4th, Thursday evening. I could not attend it but I heard it was done nicely. In parallel, a drama was enacted in another room by the Jain Sangh from San Diego. It centered on the life of Lord Rushabhdev and was performed very nicely. It re-emphasized the impact of inner enemies on our destiny by highlighting the events in the Lord's life and the lives of his sons and daughters. When the convention organizers realized that many people were turned back the first day due the space limitations, they made arrangement to repeat the drama on July 6th.

The cultural show on July 5th was probably the most memorable event at the convention. Many Jain Centers participated and I heard that some of the artists had practiced for almost 18 months! The show was indeed the show case of the artistic ability of our community. It showed very clearly what dedication, hard work and spirit of excellence can do. I have never come across a cultural show of this quality and content. It was better than what even the pros can do. It was just marvelous!



The Bollywood show on July 6th was nicely done as well. The attendees sang and danced to the tune of the songs for a long time. Every one left with a big smile!

Derasar



Mr. Rahul Jobalia who burned midnight oil for 11 months put together a very impressive 6000 sq ft temple complex at the convention. A few well known Jain stories were displayed along the wall in 3D by known artist from India Mr. Chandrashekhar Parab under the supervision of Jayana Shah from LA. It looked like a real temple. Many people visited it every day. Snatra Puja and Abhishek ceremony of 24 idols was performed on the first day of the convention. Bhakti, Bhavna, and Aarti/Mangal Divo were available every evening.

Conclusion

I was able to attend only some of the programs at the convention because many ran in parallel. I heard the programs such as Jain Academic Bowl and JAIN Connect went very well too. Those who did not come - I believe - missed out on one of the greatest conventions in the history of JAINA.

Overall, I came home rejuvenated with a feeling of "WOW". I felt that with the intellectual and financial resources our community has, only the sky is the limit in terms of what we are capable of accomplishing. Going forward, I hope the organizers of the future conventions would learn from this convention and continue to enhance the Jain values and culture.

JAINA - LEADING BEYOND THE WALLS

By Dr. Hema Pokharna



Dr. Hema Pokharna is a Certified Nonviolent Communication (NVC) Trainer. As an Executive Coach and Consultant she works with leaders and their teams to improve personal and organizational collaborative leadership. Hema is also an interfaith peacemaker and mediator, and has served on the board of Parliament of World Religions, Play for peace and presently serves on the board of Council of Religious Leaders of Chicago and also on JSMC and the JAINA Interfaith Committee. Email: hemapokharna.phd@gmail.com

When asked how often he went to the circus, William Stringfellow replied, "Not often... about 20 times a year." I have had the privilege to attend more than a dozen Biennial JAINA Conventions, most of them with my father, whose commitment to Jainism became our inspiration. My sister and I have been speakers at most of the JAINA conventions, and I also served on the interfaith committee. Over the years I have personally experienced how JAINA has come together, unified in its motivation and renewed vision, which is highly commendable.

The 20th Biennial JAINA Convention in Ontario saw the radical and wondrous splendor of Jainism for the 20th Century. It offered an opportunity with a purposeful platform to connect over 3400 Jains from North America and abroad, making JAINA a vibrant community hub leveraging the potential to promote peace and unity throughout the world.

Jains came because they have faith in humanity and hope that together, all who believe in a just and peaceful world can empower others to thrive with integrity, courage, perseverance, passion, and deep commitment to Jainism for the current and future generations.

Affirming the Divine Imprint, the Jain Temple stood amidst the convention center with the structure and vibrations of a real temple. It provided a peaceful and meditative space and experience for those who visited it. Early morning arti and bhakti by Ashish Mehta were very uplifting and moving. Shri Dipakbhai Bardolivala added further depth, meaning, and purpose to all that was being sung in the Snatra Poojan, making the Snatra Poojan an out-of-this-world experience. I felt like I could have sat in that energy forever.



The beauty and energy of the Pratimajis in the main Gabhara and the 24 Tirthankars around felt real and magnificent. Along with that was Shrimad Rajchandraji's serene and soft image, inviting one to take some time to sit down in prayer and ruminate on the five progressive steps to pursue the ultimate goal of Moksha: Seva, Satsang, Samarpan, Sadhana, and Self Realization.



Given that we are created to be a community responsible for each other, there were speakers sharing solutions to the challenges of the 21st century. The highlight of these conversations included the commitment to preserve, protect, and defend not only human beings, but also animals, encouraging Jains to commit to a vegan lifestyle.



The whole convention was a combination of healthy yet delicious food (abundant vegan options), great company, and an ambiance enhanced by recycled hand-crafted decorations. JAINA was an experience to remember and a beginning of many relationships and collaborations to Jainism for the 21st century.

The convention invited speakers of international fame like Sadhguru Jaggi Vasudev, Nipun Mehta, and Sparsh. Witnessing the father-and-son duo (Sparsh) was heartwarming and inspiring. To see such vibrant, joyful confidence despite the physical limitation was a treat. Sadhguru's serene presence and poise was

remarkable. Compassion exuded in every word and cell of Nipun Mehta's being as he demonstrated the simplicity and everyday practices to experience the Divine.

Amongst the many truly heartwarming experiences of the convention was the privilege of working with the team who designed the daytime programs and invited speakers. The team was led by Dilipbhai Parekh. His leadership and ability to attend to details is beyond imagination. His patience and follow-up with each speaker with care and empathy was noteworthy. I would highly recommend that the next JAINA host seek training from Dilipbhai, as how he managed the programming with such poise and inclusion of each team member's voice and input while attending to the purpose and theme of the convention was laudable. On Saturday, the 3rd day, there was a last-minute request for an alternative seating from a speaker, and Dilipbhai, in spite of his ultra busy schedule, was able to direct me to the people in charge of the facility, who entertained my request with unbelievable calm and enthusiasm. The team in charge of the facility received my request as if I was giving them a gift and wholeheartedly mobilized the resources to get me exactly what the speaker had requested. Just this exchange is an example of the high level of interconnectedness and commitment amongst the different teams and volunteers. I witnessed this seamless interconnectedness in the dining area as well.

On the last day, Ms. Audrey Kitagawa, chair of the board of the Parliament of World Religions, and my interfaith friend and sister Sadhvi Bhagwatiji spoke as plenary speakers, and I had the privilege to take them to lunch in the dining area. Rajubhai Shah was magical in mobilizing the plates and food for our guests. Their gratitude for the experience was beyond words. This was the last meal at the convention. In spite of the last hour, the servers and volunteers were serving food and managing the crowd with the same enthusiasm and hospitality as if it was the first hour of the convention. This experience speaks volumes about the commitment and alignment to the purpose of each volunteer.

In the last several years, I think JAINA has been able to enhance collaboration and participation of many sanghs across the United States. The cultural program One World One Rhythm was a magical and magnificent demonstration of what Jains can do through their unified effort. They entered into other nations' music and dances and performed flawlessly. The cultural program was a perfect example of what JAINA can do in building maitri across the globe, which happens to be our beloved Prime minister Narendra Modi's dream and strategy to weave the world as well. The whole performance, I imagine, literally fed and nourished each one with a global experience of oneness.



The cultural program rocked, and the earth also joined in, with the One World One Rhythm theme and gave us the experience of an earthquake, which only inspired the melodious chanting of Namokar Mantra in unison, awakening the awareness about the temporariness of life and living and the ability to maintain equanimity amidst danger.

The master of ceremony, Savita Jain truly added to the success of the convention. Her presence and skills allowed the remarkable efforts of JAINA organizers to execute a truly well planned, structured, and managed convention equally beautifully and efficiently on the stage.

The programs on the main stage truly showcased the capacity and potential of what JAINA can do to bring the message and direction of Lord Mahavir towards inner peace. This is sustained and shared with the world to create interfaith harmony not only to the Jains, but to all humanity.

The 2 pravachans given by Pujya Gurudevshri Rakeshbhai were both inspirational and instructive to each one to refine and calibrate their own human instruments to accelerate on the path shown by Lord Mahavir to uplift the soul, along with contributing to humanitarian welfare and well-being. We owe much to JAINA, because it was JAINA 2005 when we first heard Pujya Gurudevshri Rakeshbhai's pravachan and later met Him in person, and He became our Guru and has speeded us significantly on the spiritual path.

I wish for JAINA to continue to address world challenges and confront increasing social and ecological issues with peaceful and innovative strategies, and lead beyond the walls for world peace.

AN INSIDER'S VIEW OF A MEMORABLE JAINA CONVENTION

By Dr. Manish Mehta



Manish Mehta is an engineer and entrepreneur based in Ann Arbor, MI, USA. He is the Founder of M-Tech International LLC, organizing new technology ventures and research consortia for the commercialization of new materials and manufacturing technologies in transportation and defense systems.

Manish volunteers on several JAINA committees. He is a Past President of Rotary Club of Ann Arbor North, and was awarded his Rotary District's 'Humanitarian of the Year' in 2015 and 2017. He and his wife, Dr. Varsha Mehta (a Professor of Pharmacy), are passionate about uplifting those at the "bottom-of-the pyramid." He has organized several projects on healthcare, literacy, microfinance, water and sanitation in India, Bangladesh, Nigeria and Nepal.

It was an honor and a privilege to work with an outstanding Convention Daytime Program Co-Chair, Shri Dilipbhai Parekh, and our volunteer Committee to help organize one of the best JAINA Convention speaker lineups addressing diverse spiritual and non-spiritual topics across the six tracks. Varsha and I enjoyed getting to know several of our distinguished speakers through informal chats and interviews, as well as spent time exploring/monitoring many lectures, and in the process, I captured some interesting video clips of special lectures and events. Enjoy this sample of just a few of my favorite speakers and events.

Satsang in the Beautiful Temple

Having heard throughout the year-long Convention Board planning meetings about the unique on-site temple construction project undertaken by Shri Rahulbhai Jobalia with his Mexican carpentry assistant, I couldn't wait to visit and worship in it. The temple was one of the major attractions at the convention. It was an epitome of art on all scales from Conception to Installation. Besides that, 80% of the material purchase was done by him, which required a full-time job and a lot of hard work. To complete everything from designing concept, a blueprint to building an actual working Derasar in the shortest possible time considering all the protocols is truly commendable. JAINA appreciates and supports such efforts and hard work.

The moment I entered our Jain Madame Tussaud's, I was fascinated by the beautiful expressions captured by Artist Chandrashekher's (from India) labor of love in each of the exhibit's models, and them truly mesmerized by the beautiful and melodious Bhakti songs rendered by Shri Narendrabhai Nandu and son Megh Nandu. In combination, their voices brought each character and Tirthankar magically to life...And for a few moments, I felt instantly transported back in light-years of time to the bygone era when our Tirthankars were preaching!

<https://youtu.be/Pg7fJ4vEsGI>

A Rocking Start to the Cultural Program

July 5th 2019, 8:19 pm - Just as the Cultural Show was about to start in the Main Hall, the earth beneath us shook – not from the drum beats, but tremblors. While the long track lights above swung back and forth, Sadhvi Sanghamitraji, with great presence of mind, recited the Navkar Mantra and helped to bring calm to the 3,400 people, many of whom were on the verge of panic and about to rush outside. "The show must go on" announced Dr. Nitin Shah and then we all witnessed the best ever 20-item cultural extravaganza "One World, One Rhythm". No more tremors! <https://youtu.be/5iV597Nhi1U>

Coffee with Philip Wollen and Erika Abrams

What an honor to meet early morning on July 5 with our vegan diet advocates over almond lattes, and especially to get to know both, Australian Keynote speaker Philip Wollen and Udaipur-based Breakout Speaker Erika Abrams. After learning of each speaker's amazing journey and mission over informal chats, our conversation focused on the existential challenges in sustainability and ethics the world faces, which humanity must address urgently - i.e., animal-based agriculture and slaughter, and the need for a compassion revolution. They unanimously agreed that Jainism holds the key for spurring transformative change in humanity.

https://youtu.be/CKs_DoJXBKY

Short Clip of Erika Abrams' Lecture on The Compassion Revolution Under Way.

Her activism and passion for street animal rescue and rehabilitation in India speaks for itself...

<https://youtu.be/vwj5Sq5twM8>

A Visit to the Luvin Arms Animal Sanctuary Exhibit Booth at the Convention

It was an honor to meet and interview Shaleen and Shilpi Shah, who run a farmed animal sanctuary in Colorado called "Luvin Arms" They described the vital role that volunteers and interns play in operating a farm animal sanctuary in America, and have a large volunteer group, which is no small feat! Luvin Arms deserves the North American Jain community's support and volunteerism. <https://youtu.be/9QVzkQsHccl>

Jay Jain Explains Skills Needed for Shatavdhan

In this video, Mr. Jay Jain, disciple of Acharyshri Chandanaji inspires the convention session audience of nearly 400 (which was comprised of many youth participants) on how they, too, can persevere to learn the potential of brain power with awareness techniques to master the art of Shatavdhan.

Fond Memories of Time Spent with Distinguished Speakers...Philip Wollen, Ingrid Newkirk and Erika Abrams



These photos represent some of our fondest Convention moments spent meeting with the movers and shakers of the international animal rights and vegan movements. Only at JAINA Conventions would one be able to get so close and friendly with like-minded individuals who are passionate about changing the world...





SUHAANI YAADEIN (PLEASANT MEMORIES) OF JAINA CONVENTION

By Savita Jain

Master of Ceremony, JAINA Convention 2019

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Years come and go but a few become memorable and stay with you for the rest of your life. The year 2019 is one of those years - made memorable by the JAINA Convention 2019.

I remember being so excited when announcing on my JSMW Podcast (Jain Society of Metropolitan Washington) the names of dignitaries attending the Convention. When Sadhguruji's name was announced as a keynote speaker, my subconscious mind was thinking that it was a publicity stunt, but at the same time, my heart started to beat faster with the thought that I will be able to see and listen to Sadhguruji live. The list of inspiring speakers kept increasing as the convention got closer.

It was May 30! Maheshji Wadher appointed me the Master of Ceremonies for JAINA 2019!! With lots of excitement and the knowledge that I had been assigned an incredibly important volunteer role in the convention's proceedings, I began my journey to California.

On the first day of convention, July 4th, as soon as the registration process began, we were greeted by a volunteer's smiling face and I instantly knew that if it were starting off this well, the convention could only improve from here. Time went on, and with it, everyone's smiles, and happiness only increased. From breakfast, to lunch, tea time, dinner, and midnight snacks, the warm welcomes and respect from all the volunteers were cherished by all. The afternoon sessions were so plentiful and compelling that it became hard to choose which one to attend. In each and every session I attended, I was blown away by the amount of knowledge and inspiration each speaker exuded. Additionally, the number of volunteers, populating almost every room and hallway, was incredible; no one was ever left aimlessly searching for any help they may have needed.

JCSC and JCLA welcomed us into their home town with open arms, making sure we felt at home although we were 2000+ miles away. We were there for solely four days – however, for these four days to go off without a hitch, innumerable people worked day and night for months on end. Since the time Los Angeles was announced as the next convention destination, these selfless people had envisioned the 20th convention to be the best ever and they delivered on it. The quote “volunteering is a work of the heart” proved to be entirely true at this convention.

I am humbled and honored to have witnessed this monumental convention. Because of the opportunity I'd been granted, I had the ability to introduce and come face to face with such iconic figures as Sadhguruji, Gaur Gopal Dasji, and countless distinguished dignitaries. The moment Sadhguruji patted me on the back is one that I will hold dear for years to come. Receiving blessings and love from all the attendees of the convention, the Sadhujis and Sadhvijis, and the dignitaries, was an astonishingly gratifying experience that I am lucky to have had.

They say that time flies when you're having fun. On July 7th, the convention physically ended – but it will continue to live on in all of the attendee's hearts. With every photo, video, and memory that pops up, we all become more and more energized for JAINA Convention 2021!

GIVING AND RECEIVING SEVA WITH GRACE

(Editor's Note: Shami Shah of Jain Center of Southern California helped one of the Convention speakers, Sharmila Oswal, from Pune, India. Here are their comments about their experience; which shows that "Seva" is not a one-way street – it benefits both; the giver and the receiver.)

Putting the Convention Logo into Practice By Shami Shah

I was fortunate to be given an opportunity to be a part of the Hospitality Committee by JCSC at the JAINA Convention. We were assigned to assist dignitaries and speakers during the convention. This experience was absolutely incredible and more than me GIVING in terms of volunteering I RECEIVED in terms of satisfaction. The idea of being a part of this committee was to put my best foot forward in helping and keeping all our esteemed guests comfortable and happy.

I loved the title of "SEVAKS", given to all the volunteers because it kind of resonated with theme of our Convention this year. So this title really made me as a SEVAK meet a group of SATSANGIS (like minded Sevaks) give total SAMARPAN to all our guests and look to their needs to the best of our ability!!!! I for sure have made some friends for life and hopefully we have left a mark on the hearts of each and every guest whom we attended to.

Thank you JCSC for giving me this opportunity in doing what I am really passionate aboutSEVA where putting needs of others comes first and helping me be a better person!!!!



Thanks a Million !! By Sharmila Oswal

Please accept my gratitude for your wonderful hospitality, and great warmth. Your sevaks were outstanding. Shami and Chiragbhai, and other all sevaks were simply outstanding.

There are no enough words to express about solid beautiful and most wonderful arrangements. Last but not the least, I want to say thanks a million to Manishbhai Mehta, Dr Jayeshbhai, Dilipbhai, Prembhai, Rajubhai, Chiragbhai, all volunteers - don't remember names of all - for being there 24x7 for us.... Manishbhai Mehta you are the greatest soul on this earth!!! Thanks soooooo much JAINA for World class experience!! Mayor Naresh Solanki invited me at his home, he appreciated so much about JAINA...Thanks soooooo much for everything!!!

To provide your comments about the articles, please go to <https://tinyurl.com/JainDigest-July2019>

JAINA Convention 2019 Survey Comments

Right from the first day of the convention, the attendees were very generous in giving us compliments about everything they liked. Everyone was enjoying the various events, decorations, food, etc. We were certainly grateful for what we heard. However, we also knew that there were a few things we could have done better. Hence we requested the attendees' feedback in 30 categories as well as comments about what they liked and what we could improve upon. Within a week, we received responses from 502 people. Below is a summary of the comments by attendees followed by pie-chart graphs of how well we did in the 30 categories. My sincere thanks to Sameer Shah of Los Angeles for his help with this.

What did the Attendees Like?

1. Excellent overall Planning, Management, Execution
2. Great Venue with nice layout of halls and conference rooms
3. Amazing Volunteer enthusiasm, dedication, collaboration, friendliness
4. Wonderful Hospitality, Smiling Faces, Kindness of Everyone
5. Great Food with many choices, Good Vegan Food
6. Very well managed food service
7. Beautiful Temple, Bhakti-Bhavana at the Temple
8. Excellent, Fantastic, Very Professional Cultural Program
9. Professional Stage Management and Emcee, Less announcements, Good use of LED screens
10. Astounding Keynote Speakers
11. Good Variety of Session Topics
12. Excellent Speakers. Lots of good speeches
13. Smooth Registration process at the convention center
14. Good Location with proximity to hotels
15. Informative Presentations on Vegan life style, Diabetes,
16. Excellent Shuttle Service between hotels and convention center
17. Good Yoga Sessions
18. Great Audio/Video quality with Professional management, Great Live Telecast
19. Good hotel accommodations
20. Wonderful opportunity to get together with family & friends and networking
21. Courteous Convention Center Staff
22. Excellent Attention to Details
23. On schedule performance of all events and activities
24. Excellent caring for disabled people

Some Specific Comments

“Extremely well organized. It achieved my goals of learning new things & hence spiritual enhancement.” (Shakopee, MN)

“The keynote speakers' line up was the main attraction for us to sign up for JAINA.” (Fremont, CA)

“Everything I liked about the convention. It was superbly and masterfully orchestrated program.” (Leawood, KS)

“Volunteers who had contribute their TAN, MAN and Dhan and made this entire event mind blowing to thousands people.” (Mountain View, CA)

“Great Programming variety to meet diverse interests. Best-ever speaker lineup of both Keynotes and breakout speakers which generally flowed well and on-time” (Ann Arbor, MI)

convention was perfect. The programs, the choreography of where people were at what time, the treatment of speakers, the volunteers' friendliness, the smashing keynote addresses by absolutely every speaker in the plenary sessions...this was a model convention. Thank you for giving me the opportunity to attend. I loved it, met many wonderful people, felt inspired by Jains and Jainism once again---" (Udaipur, India)

"Anekantvad in practice, variety of speakers and key murtis in temporary derasar. Amazing 3,500 attendees and 91 speakers. Agility and humbleness of organizing team from President to Peon!" (Vadodara, India)

"Extremely well organized event with several choices of Speakers and above all was the mind blowing experience of the Cultural Show!!! Bravo to ALL!!!" (Tustin, CA)

"Gave feeling why me & my wife are lucky to be JAIN" (Laguna Niguel, CA)

"Everything was great. No unnecessary speeches. Time between programs was very effectively used by the emcee. Her few lines of singing to introduce the events were very effective. Awards and donation appeal was short but very effective. It was good that religious topics were in breakout sessions, and spiritual and general topics were in main sessions." (Wellesley, MA)

"It was an amazing feeling to be a part of JAINA 2019 Convention. It was very well organized. Go JCSC! " (Tustin, CA)

"Spiritually uplifting discourses from the saints and scholars, enthusiasm of the host sangh (JCSC), welcoming and helpful volunteers, wonderful networking opportunities, delicious food menus, very impressive & fantastic cultural programs, convenience of the location. We greatly appreciated all the pre-planning, management of the events, dedicated hard work of all the volunteers to make this convention superbly successful. THANK YOU for the great convention experience you all have provided." (Lincoln, RI)

"Many first time innovations, speakers line up and overall professionalism." (India)

"Everything. A lot of improvement from the 2017 convention. My faith and confidence has been restored." (Huntersville, NC)

"Extremely well organized! Timely topics and great speakers!!" (Ashland, KY)

"Everything from management to lodging, boarding and wonderful speakers and All programs were flowing smooth with its time schedule. All programs were fantastic." (San Diego, CA)

"Lectures, cultural programs, cleanliness, food and water, temple and tremendous hard work of volunteers. You name it and we loved it. This is my 4th convention. THIS IS THE BEST. In every single which way. Kudos to all of you. And Thanks a Billion. You are the Best." (San Diego, CA)

"Very well organized and very very awesome speakers. The temple was phenomenal and beautiful! Vegan food was great idea." (Indianapolis, IN)

"This was one of the best convention that I attended. This was professional level of planning and kudos and thanks to organizing committee and the volunteers who managed this scale and this well. Thanks to Mahesh bhai and Jaswant bhai for giving their heart, soul and money to make this JAINA program an amazing program. We can see that you all have put your heart into this. Thank you for running Vidyodaya and Khatarnak Shatru twice. It helped. I will suggest bring some more of such professional movies and plays in JAINA next time." (CA)

"It is indeed the great show (assembly or platform) of Jains on the earth where various talents of Jains including knowledge of Jain religion were exhibited with the most modern technology in the best possible way. Mobilization of youth talent from different parts of US was very special and exemplary. Main Hall activities were very well executed." (Aligarh, UP, India)

"Fantastic speaker line up, great networking opportunities, convenient location and proximity of hotels to convention center. Ample food outstanding volunteer team providing top-notch hospitality and welcoming guests." (Columbus, OH)

“Best Speakers including Keynote speakers, Organization and delivering the whole convention with smiling face of all volunteers. Super successful convention. Wish all JAINA Conventions are like this every year. We Salute All the dedicated Volunteers and Convention Committee for a wonderful hard work and delivered all the task. Thread of Jainism well represented throughout Convention, was well carried out with "FIVE S " Seva/ Samarpan/Sadhana/Self Realization.” (San Jose, CA)

“Keynote speakers, Phillip Wollen, Sadhguru, Ingrid from PETA. Loved the temple; morning and evening Bhakti with Shri Ashishbhai, Shri Deepakbhai and Sanghamitraji. All vegan meals with variety. Well-coordinated team of volunteers, Venue, Location. Shri shrenikbhai Gala's swadhyay.” (Schaumburg, IL)

“It was well organized, thanks to all the volunteers and the entire Jaina committee. We truly liked the mandir and the ambience and the crew that performed the bhakti. The quality of the cultural program, drama, the topics presented by various speakers was outstanding. Food and transportation management was perfect. Additionally, thank you for the wonderful app and all the communication via emails.” (Greer, SC)

“I enjoyed all the events and loved the decorations. My especially favorite parts were the youth events and JAB games.” (Fremont, CA)

“Meeting excellent thinkers and presentations on breakout sessions. Superb Cultural program. Superb Audio Visual creations.” (Porter Ranch, CA)

Suggestions for Improvement by the Attendees

1. Lunch should have more variety of Indian items rather than Mexican and Chinese
2. Food was spicy; especially for younger kids
3. Go fully Vegan for future events
4. Keep sessions by popular speakers in large conference rooms
5. Allocate more time to good speakers and complex topics
6. Marking sessions “full” kept people away from the sessions and rooms were not full.
7. Entry to sessions should be unlimited. There should not be requirement of prior registration.
8. Invite new speakers; don't repeat the same every time
9. Invite more Jain speakers to talk on Jainism
10. More interactive sessions with Youth
11. Jain Connect App should provide profiles of attendees
12. Jain Connect needs overhaul
13. Have fewer breakout sessions
14. Provide assigned space for elders to rest
15. Needed more events for Youth and YJP
16. Use more, smaller shuttle buses
17. Bollywood Night was mediocre
18. Provide day care for younger kids
19. Too many emails
20. Exhibit area was not well publicized, or placed with maximum foot traffic
21. Reusable bottles were of poor quality; they leaked
22. Needed better Mobile App with accurate information
23. Website and Mobile App teams need adequate staff
24. Better recognition of volunteers; especially for out of town volunteers
25. Recognize sponsors on stage
26. JAB winner recognition should be done on main stage
27. The main hall was too cold
28. Use paper cups, avoid plastic
29. There was confusion about availability of lunch on Sunday
30. Too many seats for VIPs
31. Photographers in middle in the main hall blocked the view for many people

Some Specific Suggestions

“It would be great if we can avoid Ratri Bhojan (food/drinks after sunset). Adding healthier items and making food less spicy would benefit all of us (minimize fried food)” (Walnut, CA)

“Have regional mini-conventions every other year to fill in the gap years when there is no convention. For example, offer a 1.5 day convention in DC for the northeast next year and then move it to Albany for the northeast in 2022. This would continue due the Jaina connections but at a regional level.” (North Wales)

“This is a Jain religion focused events. I recommend not keeping Bollywood or Raas Garba events. For the entire event, I didn’t see anything around “Bhavana” or any sort of that event. Something to think about.” (Paramus, NJ)

“Please ask future attendees of the future conventions to rank order their preference for topic/speaker and based on the cumulative input, arrange the lecture rooms and pair the talks with the interest.” (Leawood, KS)

“Special dhyana(meditation) shibir should be conducted to connect with inner self and disconnect with outer world.” (Fremont, CA)

“Cultural programs showed that Jainism does not own it's own cultural heritage. It could include plays on Jain Puraan like chandan bala, sati soma and concepts like forgiveness environment pollution, terrorism, etc. They should be knowledge imparting instead of mere entertainment.” (New Delhi, India)

“We do not need to give gift bags any more. They are a big waste of paper, costs and supply. Most Jains do not need any more items in their home and we should try to minimize giving worldly possessions. Next time I would suggest not doing gift bags, and providing digital copy of the JAINA book.” (Anaheim, CA)

“Bollywood night needs improvement, need better singers and better administration as most of time was wasted in dancing & there should be no dancing on stage, it look so bad.” (Buena Park, CA)

“Please consider having poster exhibits in the main corridors to highlight the tenets of Jainism and the work of select NGOs. That would increase the educational component of the Convention.” (Phoenix, AZ)

“Provide one or two golf carts for handicapped person (in the convention center) if possible” (Troy, MI)

“Acoustics at the evening functions were excessively loud. Background lighting too flashy for morning and evening functions, obscuring the speaker/ performers.” (Cincinnati, OH)

“There was no special reception for sponsors to meet with invited speakers and dignitaries. This made the sponsors unhappy and could affect future sponsorship.” (Ann Arbor, MI)

Total 500 + Responses from Participants from All Over the World

Survey Response Received From Participants from the 4 Major Continents

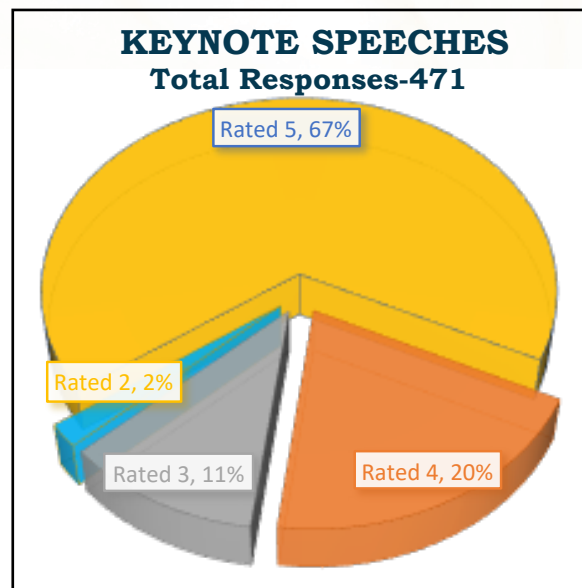
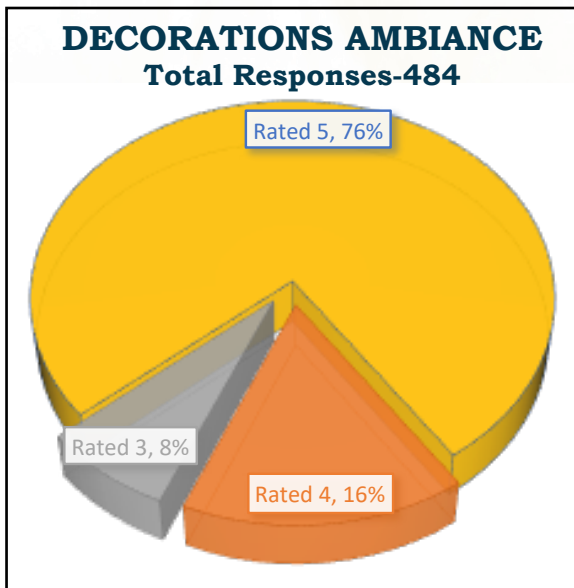
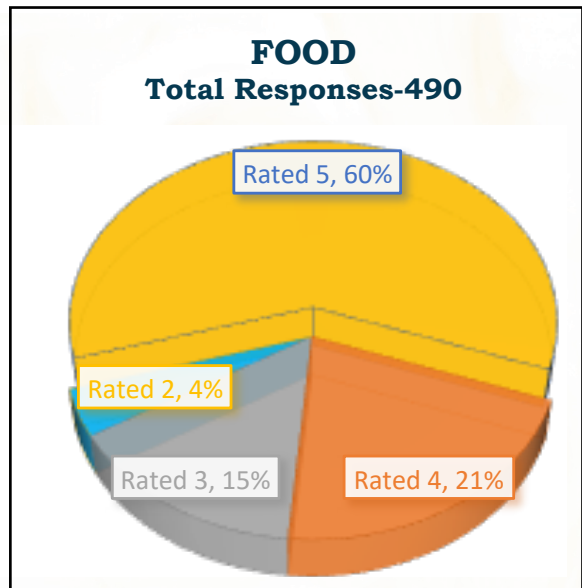
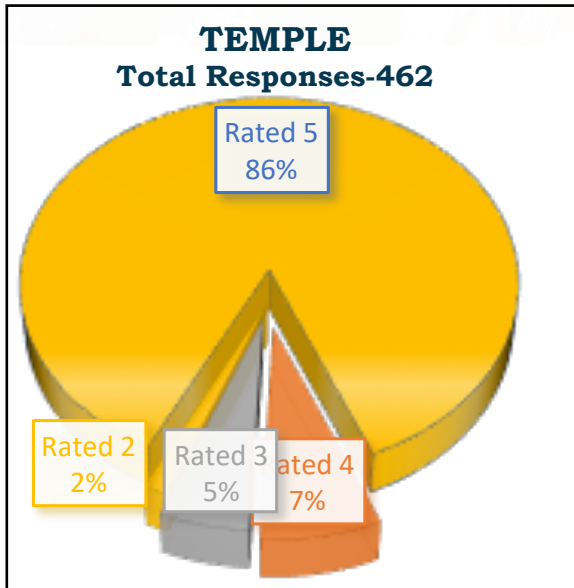
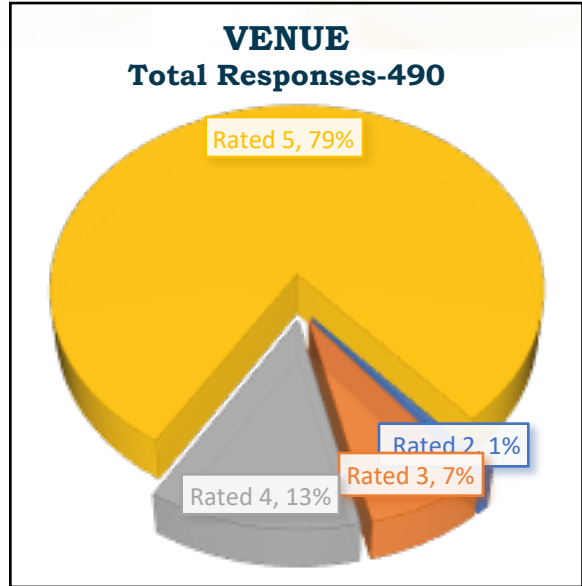
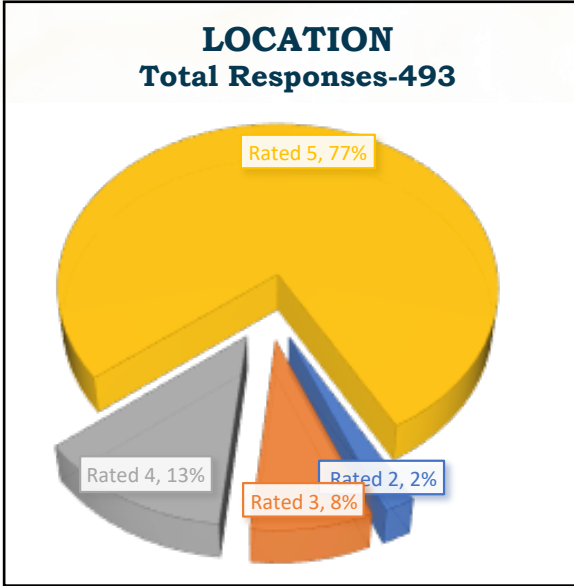
From North America

From India

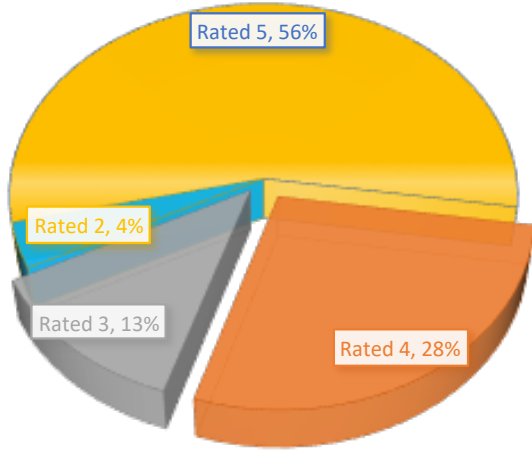
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From Europe

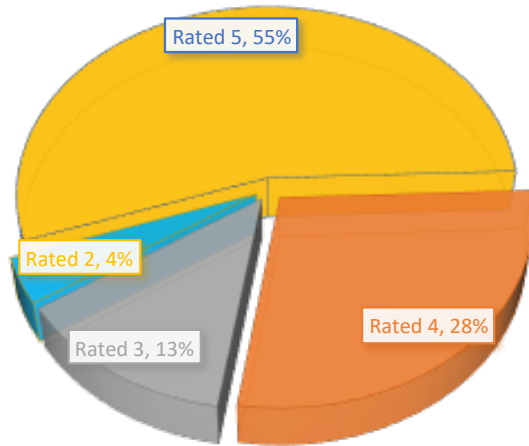




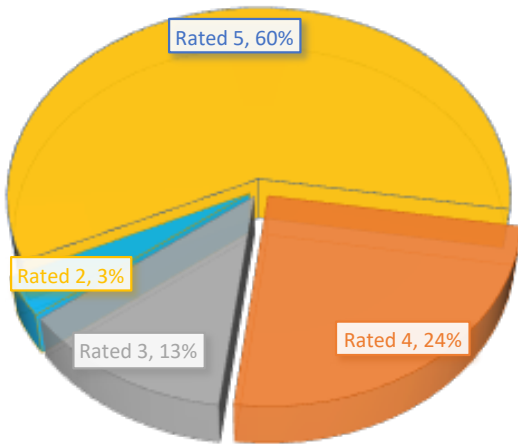
OTHER MORNING EVENTS
Total Responses-422



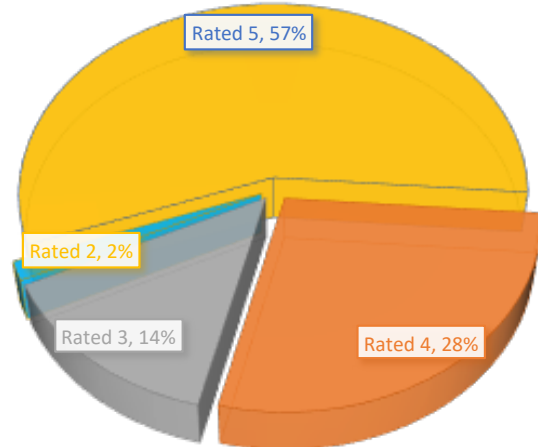
AFTERNOON SESSIONS
Total Responses-460



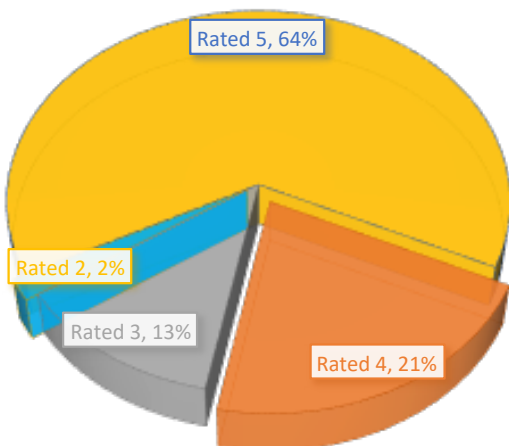
CONFERENCE ROOMS
Total Responses-442



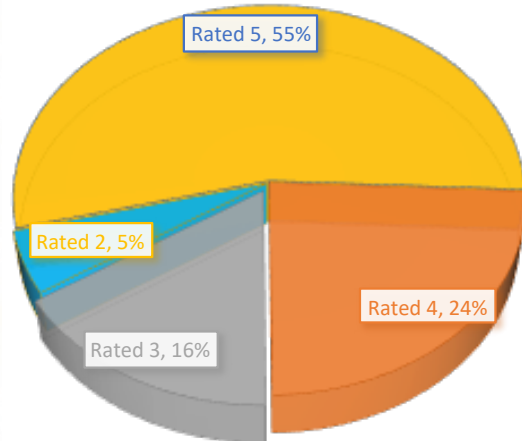
GARBA_RAAS
Total Responses-388



DRAMA - KHATARNAK KSHATRU
Total Responses-279

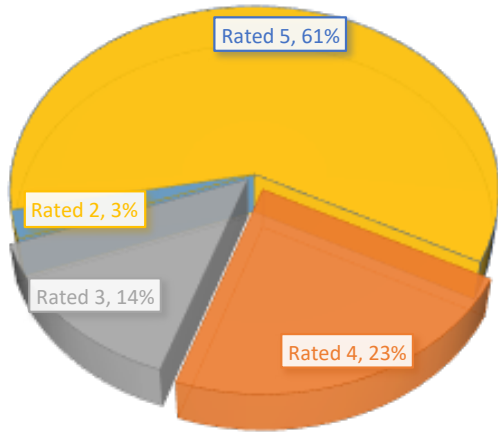


MOVIE - VIDYODAYA
Total Responses-175

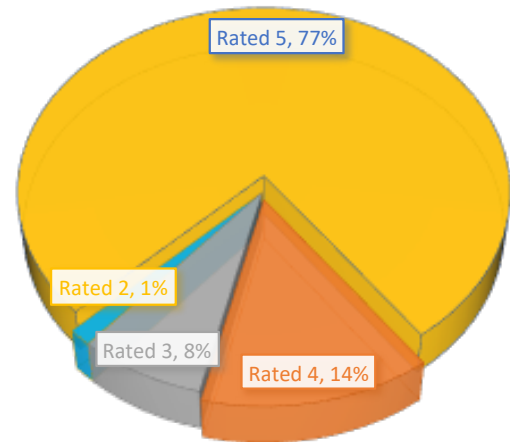




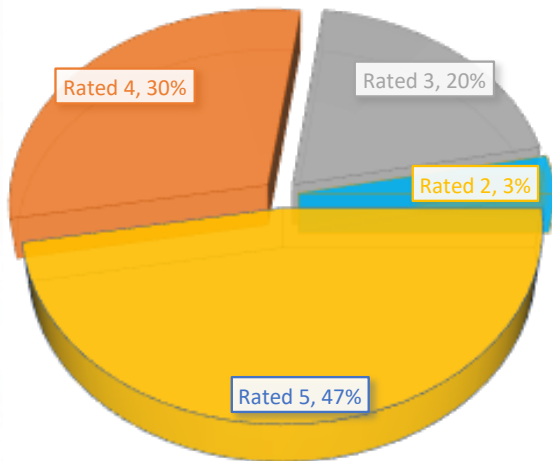
JAINS GOT TALENT
Total Responses-324



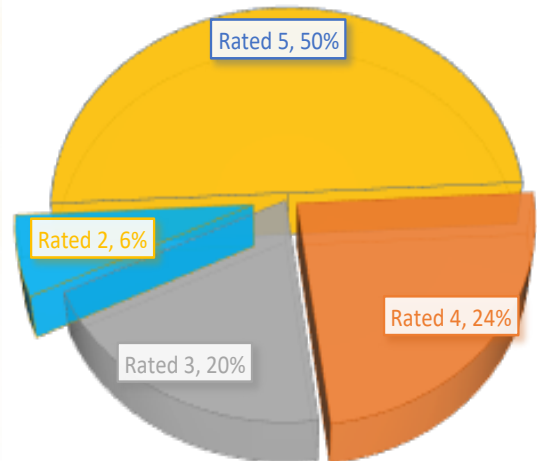
CULTURAL PROGRAM
Total Responses-420



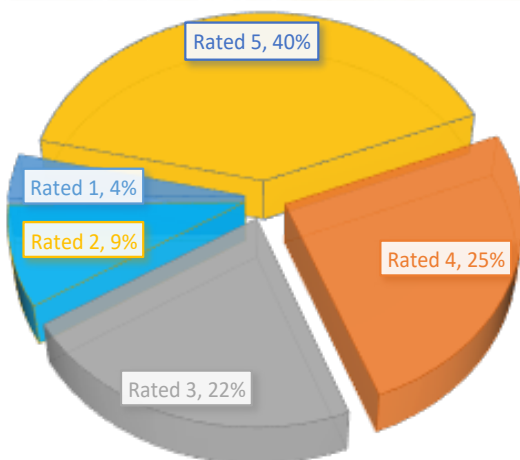
YJP ACITITIES
Total Responses-129



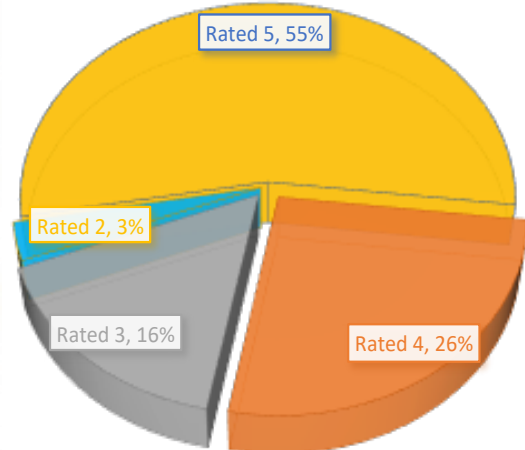
JAIN CONNECT
Total Responses-132

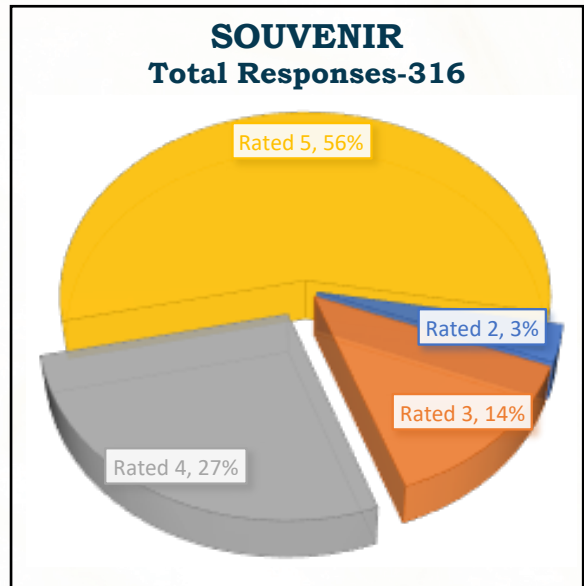
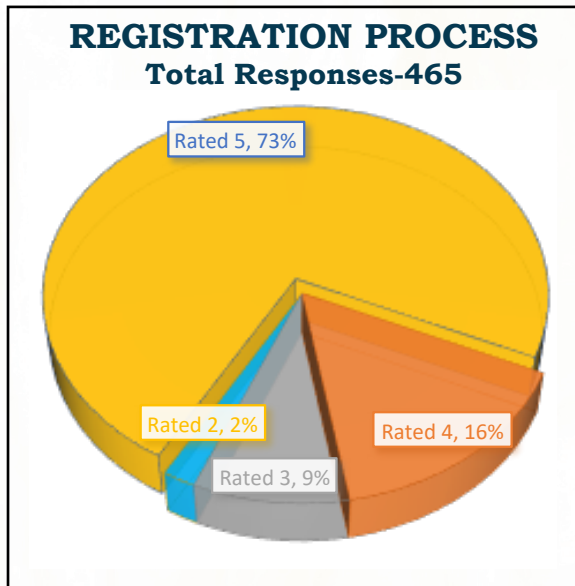
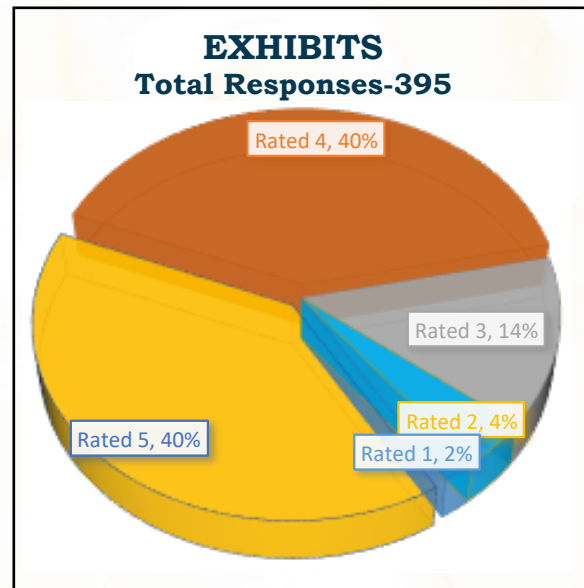
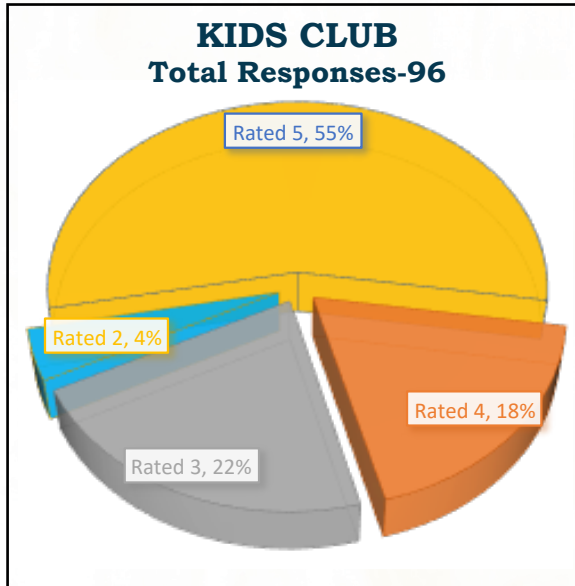
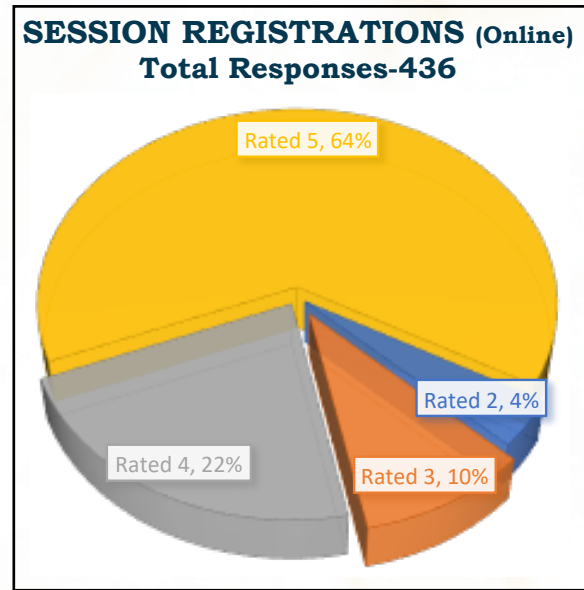
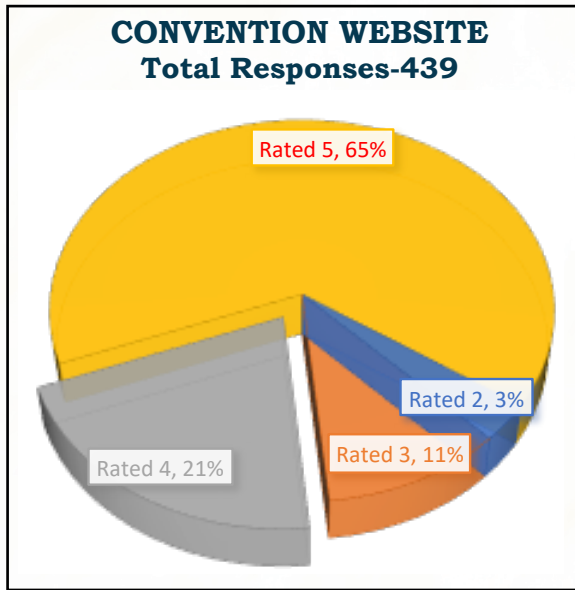


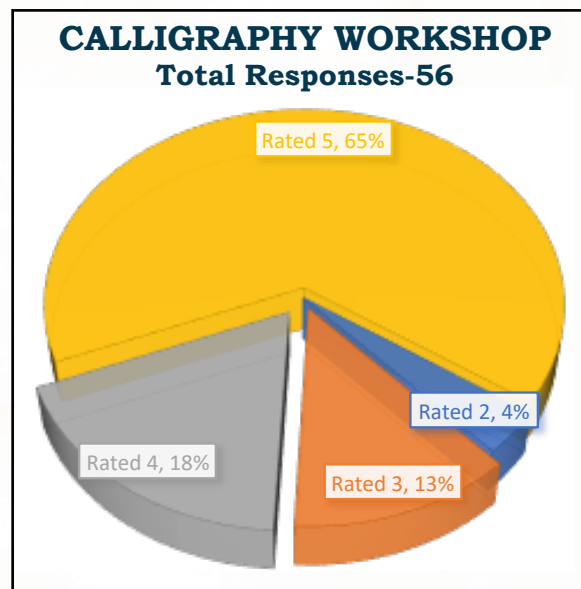
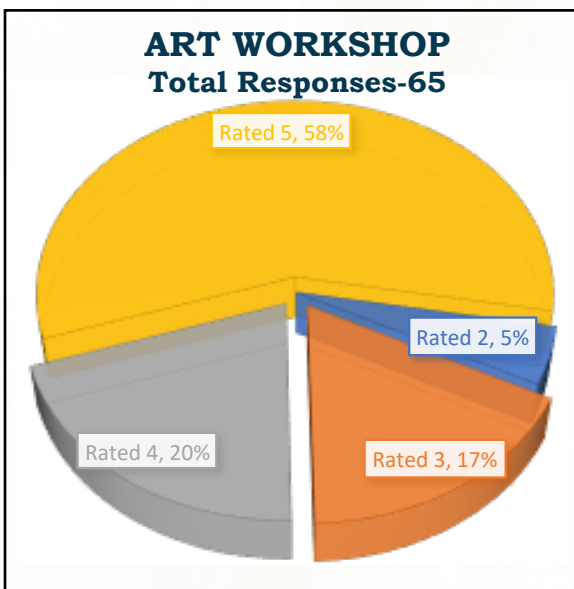
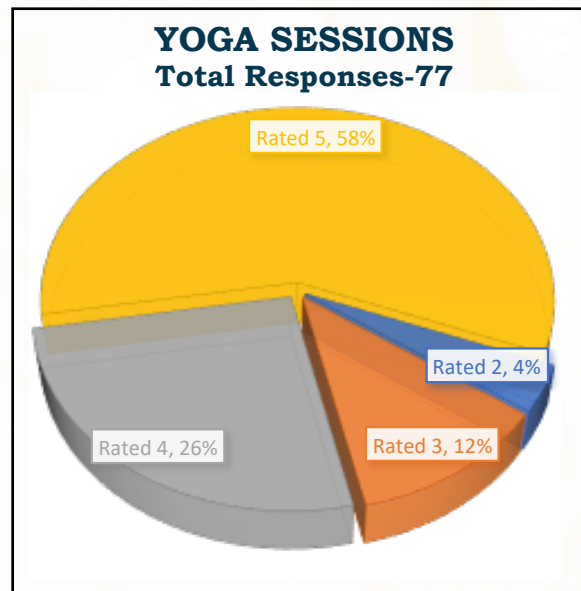
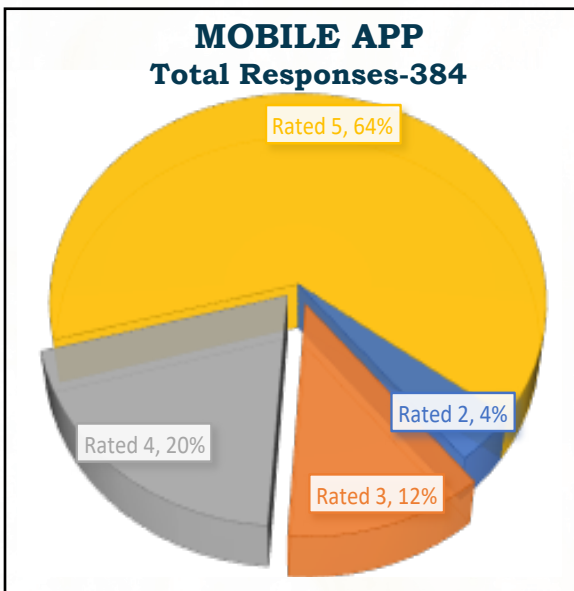
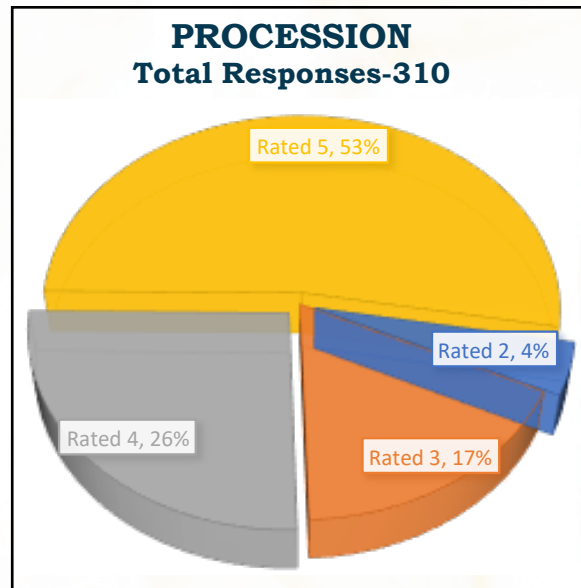
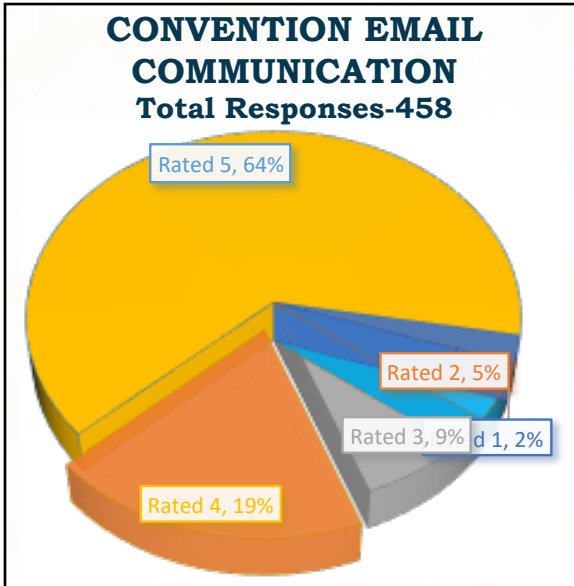
BOLLYWOOD NIGHT
Total Responses-392



YOUTH ACTIVITIES
Total Responses-133









July 4-7, 2019
JAINA Convention 2019
“An Incredible Success Story”



Article Author: Dipak Doshi, Chicago
 Contributing Editors: Dr. Manoj Jain, Hemant Shah, Dr. Manish Mehta

Public Relations and Press-Media Committee
 JAINA Convention 2019
www.jainaconvention.org

Long Range Planning Committee
 JAINA
www.jaina.org

Date: Wednesday July 17, 2019



“Nearly 3,500 gathered at the JAINA Convention held this past July 4th holiday weekend in California, USA and created history celebrating Jain Religion in 21st Century at the Ontario Convention Center, CA, by featuring programs for delegates aged 3 years to 93! Programming events were comprised of Jain spiritual discourses by renowned scholars and dignitaries, multi-faith Keynotes, colorful procession, on-site Jain Temple, Yoga and Meditation sessions, Jain Academic Bowl, Jains Got Talent, Youth Activities, Young Jain Professionals, Jain Connect, Shatavdhan, JAINA Awards and Election Results, Cultural Entertainment Program, and a Bollywood Show, with over 48,000 vegetarian/vegan meals served over a 4-day event.”

Ontario, CA – Every two years, the federation of Jain Associations In North America (JAINA) - in partnership with a local Jain center community - organizes a biennial convention in North America, drawing thousands of diaspora attendees and distinguished speakers not only from the US and Canada but also from Asia, Europe, Australia, and Middle-East. This year, JAINA partnered with the Jain Center of Southern California (JCSC) and Jain Center of Los Angeles (JCLA) hosted JAINA's 20th Biennial Convention at Ontario Convention Center (OCC) in Ontario, California, just east of Los Angeles.



It took two years in planning and more than nine months of preparations and dry runs perfecting it. In the end, JAINA in partnership with the two host Jain centers of Southern California, JCSC and JCLA, delivered an incredibly successful convention last weekend, at a sold-out venue in Ontario Convention Center, Southern California from July 4 to July 7. This year's convention theme was appropriately coined as "*Jain Religion in the 21st Century*". The convention remained true to its theme leaving behind an everlasting impression of JAINA and a unique immersion into self-realization with education and inspiration.

Thousands of Jains from North America and around the world participated to celebrate their religion, absorb thoughts and ideas from experts and professionals for further adopting and living a Jain Way of Life, and discuss how to promote Jainism and transition its values in a sustainable manner to the next generation.

In the opening session, Convener Mr. Mahesh Wadher and Co-conveners, Dr. Nitin Shah and Dr. Jasvant Modi, warmly welcomed and explained this convention's logo and theme; highlighting the five distinct tracks of enrichment about Jain principles and practices. These tracks represent the five key elements – *Seva*, *Satsang*, *Samarpan*, *Sadhana*, and *Self-Realization* and other tracks on focus groups, including for Young Jain Professionals, Young Adults, Youths, and Jain Connect. The five tracks depicted in the convention logo represented the steps in a path of progression of a spiritual journey towards achieving moksha, the final liberation. This convention was extraordinary also from its attendee demographics in that it attracted over 600 youths and young adults among the 3,450 attendees.



In addition to thought-provoking speeches by invited Keynotes and leading Jain thought leaders, the convention was also graced by speeches from revered Jain *acharyas* who reside in India – namely, Shri Namramuniji Maharaj and Acharya Shri Yashovijayji Maharaj (pre-recorded) and Acharya Shri Vijay Ratna Sundar Suriji Maharaj (live stream) from India. Further, the convention was sanctified by 22 invited Jain sadhus, sadhavis, scholars and spiritual guides who have significant diaspora following, such as; Acharya Shri Chandanaji (Founder of Veerayatan International, Rajgir, India), Acharya Dr. Lokesh Muni (Founder of Ahimsa Vishwabharti, New Delhi, India), Bhattarakji Charukeerthiji (of Jain Digamber Math Moodbidri, India), and Gurudev Shri Rakeshbhai Jhaveri (Founder of Srimad Rajchandra Ashram, Dharampur, India).



Resonating the themes and major tracks of this convention to illustrate commonalities the world's great religions have with Jainism's core teachings of Ahimsa (Non-Violence), Aparigraha (Non-Attachment) and Anekantavad (Non-Absolutism) were invited keynotes from leaders of multiple faiths and global service organizations who addressed the gathering's four General sessions and an Interfaith Roundtable – represented by Hinduism, Buddhism, Judaism and Christianity. Foremost amongst them were Sadhguru Jaggi Vasudev (Founder of Isha Foundation), Gaur Gopal Das (who was born in a Jain family in Pune and is a motivational speaker with ISKCON), and Sadhvi Bhagawati (co-leader of Parmarth Niketan, Rishikesh, India), Brahmurishi Guruvanandji (Founder of Sri Brahmurishi Ashram, Tirupati, India), Rahul Kapoor Jain (a motivational speaker from Bangalore, India), and Audrey Kitagawa, JD (Board Chair of Parliament of the World's Religions).

Sadhguru pointed out human weaknesses and our futile tendency to look outside to guns, drugs and other forms of violence to tackle human conflict, when the reality is that we are just a speck in the universe. Hence, his recommended path towards salvation is to look inward like Bhagwan Mahavir and Jain Tirthankars did to find inner strength against evil, and to tackle existential challenges such as climate change and intolerance,



There were 90 distinguished speakers including professors, medical doctors, astronomers, climate scientists, animal rights activists, vegan advocates, scholars, and other subject-matter experts. Besides 12 keynote lectures, the Convention featured

86 breakout sessions among its 8 parallel tracks – several sessions were repeated due to attracting capacity crowds. These scholars and speakers were the stars of this JAINA Convention that recharged everyone’s spiritual batteries.

Australian entrepreneur / philanthropist / vegan activist and Founder of Winsome Constance Kindness Trust Philip Wollen stressed in his eloquent Keynote talk the need for the world to reduce both, our carbon and karmic footprints, by adopting a vegan diet that eliminates slaughter and uses non-dairy alternatives, while PETA President Ingrid Newkirk, complimented the Jain community on its reverence for all life, and their recent activism campaigns against animal cruelty in the US and India. Both, Wollen and Newkirk urged the world to use cosmetic, medicinal and lifestyle products that don’t involve animal sources or suffering.



Nipun Mehta (Founder of ServiceSpace, a San Francisco non-profit group) spoke about the significance of adopting a lifestyle that embodies Jain principles through acts of kindness and service to uplift others. He shared his message on service, compassion and humility, and encouraged the audience to initiate the smallest, simplest acts of kindness to experience how they can radically transform one’s life. His concluding line was “In a gentle way, we can shake the world.”

Gurudev Shri Rakeshbhai Jhaveri spoke on why currently self-realization is elusive and how seva, satsang, samarpan and sadhana are the founding pillars towards achieving self-realization.

Gaur Gopal Das, an ISKCON monk and a lifestyle coach, in his inimitable style of tongue-in-cheek humor and witticisms, imparted life-long lessons on bringing balance and purpose in our lives explaining that spiritual wisdom is about propagating

universal values and transforming to the better inner state with religion-neutral choices by pursuing our mastery over anger, greed and deceit.



Rahul Kapoor Jain, a motivational speaker from India hosted two interactive sessions to packed audiences on harnessing our inner powers to reinvent ourselves.

Each dignitary keynote speaker left a lasting impression on the audience on the significance of our human life and the many opportunities it provides for self-improvement. Each speaker conveyed impactful messages about living in harmony and peace while striking a balance towards multiple aspects of duties towards mankind and other living beings.

Noteworthy among many other firsts in this convention, were two service projects, performed by youths, young adults, and seniors; executed at the onset and closing of this convention. The Sarva Mangal Family Trust, in collaboration with JAINA and JCSC, sponsored both projects. A health fair was held at Dr. Atul Karia's office that provided free dental and vision care to 52 patients and donating 55 pairs of prescription eyeglasses. Further, these volunteers assorted, packed, and distributed in one hour 1,008 backpacks containing basic essentials to the homeless in Anaheim, Santa Ana, and San Diego, through a non-profit U-Turn Lives.



At the Welcoming Ceremony, the attendees observed a moment of silence in recognizing the immense contributions by Jain pioneers to the West, Late Gurudev Shri Chitrabhanuji, Late Acharya Sushil Kumarji Maharaj, and Late Amrendra Muniji; all deserve the community's credit for their grassroots efforts in establishing the Jain community organization such as JAINA, Siddhachalam and other institutions in North America.



The convention begun on Thursday July 4, 2019 afternoon with a grand procession featuring colorful floats and banners represented by Jain Centers from across North America, an unveiling ceremony of a uniquely constructed Jain Temple, and a *Swagatam* ceremony welcoming the attendees in the OCC's grand ballroom.



First of its kind at such a convention, it took eight months for this Jain Temple's plan, design, and construction, prior to its installation on 6,000 square feet of convention center space. The Jain temple with *shikhar* and *gabbara* with *chovisi* (arrangement of 24 Tirthankars) also displayed in its *rangmandap* an exhibit, created by artist Chandrashekar Parab from India, of a three-dimensional depiction of epic Jain stories of the lives and virtues of Jain tirthankars including Bhagwan Mahavir.



Twenty-two beautiful decorations and displays constructed with recycled and reused art materials decked the halls throughout the OCC, providing ample photo opportunities to attendees. Over 30 vibrant exhibit booths informed or entertained the crowd during breaks.



The opening evening entertainment was highlighted by Garba-Raas, a Jains Got Talent competition. On the second night, a Jain Cultural Program titled “One World, One Rhythm” featured uniquely choreographed performances representing the countries and cultures around the world, involving 20 non-stop dances with universal themes of harmony performed by over 200 youth and adult dancers to thunderous audience applause, which nearly drowned out the commotion caused by a 6.9 magnitude earthquake that hit Southern California on July 5! The final evening held a Bollywood Concert on the third evening. Each program carried and delivered a night of excitement with performances, music, and dancing.

The safety and security team did an outstanding job in ensuring a sustained and calm endurance of 3,000 people audience in the main hall during evening program when at the onset of the show, a 40-second 6.9 magnitude earthquake hit the LA metro area and felt by all in the audience. The very successful Convention was not fazed by the quake that shook the building where it was being held. Following the safety announcement, Co-convenor, Dr. Nitin Shah told the audience, “the show will go on”.



Among the extraordinary efforts by 45 committees, the convention's multimedia and audio-visual committee installed a huge LED wall screen covering the entire span of the stage, where art, graphics, pictures, images, and videos sourced from around the world were projected commensurate with each session, presentation, and performance with unique special effects.



One of the significant youth education and development initiatives is a team-based competition, Jain Academic Bowl (JAB), first launched about a decade ago by the JAINA Education Committee to encourage youth learning the basics of Jain religion in a fun and entertaining manner. JAB is a Jeopardy show style trivia game in which young teams compete with each other for a prestigious win. One hundred youths from 15 JAB teams, ranging in ages 10 to 18 years, representing *pathshalas* from 9 Jain centers, participated in the JAB competition. This 13th Jain Academic Bowl competition involved 33 hours of game play requiring JAB students to master 400-pages of Jain facts, concepts, and stories from ancient literature. This year's winners of both senior and junior teams are from Chicago, Senior Team "Hrim" and Junior Team "Arham", of the Jain Society of Metropolitan Chicago.

Congratulations Chicago!!

The other significant accomplishments at this convention were the sold-out events of Young Jain Professionals and Youth Activities. Almost 600 youths and young adults enjoyed this convention by attending focused tracks at their opening and closing keynotes, and dedicated parallel sessions including; Ted Talks, Mind Connection, Lifestyles, Jainism 101, Jainism in College, Jains in Action; and more; all of these were organized by and for youth and young adults.

Presented for the first time at a west coast JAINA convention, was *Shatavdhan* (a demonstration which tests a person's memory power by performing multiple tasks simultaneously) at which Mr. Jaynesh Jain, a young disciple of Acharya Chandanaji, demonstrated his unique skills and talent by memorizing in about 45 minutes 50 questions, objects, and statements asked by a live audience of over 400 youths and adults, and then immediately recalling them and answering the questions in any order prescribed.

The BAPS Swaminarayan Mandir of Los Angeles, under the oversight of the Convention Food Committee and many volunteers, prepared fresh vegetarian and vegan meals serving 3,450 attendees 4-5 times/day. It must be recognized that the members of the Food Committee and over 110 dedicated volunteers of BAPS prepared and served 14 delicious meals over the 4-day convention event. In 4-days, they served approximately nearly 50,000 meals!!

At each convention, JAINA announces its most prestigious biennial award recipient for the JAINA Ratna Award, which is bestowed upon one most deserving nominated individual. Dr. Nitin Shah, Chair of JAINA's Award Committee, announced the selection of Mr. Ram Gada of Minnesota as the winner of the 2019 JAINA Ratna award. Mr. Gada gave a heartfelt acceptance speech crediting his spiritual journey to the teachings of Mahatma Gandhi and recognizing Mahatma Gandhi's 150th birth anniversary this year.

On behalf of the JAINA Executive Committee, Mr. Gunvant Shah, now the immediate Past President of JAINA, presented special Presidential Awards to Acharya Shri Chandanaji, late Gurudev Chitrabhanuji, Acharya Dr. Lokesh Muni, and Gurudev Shri Rakeshbhai, for their immense contributions to the establishment of Jainism and for promoting the united lifestyles of Jains in North America.



JAINA conducted its biennial elections of the Board of Directors and Executive Committee in June. The Election Committee Chair, Mr. Anop Vora, announced the results of this election. The new officer bearers of JAINA's Executive Committee for the next 2-year term are: Mr. Mahesh Wadher – President, Mr. Haresh Shah – First Vice President, Mr. Hemant Shah – Secretary, and Mr. Ashok Savla – Treasurer; they will be supported by 7 Regional Vice-Presidents. Accepting the Presidency, Mr. Mahesh Wadher said that he is humbled by the trust invested in him by the community, and promised to make JAINA stronger, vibrant, and more relevant in the lives of the Jains in North America as well as for communities across the world.

In a statement released by Mr. Dipak Doshi, Chairman of Public Relations and Press-Media Committee of this convention, he conveyed that the JAINA conventions embody Jain values with a call for action at gatherings that have been organized by volunteers every two years since 1981 in North America. This 2019 JAINA Convention highlighted diverse topics related to the Jain Way of Life, along with devotion, compassion, and transformation while creating many opportunities for exchange of ideas, dialogues and concerted actions on global issues. As the largest and most organized gathering of diaspora Jains outside India, the convention brought together thousands in promoting Jain values. JAINA and its community will look at this convention as a benchmark to model its future events and programs. He credited the thousands of hours of relentless planning, preparation, activity and efficient execution by a group of 600 volunteers from Southern California and across North America for making this convention a huge success. What was done was no small task. An incredible achievement has happened! This is what a Jain Way of Life is all about!!



For Further Information, visit www.jainaconvention.org, or contact Chair of Public Relations and Press-Media Committee, Mr. Dipak Doshi at dipakginni@gmail.com or our Committee Co-Chairs, Mr. Hemant Shah at hemantil@yahoo.com or Dr. Manoj Jain at mjainmd1@gmail.com.

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