

Background Information:

We are hoping to get your guidance concerning the Pratimajis (idols) of the Jain Center of Southern California temple.

This Jain Center was established in 1979. The temple was built in 1988 with the help and cooperation of local Jain families and some Jain Sanghs in India. More and more families have joined thereafter, and now there are more than 1000 families who worship here in harmony. Our estimate is that there are approximately 1200 Jain families who reside in this area. People who come from India and other countries also take advantage of this Jain Center.

Majority of people here are SWETAMBER although people from other sects such as DIGAMBER, STHANAKVASI, and TERAPANTHI also worship here in harmony. Religious programs are arranged in the Aradhna hall very frequently. Paintings of SHREE KUNDKUNDACHARYA, SHREE HEMCHANDRACHARYA, UPADHYAYA YASHOVIJAJI and SHRIMAD RAJCHANDRA are here too.

With the increase in the number of families here, there was a need for an expansion that we completed recently.

At the time of the opening of our center in 1988, we had received three idols with the help of Shankeshwar tirth, Shree Anandji Kalyanji pedhi and Shree U N Mehta. MAHAVIR SWAMI's 27-inch idol was placed in the middle, and to the right of it was a 21-inch idol of Shree RUSHBHDEV BHAGVAN, and to the left of it was a 21-inch idol of Shree PARSHWANATH BHAGVAN.

These three idols were placed here after performing 18 Abhishek on them. Arti and Mangal deep had been performed on daily basis while Pakshal and Pooja had been performed on weekly basis.

In July 2005 when a new cultural hall was built and the construction of new temple began, these idols were moved and placed in a Swadhyaya hall. At this new location, Pakshal, Pooja, Arti, MangalDeep were performed on a daily basis after the arrival of Poojari in February 2007.

It was decided to place these idols in the newly built temple's Gabhara, and since there was no Anjanshalaka performed on these idols in 1987, it was decided to place these idols after performing Anjanshalaka. However, due to some circumstances, this was not accomplished by the time the new temple was built so a new idol of MAHAVIR SWAMI was brought from India after performing Anjanshalaka. In addition, on a separate pedestal inside the Gabhara of new temple, a DIGAMBER idol of Shree NEMINATH was placed on the right side. Pran Pratishtha according to the DIGAMBER tradition was performed on this idol on October 5, 1008. In the Gabhara of the new temple, on a separate pedestal, an idol of Shree SHANTINATH was placed. Eighteen Abhishek according to the SWETAMBER tradition were performed on this 21-inch idol.

Thus, the three original idols with eighteen Abhishek of SHREE PARSHWANATH, SHREE MAHAVIR SWAMI, and SHREE RUSHABHDEV were placed in the center on the same pedestal. The 27-inch MAHAVIR SWAMI idol with Anjanshalaka, which was brought from India, was placed in the Rang-Mandap.

With the current situation, on behalf of our Sangh, we are asking for your assistance about the matter described below.

Questions and Answers:

Q1: Does Anjanshalaka have to be performed by Shree Acharyaji or can it be performed by a ritual performer or by someone who is an expert in Jainism?

A1: [Anjanshalaka can only be performed by an Acharya in India. It cannot be performed by anyone else such as ritual performer or other spiritual leader.](#)

Q2: How can we perform Anjalshalaka in temples that were built in the US?

Q3: Is it possible to invite some Acharya from India to perform the Anjalshalaka in the USA? Would a step like this in line with our religion and scriptures?

A2&3: It will set a wrong precedence if you invite an Acharya from India. A step like this would be against our religion. The three current idols can be taken back to USA in a plane after performing Anjalshalaka on them in India. There is no other solution. You cannot perform Anjalshalaka on only one idol.

Q4: If we send the current three Pratimajis from our center to India for Anjalshalaka, how can we deal with the issue of Sin/Ashatna?

Q5: If we bring these Pratimajis to India in a plane, there might be other passengers who consume things such as meat, liquor, etc. How can we alleviate sins, caused by this trip, through any rituals or penance?

A4&5: You can avoid the sins caused by the plane trip by performing 18 Abhishek Pooja on the idols.

Q6: Would the Anjalshalaka be considered as legitimate after taking the idols overseas through plane?

A6: Yes, Anjalshalaka would be considered legitimate even after taking the idols overseas through plane. Now days, they have been taking them to other countries. If you take the idols carefully in a box in a plane, Anjalshalaka would not be considered illegitimate.

Q7: Is there less sin in taking the Pratimajis to India for Anjalshalaka and bringing them back in the plane or in getting the Anjalshalaka done in US by some spiritual leader or by an Acharya who agrees to come to the US?

Is it appropriate to assume that it is the best for the community to get the Anjalshalaka done in the US by an Acharya or by a ritual performer?

A7: Anjalshalaka can be performed only by Acharyas who are in India. No one else can do it so talking about doing Anjalshalaka in the US is wrong.

Q8: We had performed Pooja, Pakshal, etc on weekly basis for the last 19 years on the idols that were brought here 21 years ago, and we have been performing Pooja, Pakshal, Aarti, Mangal deep, etc on daily basis for the last 2 years. Is it appropriate to assume that because of all these auspicious activities, the idols are comparable to idols with Anjalshalaka?

A8: There are three types of Pratimajis: Darshaniya, Vandaniya, and Poojaniya

Darshaniya: This is something equivalent of one that can be bought from a store and given to you as a gift. It is only for the viewing purpose.

Vandaniya: This is something that had 18 Abhishek performed after Pratimaji was made. It is a purification process by doing "Abhishek" with special mixed drvyas (VanAushadhi) to eliminate "dosha" (inappropriate handling etc.) Such idols are still not considered Poojaniya(worship worthy) but one can do ChaityaVandana, Darsahn and in some exception only Vaskshap (Premixed blessed Sandalwood powder) pooja, but no Pakshal Pooja (anointing Idol) or Ashtha Prakari Pooja. Yes, Dhoop, Deepak pooja, Aarti and Mangal Divo can be performed on such idols.

Poojaniya: These are the idols, which have gone through Anjan Shalaka process. It is a special process where special Mantras have been chanted with a unique process of instilling God hood (Pran Sanchar) and such idols can be worshipped fully with Astha Prakari pooja including Abhishek, Keshar-Chandan pooja, Flowers etc.

Aarti and Mangal divo also should be performed on a daily basis. It is important for females to avoid such pooja during the menstruation period. These Pratimajis require such additional precaution then Vandaniya ones.

A pratishtha can be done only of the "Poojaniya" Pratimaji. For Vandaniya Pratimaji it can only said to have "Sthapana" done. "Chal Prtishtha" (temporary) term should not be used for such Pratimajis. Thus, it is very important to be careful and understand the significant difference so that age-old holy tradition is not misrepresented or harmed.

Q9: Is it appropriate to do Anjalshalaka on only one of the three idols with eighteen Abhishek?

What if the main center idol is with Anjanshalaka while the other two on the same pedestal are with eighteen Abhishek is there a possibility of dosh (harm) during Pooja/Pakshal?

What if the main center idol is with Anjanshalaka while the other two on the same pedestal are with eighteen Abhishek, and if there is MAHAVIR SWAMI Idol with Anjanshalaka on a separate pedestal inside the Gabhara, is there a possibility of dosh (harm) during Pooja/Pakshal?

A9: The three Pratimaji that have been worshipped for quite some time, which is very beautiful indication of the Faith of the worshippers. It is very important to do Anjan Shalaka of these three Pratimajis. If you only do Anjan Shalaka of the central Pratimaji and not the other two on sides, it may become a reason for dosha (inappropriate) practice. As people performing Keshar-Chandan Pooja of the main Pratimaji may end up doing such pooja of the two other idols which they should not, as they would be considered only Vandiniya.

Also, worship of AnjanShalaka prtimaji brings divine rewards and much higher spiritual reward (Shubh Fala) to worshipper. Also, Anjanshalaka Pratimaji will bring even higher progress and reward of the Shri Sangha as well; there is no doubt in this matter. It is not appropriate to put AnjanShalaka Pratimaji next to Vandiniya Pratimaji; it can become the reason for future negative karma (Pap Anubandha). Also, the current Anjan Shalaka Pratimaji has not been placed appropriately; it has to be on an appropriate seat with pratishtha (permanent) as it is equivalent of a live BHAGWAN.

In your temple, all the three Pratimaji including MAHAVIR SWAMI should be with AnjanaShalaka. As your temple is grand, it is best to have Poojaniya Pratimajis. Not doing so can bring the danger of the elimination of an age-old spiritual tradition (which includes panch kalyanak process celebration) and which invokes special respect towards the BHAGWAN from an aspirant.

Q10: Can two Anjalshalaka Pratimajis of MAHAVIR SWAMI be kept in the same Gabhara? Would this cause any sin?

A10: You cannot keep two Pratimajis in a Gabhara. Number of Pratimajis must be of an odd number such as 1, 3, 5, 7, 9, etc.

Q11: Currently inside of the Gabhara on the middle pedestal, there are 3 Pratimajis.

- (A) Out of these three, the main, middle one is MAHAVIR SWAMI. RUSHABHDEV BHAGVAN is on the right side and PARSHWANATH is on the left side. These three current Pratimajis are 18-Abhishek chal-pratishthit Pratimajis.
- (B) On a separate pedestal, on the left side of the above-mentioned middle pedestal, is a Pratimaji of SHREE SHANTINATH BHAGVAN. This is an 18-Abhishek performed SWETAMBER tradition Pratimaji.
- (C) On a separate pedestal, on the right side of the above-mentioned middle pedestal, is a Pratimaji of Shree NEMINATH BHAGVAN. This is a pran-pratishtha performed DIGAMBER tradition Pratimaji.
- (D) In addition, there is an Anjanshalaka performed Pratimaji of MAHAVIR SWAMI out side of the Gabhara in the Rang-Mandap.

A11: As mentioned earlier, you must get Anjanshalaka done for the current 18-Abhishek performed Pratimajis.

In addition, main middle Pratimaji of MAHAVIR SWAMI is the best for your community.
RUSHABHDEV on the right side is the best for your community
PARSHWANATH on the left side is the best for your community

You must get these idols inscribed with footnote. This is needed to provide historical proof.

- (1) It is an ancient historical tradition to write the date of Anjanshalaka
- (2) City, State, name of the community, etc. should also be written in it.
- (3) Name of the Aacharya that performed the Anjanshalaka is also an important proof.
- (4) If you do not want to write this footnote on the bottom, do not write anything there, but write this on the both sides of the Pratimaji on the bottom.

Q12: Now if we do Anjanshalaka only for the main middle Pratimaji of MAHAVIR SWAMI:

- (A) What can be done about these six Pratimajis with their arrangements and placements?
- (B) Where would it be appropriate to place the new MAHAVIR SWAMI Pratimaji with Anjanshalaka in the new temple? Currently this Pratimaji is in the Rang Mandap.

A12: The main-middle idol should be placed in the middle.

RUSHABHDEV – PARSHWANATH should be next.

Then SHANTINATH should be placed. (They all need to be Pratimajis with Anjanshalaka) otherwise, MAHAVIR SWAMI can be placed in place of the SHANTINATHJI.

Then on one side, on a separate spot, NEMINATH PRABHUJI (DIGAMBER) should be placed so that there is no interference from anyone during each other's rituals.

Everyone in the Jain Center of Southern California has been working and worshipping together in peace and harmony for many years so we are asking for your guidance so that the unity amongst the members of the center stays intact. We would also like to continue our work of instilling good values in the next generation through Pathshala (Jain School). There are approximately 350 students who participate in the Pathshala right now, and approximately 150 people come to Swadhyaya.

We all very strongly believe in our religion and that is the reason why we have been able to establish such nice center and a spectacular temple.

We are asking for your blessings and guidance for our auspicious work.

Jayesh Shah
Chairman, Anjan Shalaka Committee.
Los Angeles, Jain Center of Southern California.