

SPECIAL FEATURES

2025 Jain Cultural Festival at the University of North Texas: Student Essay Contest Winners

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On March 1, 2025 the Jain Studies Program at the University of North Texas held a [Jain Cultural Festival](#) featuring booths for local Jain businesses and organizations, a community art show, and a student essay contest. The event was sponsored by the [Jain Education and Research Foundation](#) (JERF), the [Jain Society of North Texas](#) (JSNT), and the [Dallas chapter of the Jain International Trade Organization](#) (JITO), with support from students, staff, and faculty in the Department of Philosophy and Religion. We began with opening remarks from Dean [Albert Bimper](#) of UNT's College of Liberal Arts and Social Sciences. We also welcomed special guest [Prem Jain](#), representing JERF and JITO, who was instrumental in founding our endowment in 2017. Other speakers included [Anil Mundra](#), the Bhagvan Vimalnath Endowed Chair in Jain Studies and South Asian Religions at UC Santa Barbara, who gave a lecture on campus the day before the festival, and [Rohit Gangwal](#), the current president of JSNT, who provided closing remarks. In our inaugural issue of *Samyak: An Undergraduate Journal of Jain Studies* we are delighted to feature the winners of the student essay contest and community art show.

Student Essay Contest Winners

We received fifteen essays from area youth ranging from high schoolers to college students. These were evaluated by academic scholars of Jainism as well as community members at the Jain Society of North Texas. Our submissions included research essays as well as personal reflections and creative writing. All of the works were of high quality, making the judging quite difficult. To accommodate the range of evaluations, we awarded several ties and honorable mentions.

Here, we are celebrating all of the winners, whose essays we are publishing in this special feature: Aashita Doshi, "Everything My Eyes Hold Ends: Lessons in Jain Aparigraha"; Yasha Godha, "Jainism and Environmental Ethics"; Ayona Katariya, "Vegetarianism and Veganism in Jainism"; Roma Ajmera, "Anekāntavāda"; Aanya Nuna, "Jainism, Ahimsā, and Nonviolence"; Neervi Jain, "A Minimalist Lifestyle and Aparigraha"; and Atharv Nahar, "Vegetarianism and Veganism in Jainism." We hope readers will join us in congratulating these outstanding student participants.

Community Art Show

The community art show featured over forty original works by participants of all ages. These were evaluated by both professional artists as well as community members at the Jain Society of North Texas. We are delighted to feature a selection of the winning artworks for our inaugural issue of *Samyak*.

Adult Category



Jiya Shah, "Ranakpur Temple," oil on canvas

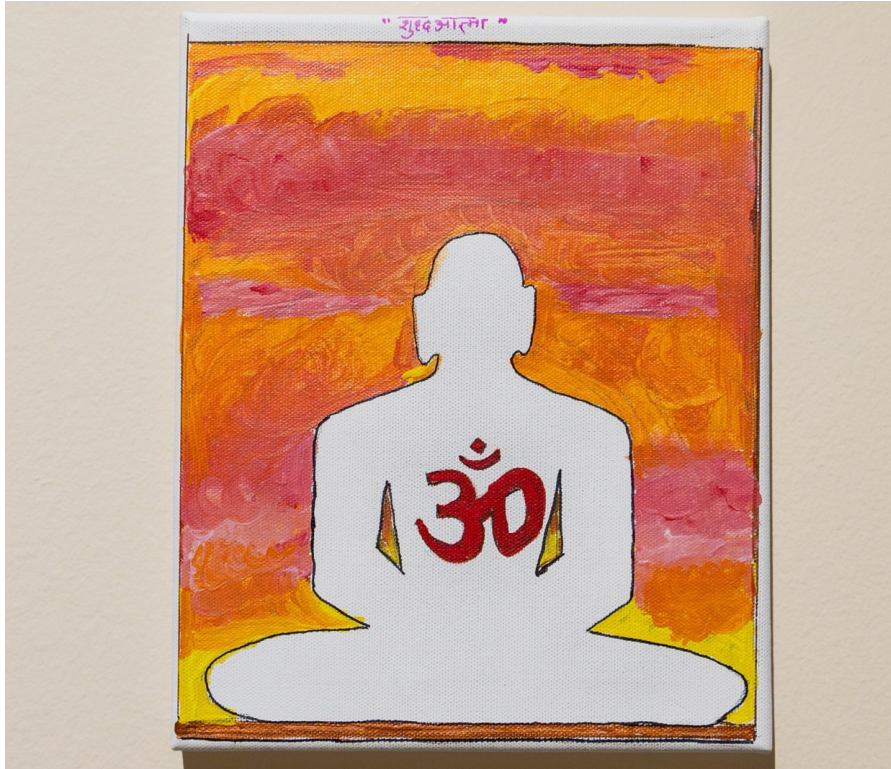


Tanya Sanghvi, "14 Dreams Seen by Mahavir's Mother Trishala," acrylic on canvas

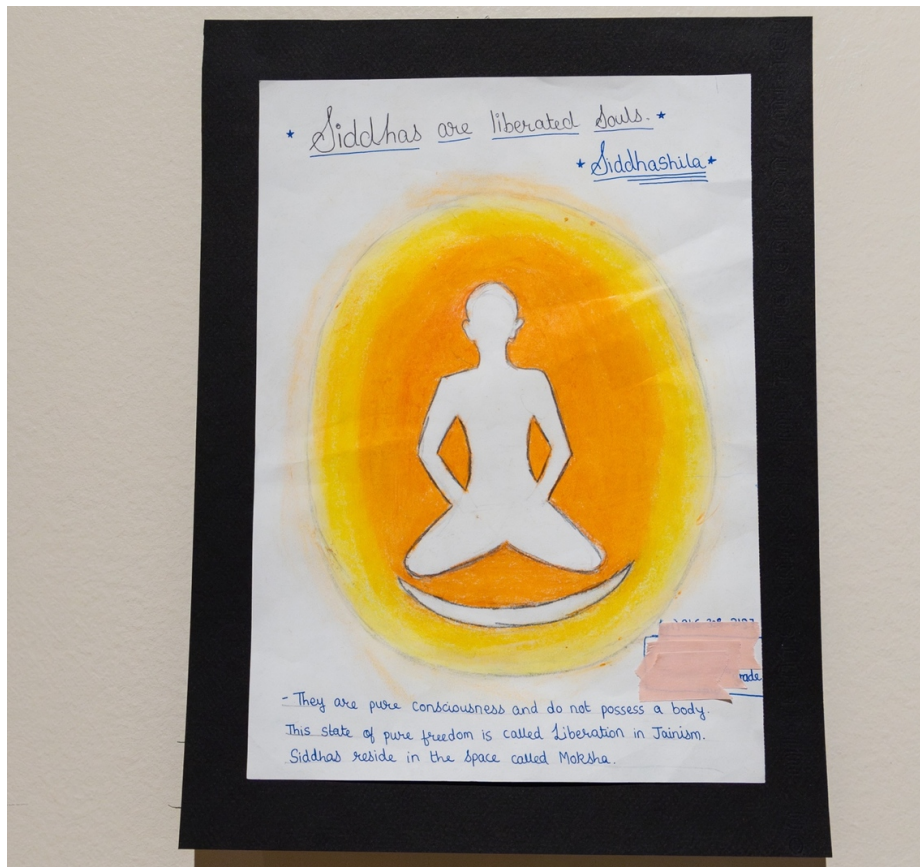


Tanvi Jain, "The Divine Radiance of Keval Gyaan: The Abhamandal of Tirthankara," mirrors and paint on board

Middle School and High School Category



Aadee Ashish Doshi, "Shudhhaattama," paint on canvas



Saiyati Vishal Tatiya, "Siddhashila," oil pastels on paper



Rijul Gandhi, "Om," collage on board

Primary School and Elementary School Category



Prakriti Navaratan, "Jain Symbol," watercolor on paper



Divya Khara Patel, "Jain Flag," paper on posterboard



Mishita Jain, "Jain Alphabets," collage on posterboard

Special Category: 3D Models



Dhriti Baldota, "Four State of Existence," 3D model

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