

The BHAGWAN MAHAVIR PROFESSORSHIP IN JAIN STUDIES was established at Florida International University on April 16, 2010. The Jain Education and Research Foundation presented a ceremonial check in the amount of \$600,000 to FIU President Mark B. Rosenberg. With State of Florida matching funds, this will result in an endowment in excess of \$1,000,000 to fund the professorship. Professor Nathan Katz, a specialist in the religions of India and former chair of the Department of Religious Studies, was named the first Bhagwan Mahavir Professor.

The professor will aid in advancing this gift to the higher levels described below, will meet with Jain communities in North America, India and elsewhere to discuss the project, will coordinate study-Jainism-in-programs, will oversee a comprehensive web site <religion.fiu.edu/mahavir>, will network with scholars of Jainism internationally, and will organize an annual lecture or symposium to be held around the time of Mahavir Jayanthi.

Once all funds are in place, Professor Katz will direct an international search to recruit the second Bhagwan Mahavir Professor who will assume the position upon Professor Katz's retirement.

The second tier of this project is the BHAGWAN MAHAVIR CHAIR IN JAIN STUDIES. At this point the gift will grow to \$2,000,000 which will be matched dollar-for-dollar by the State of Florida, resulting in a \$4,000,000 endowment. The chair holder will direct two samanis from India to teach at FIU, will expand the lecture/symposium series, and will coordinate a "Network for Jain Studies" to support faculty and student exchanges between FIU and JVBI (and other institutions as appropriate) will coordinate North American lecture tours by scholars from India, will direct scholarship programs to enable American students to study Jainism in India, and will interface with local, national and international interfaith groups.

The third tier is for the BHAGWAN MAHAVIR CENTER FOR JAIN STUDIES AND RELIGIOUS PLURALISM with FIU's School for International and Public Affairs. The donation will expand to \$3,000,000, resulting in a \$6,000,000 endowment. Directed by the Chair, the Center will seek to develop curricula about Jainism for public and private secondary schools, will seek input into world religions textbooks, and will endeavor to ensure a Jain presence in interfaith for a. The Center will be the hub of a global Jain Studies network, facilitating exchanges among students and faculty, will promote study tours in India, will run summer institutes about Jainism and related topics for American college instructors, will fund graduate students at FIU, will develop a project to infuse Jain perspectives into secondary school curricula, will develop FIU's library collections, run national and international research conferences, will develop textbooks and curricula on religious pluralism, and will undertake projects to enhance interdisciplinary work on religious pluralism in fields such as international relations, environmental studies, political science, and the like.