



Preserving Jain Heritage: The Kumbhoj Manuscripts Conservation Project



Celebrating Our Legacy Through Conservation

The **Acharya Shantisagar Foundation** is delighted to share the incredible journey and success of the **Kumbhoj Manuscripts Conservation Project**, a monumental initiative dedicated to preserving the spiritual and cultural heritage of Jainism. By conserving these ancient manuscripts, we aim to bridge the past with the future, ensuring the timeless wisdom of Jain teachings is accessible to scholars, devotees, and generations yet to come.

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HAL Old Airport Road | Bengaluru | Karnataka- 56001
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Project Overview

- **Location:** Kumbhoj Bahubali, Kolhapur, Maharashtra
- **Start Date:** 14 February 2022
- **End Date:** 30 September 2024
- **Duration:** 2 Years, 7 Months, 15 Days
- **Objective:** To restore and preserve manuscripts of immense historical and spiritual significance, safeguarding their longevity for academic research and community enlightenment.



Scope of the Conservation Project

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The Kumbhoj Manuscripts Conservation Project stands as a testament to the dedication and expertise of our team. This large-scale conservation effort covered a diverse range of manuscripts, each with unique requirements and challenges.

Key Accomplishments

- **Total Manuscripts Conserved:** 1,399
- **Total Folios Treated:** 100,000
- **Manuscript Types Conserved:**
 - **Palm Leaf Manuscripts:** 122
 - **Handwritten Paper Manuscripts:** 1,018
 - **Archival Books:** 259

These artifacts are a treasure trove of knowledge, chronicling Jain philosophy, practices, and cultural milestones. Through meticulous restoration and documentation, they now serve as invaluable resources for the Jain community and academic scholars worldwide.



Library pic after conservation work completed at Kumbhoj Bahubali, Karnataka.

The Art and Science of Conservation

Innovative Techniques for Palm Leaf Manuscripts

- Gentle dry cleaning and solvent cleaning to remove dust and grime.

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- Repairs using natural materials like palm leaves and Japanese tissue paper, paired with traditional adhesives.
- Application of citronella oil to enhance flexibility and durability.
- Safe storage in acid-free, archival-grade boxes for long-term preservation.

Advanced Methods for Paper Manuscripts

- Biological treatment to address issues like insect infestations and fungal damage.
- pH stabilization through advanced alkalization techniques to preserve the integrity of the paper.
- Mending tears and damage using Japanese tissue and Klucel-G adhesive.
- Comprehensive documentation, including pH testing, before-and-after photographs, and labelling.



Conservation process of palm leaf manuscript



A Journey of Achievement

Unveiling Our Success

Through this project, the foundation has successfully restored and preserved over **1,399 manuscripts** and **100,000 folios**, including centuries-old palm leaf manuscripts that hold immense historical and spiritual value. These restored treasures now provide scholars and devotees with an authentic connection to Jainism's teachings and philosophies.

Impact on Cultural Heritage

The manuscripts conserved under this project are more than historical documents; they are living embodiments of Jain thought and philosophy. By ensuring their preservation, we honour the legacy of Jain Acharyas and scholars while making their wisdom accessible to contemporary and future audiences.



Before the conservation, state of the Manuscript.

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After the conservation, the state of the Manuscript.

Inspiring Future Generations

This project serves as a source of inspiration and education for the Jain community and beyond. By restoring and preserving these manuscripts, we not only safeguard our heritage but also create opportunities for learning, research, and cultural exchange.

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Maharaj Shree's visit to the Kumbhoj Bahubali site.



Guest from the other country visited our site at Kumbhoj Bahubali, Karnataka.



Looking Ahead: Expanding Our Vision

The Kumbhoj Manuscripts Conservation Project is just the beginning. Inspired by its success, the **Acharya Shantisagar Foundation** is expanding its efforts to conserve manuscripts in other regions of India. With plans to incorporate cutting-edge technologies and foster collaborations with conservation experts, we are committed to preserving India's rich heritage on a larger scale.



1. **Nationwide Conservation Projects:** Expanding efforts to conserve manuscripts in historically significant regions such as Karnataka, Gujarat, and Tamil Nadu, replicating the success of the Kumbhoj project.
2. **Technology-Driven Preservation:** Leveraging advanced tools like AI for manuscript analysis, digital archiving, and real-time monitoring to enhance the precision and scale of conservation work.
3. **Collaborative Expertise:** Partnering with conservation experts, historians, and research institutions to adopt best practices and innovative methods for manuscript preservation.
4. **Training and Skill Development:** Establishing comprehensive programs to train new conservators, integrating traditional techniques with modern practices to build a skilled workforce.

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5. **Digital Accessibility:** Creating a global digital repository of conserved manuscripts to promote academic research and ensure the accessibility of India's intellectual heritage.
6. **Public Engagement and Funding:** Increasing awareness through campaigns and fostering sustainable funding models, including corporate partnerships and community donations, to support long-term conservation efforts.

Join Us in This Noble Cause

Preserving heritage is a shared responsibility, and we invite you to be a part of this noble endeavour. Your support can make a significant difference in safeguarding the timeless wisdom of Jain teachings for generations to come.

How You Can Help

- **Donate:** Your contributions directly support our conservation projects.
- **Volunteer:** Join hands with our team to make a tangible impact.
- **Spread Awareness:** Share our mission to inspire others to join this cause.

Together, let us ensure that the treasures of Jainism continue to enlighten and inspire humanity for centuries.

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ASSF Esteemed Trustees with the Dedicated Conservation Team



Conservation team along with the language experts in middle.

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