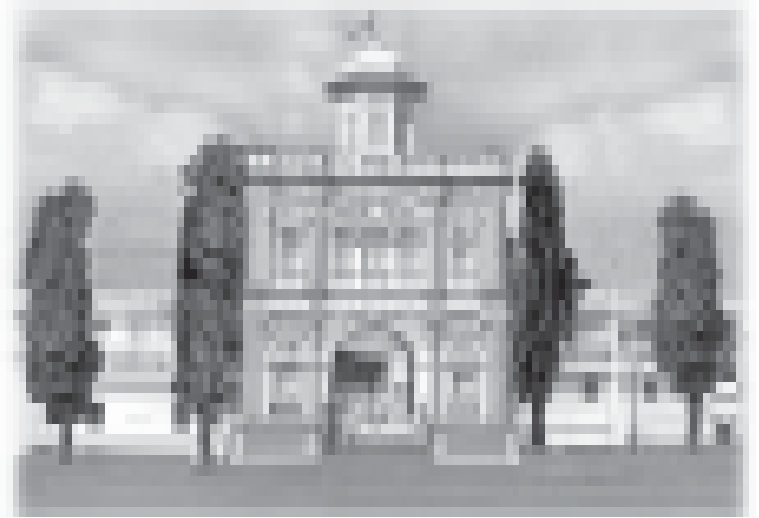




Shri Sanatan Jain Dharma,
Shrimad Rajchandra Ashram, Agas
A Brief Description

This Ashram was set up in 1920 A.D. by His Holiness Laghurajswami, the dedicated follower of the utmost Enlightened Graceful Lord Shrimad Rajchandra-ParamkrupaluDev. Since it came into existence under the patronage of Shri Laghurajswami, it was initially named by the devotees as "Shri Laghuraj Ashram." The great sage, however, did not want his name to be associated with the Ashram. Hence, as a selfless and true devotee of his Guru, he suggested to term this edificial memorial of Shrimadji as "Shri Sanatan Jain Dharma, Shrimad Rajchandra Ashram." It was therefore named accordingly. This Ashram is meant to reinforce Jainism in its pure form.

After entering the Ashram premises, one comes across an impressive gate, which prominently displays the motto **'Forgiving is the Grand Gateway to Liberation.'** While entering the gate, one sees a charming temple. There is Shwetamber temple on the first floor and Digamber one on the second floor. In the basement there is 'Shri Guru Mandir' where there is a marble idol of Shrimad Rajchandra in lotus posture proportionate to his body size. There is Pranav Mantra 'Aum' inscribed on its one side and Shrimadji's footprints on the other side.

On the right side of the temple, there is a grand assembly hall (Sabha Mandap) which is used everyday by numerous truth seekers for spiritual pursuit in the form of communion, listening, devotion, worship etc. In this hall a standing portrait of Shrimadji in meditative pose proportionate to his body size has been installed.

There is a library above the main gate facing the temple. In the open terrace above it, there is a mini temple of marble. Therein stands an idol of graceful Lord Shrimad Rajchandra in standing meditation posture. It is made of five composite metals.

In this sacred complex, there is a large prayer hall, on the left side of the temple. A magnificent portrait of Shrimad Rajchandra in lotus posture has been installed therein. The hall is mostly made use of by those old mumukshus who are unable to ascend stairs of Sabhamandap. Above the hall, there is the Shantisthan (place of serenity) which also has a portrait of Shrimad Rajchandra in standing meditative pose.

To the east of it there is Rajmandir. wherein impressive portraits of Shrimad Rajchandra, Shri Laghurajswami (who was popularly known as Prabhushriji) and Rev. Brahmachariji have been installed. It also has the inscription for taking vows. In this Rajmandir on Kartik sud 7 Vikram Samvat 2010 (13th November 1953) Rev. Brahmachariji attained the ultimate quietude in 'Kausagga' posture.

To the further east, there is the room in which Rev. Brahmachariji used to stay, which is now equipped with his two portraits. To the further east there is the place, where H.H. Prabhushriji used to live, and where he attained the ultimate ecstasy on 8th day of the month of Vaishakh in Vikram Samvat 1992 ((29th April 1936). His memorabilia consisting of his divan, seat, staff etc. along with his nice portrait have been kept therein for worshipping.

In the northeast beyond the temple complex, there have been installed H.H. Prabhushriji's footprints in a small temple at the place of his cremation. A little ahead of it there is also a small temple in which the footprints of Rev. Brahmachariji are installed at the place of his cremation.

Since the above-mentioned old assembly hall was found too small on the days of sacred festivals, a new assembly hall admeasuring 17000 sq. ft. has been constructed at the cost of several million rupees which has capacity to accommodate approx. 3000 mumukshus at a time for spiritual pursuit. In this new assembly hall, a huge and splendid 13 feet standing

portrait of Shrimadji in meditative pose has been installed.

The Graceful Lord Shrimad Rajchandra had said to H.H.Prabhushriji, 'Muni, this is the hard time, and hence move as a simpleton like Jadbharat (a Mythological Character). Cross over the accomplishments that you will gain. The living beings of this time are like ripe muskmelons; they would not bear the harshness. If you therefore behave as a benefactor, many people will gain beneficence through you.'

While staying in the Ashram from 1920 to 1936 A.D. His Holiness Prabhushriji has laid a unique spiritual routine, which is being observed in the Ashram over 100 years as directed by him. The soil of this Ashram has been sanctified by his footprints and by his stay here. One can even now experience the sacred impact thereof in the Ashram.

The daily routine of devotional activities at 'Ashram' from 4.00 a.m. to 9.30 p.m. is as under.

4.00 a.m.to 6.30 a.m.: Recitation of Devotional compositions, Mantrasmaran, Lesson of Atonement, Chaityavandan and Stavan (Devotional Prayer intemple).

9.00 a.m. to 11.45a.m.: Devotional Compositions, Puja of Atmasiddhishastra or other Pujas.

2.00p.m.to 4.00 p.m. : Recitation of Devotional

Compositions, and contemplation of 'Vachanamrut'.

6.00 p.m.to 6.45 p.m.: Dev-vandan, Aarti and Mangaldivo at four places.

7.15p.m.to9.30 p.m.: Recitation of Devotional Compositions, reading of Shrimadji's letters, Mantrasmaran, Reciting of Atma-siddhishastra and reading of Updeshamrut and Bodhamrut.

(This routine is changed depending upon the sanctity of days and changes in time of sunrise and sunset.)

There being non-sectarian environment in this Ashram, the truth seekers belonging to Digamber, Shwetambar; Deravasi, Sthanakvasi and Vaishnav sects as well as others interested in the well being of soul come and stay here. That is the unique feature of this pious abode of wholesome communion and a great place of pilgrimage.

Since the passing away of Rev. Brahmachariji in 1953 A.D. there has not been a successor to him, yet the devotional routine has been continually prevailing in the Ashram as laid down by the Enlightened persons. H.H. Prabhushriji said in 'Updeshamrut' : **"What type of 'Ashram' is this ? Here talks prevail only about the soul. You should try to know your own soul."** It is necessary for every truth seeker coming here to remain present and take part in the above programme of devotion etc. One has to stay here only for

communion, renouncement, devotion etc. with the purpose of soul-orientation. It is forbidden to stay here for the sake of sense-indulgence, defilement or indolence.

During 1898 A.D.(Vikram Samvat 1954) when H.H. Prabhushriji was at Vaso, the Graceful Lord Shrimad had been there. That time he had told His Holiness to tell those truth seekers, who seek the means of self-realization, to extend the Mantra of Sahajatmaswaroop with the stipulation to avoid seven major addictions, to give up seven forbidden articles of food etc. and to recite the lessons of Nityaniyam (daily routine). The Graceful Lord has thus presented the path of liberation for the present time and authorized H.H. Prabhushriji to extend the same to the world. In view of that authorization H.H. Prabhushriji has devised the above-mentioned spiritual routine for the Ashram.

In this connection Rev. Brahmachariji has mentioned as under in Bodhamrut part 3.

“H.H. Prabhushriji has set the programme for the Ashram with much foresight. Absence of interest therein would indicate the lack of liberation-seekers desire. Someone may be interested in prevailing as per his fancy; but that is self-indulgence, which is the cause of worldly wandering. It is therefore beneficial to turn the mind towards the path shown by the Enlightened. If mind does not turn, it should be directed towards the path even by force.”

A few days prior to leaving the body, on a sacred day of Chaitra Vad 5, Vikram Samvat 1992

(12th day of April 1936) H.H. Prabhushriji entrusted the authority to Rev. Brahmachariji to administer the vows. After the latter's passing away it was felt that the liberation-seekers should not remain deprived of the opportunity to take vows as per directive of the Graceful Lord Shrimad Rajchandra. With that view in mind, an inscription showing H.H. Prabhushriji's instructions regarding the vows and his explanation of the Smaranmantra has been installed in Rajmandir at the place, from where H.H. Prabhushriji and Rev. Brahmachariji used to administer the vows. As indicated therein, many truth seekers even now take the vows at the witness of the Graceful Lord's portrait with the contemplation. 'At the instance of the sage (H.H. Prabhushriji) I abide by the commands of the ParamKrupaluDev (Graceful Lord)'.

Everyone in the Ashram needs to entirely avoid seven addictions, seven forbidden articles of food, the vegetables growing underground and eating after sunset. Moreover, it is essential and inevitable to observe celibacy within Ashram. That is the foundation stone of Ashram.

Regarding this Ashram, H.H. Prabhushriji has said as under in 'Updeshamrut' :

“Do you know what type of Ashram is this? It is the divine abode. Whoever wants to come here should keep the worldly concepts outside. Here prevails the spiritual force of Soul.”

“Here prevail the commands of the Param KrupaluDev (Graceful Lord). He is great and superbly Enlightened. The significance of this sacred land is unique. Those living here are meritorious.”

Thousands of truth seekers come here on the sacred days to partake in the devotional and spiritual programmes set by H.H. Prabhushriji.

In the Ashram, there is adequate arrangement for boarding and lodging for mumukshus.

More than 130 books published by the Ashram (inclusive of those books published by Paramshrut Prabhavak Mandal managed by Shrimad Rajchandra Ashram, Agas) are sold at the 'Book shop'. The list of books is printed at the end of this book.

On the floor above the administrative office, there is a model collection of Jain literature. There are more than 500 scriptures, and many of them are manuscripts. All of these have been laminated so that they can remain intact for a long time.

This Ashram is managed as per Trust-deed prepared on April 9, 1924 by H.H. Prabhushriji, and the 'Scheme' devised thereafter by the Charity Commissioner of Gujarat State. The management is carried on by the Board of Trustees as per the clauses thereof.

The reader will realize that since the Ashram was set up by H.H. Prabhushriji, it follows the pattern established by him. That is the royal road of religion. The Board of Trustees and other mumukshus remain

vigilant to maintain it. However, the force of wrong beliefs, prevails all around. Under these circumstances it is our duty to remain alert and if necessary to challenge the elements that intend to interfere in the wholesome pattern of the Ashram and to disrupt its objective and the ideal. The Board of Trustees earnestly seeks your co-operation in protecting this ideal of Ashram, which is the essence of its existence. The Board is confident that it will get the total co-operation from those, who treat this place of pilgrim as a unique of beneficence and are its well wishers.

It is worth repeating that Ashram is meant for observing and following the eternal Jain path of the detached Lords. It is our humble request that every mumukshu extends his full support to the original objective of Ashram and adds to its reputation.

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