

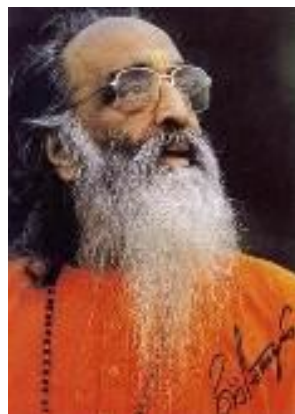


Chinmaya Pradīpikā



CMSD Quarterly Newsletter

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The Master Speaks:

Submit and learn. Submit to the feet of your Master, and render yourself receptive. Submit to the Will of the Lord, and draw a lesson from every event. Submit to the grandeur of Nature and listen to every silent message it offers.

- **Swami Chinmayananda**

In this issue of *Chinmaya Pradīpikā*

This quarter commenced with *Navarātrī* Celebrations highlighted by a grand Vio-Venu-Veena concert entitled “*Shakti*”, by local young musicians.

Dīpāvalī celebrations at CMSD have always been a special one; this year children performed *Lakṣmī pūjā* under the guidance of Lakshmi auntie.

Community services included a workshop on “Hinduism and Hindu Culture” for Bala Vihar students and adults.

CBCC included Gita-thon over 21 days culminating in the *Gītā Jayanti* and *Tapovana Jayanti*.

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Ācārya devo bhava- May our teacher be a God unto us



CMSD Bala Vihar sevaks and sevikas are acknowledged for their loving service to the children, during the *Navarātrī* Sunday Assembly.

Navarātrī Celebrations

Navarātrī Celebrations were held this year at *Chinmaya Jyoti* from October 13th through Oct 21st. Everyday two chapters of the *Gītā* were chanted before the evening study classes followed by the *Devī āraṭi*.



On Friday, Oct 16th, the *Śrī Lalitā Sahasranāma stotram* was chanted followed by *Śrī Durgā Lakṣmī ashtottara pūjā*, *Devi bhajans* by Chinmaya Dhvani, *āraṭi* and *prasādam*.



Navarātrī celebrations with “Shakti”- a Vio-Venu-Veena concert

- Ranga Sampath



Chinmaya Jyoti came alive during *Navarātrī* celebrations on October 18, 2015 with a “powerful” performance titled **Shakti**, by a set of talented young San Diego artists. Led by **Radhakrishnan Ramachandran on the venu** (flute), the trio that included **Aravind Seshadri on the violin** and **Hrishikesh Chary on the veena**, performed brilliantly, holding the audience spellbound as they caressed and stroked each note with the precision of veterans. The percussion accompaniment of **Naveen Basavanahally on the Mridangam** and **Kalyan Vaidyanathan on the Kanjira** were equally top class and kept up beautifully with the lead instruments. **Radhakrishnan Ramachandran** announced that the artists dedicate the performance to the legendary flute maestro Dr. N. Ramani, who passed away just a few days before the concert.

Beginning with the Invocation, Harikeshanallur Muthiah bhagavadar’s **Māte Malayadvaja Pāṇḍya Sañjāte** in Rāga *Khamās*, the group celebrated the nine nights of *Navarātrī* by performing nine jewels of musical compositions in nine different *rāga*-s.

The selections included compositions of Sri Muthuswami Dikshitar -**Siddhivināyakam** in *ṣaṅmukhapriyā rāgam*, *rūpaka tālam*, **Renukādevī samrakṣitoham** in *kannada bangala set to khaṇḍa cāpu tālam*, **Ānandāmṛtavarṣiṇī** in *amṛtavarṣiṇī rāgam*, *ādi tālam*. Compositions of Shyama Sastri included **Annapūrṇe Viśālākṣī** in *rāgam śāmā set to ādi tālam* and **Pālīṅcu Kāmākṣī** in *madhyamāvati rāgam* and *ādi tālam*. The concert concluded with the famous **Śricakrarāja Simhāsaneśvarī** in *rāgamālikā* followed by *tillānā* and *maṅgalam*.



The packed Pranava Nilayam audience could truly see **Shakti** brought to life beautifully by these youngsters. This was the most appropriate tribute to Divine Mother invoking whose blessings brings out every individual’s true potential.

The Vio-Venu-Veena Concert: An Allegory of Śaktī

- Aditi Puttur (Grade 10)

This year's *Navarātri* celebrations featured the amazing Vio-Venu-Veena concert on October 18th. Being a great tribute to the all-pervading power personified as Śaktī, it showcased a variety of *Carnatic kṛti*-s through the perspective of the Violin, the *Veṇū* (flute), and the *Vīṇā* (Veena).



As the concert progressed, the instruments and their distinct qualities were reminiscent of the three goddesses worshipped during *Navarātri*. The violin, with its rich, rough timbre and its strong sound, brought to mind Goddess *Durgā* in all her glory. Goddess *Durgā*, the *kriyā-śaktī*, is the fiercest out of the three and is worshipped during *Navarātri* to remove our bad tendencies. She is associated with the *tamo* guṇa. Next, the flute, with its bright, energetic tones, and being the classic instrument of Lord *Kṛṣṇa*, brought the image of Goddess *Lakṣmī*. Goddess *Lakṣmī*, the *icchā-śaktī* is worshipped during *Navarātri* for the endowment of spiritual and material wealth. She is associated with the *rajo* guṇa of passion. Finally the *vīṇā*, with its mellow, calm tone, is the divine instrument of Goddess *Sarasvatī* herself. Goddess *Sarasvatī*, after six nights of mind cleansing, bestows us with the Divine Knowledge, preparing us for a complete victory over our mind. She, the *jñāna-śaktī*, is associated with the *sattva* guṇa of purity. All three instruments played together in harmonious unity during the concert, celebrating the combined power of the three Śaktī-s.



Bala Vihar presentations for Navarātrī

The fifth grade *Bala Vihar* students enacted the **Legend of *Mahiṣāsura-mardini*** at the Sunday Assembly. They depicted the scene of Goddess *Durgā* triumphantly defeating *Mahiṣāsura*, a demon king who attained a boon from *Lord Brahma* that he would not be killed by a man, animal or God.

As demonstrated in the play, the gods joined their superior forces to create Goddess *Durgā*, who saved the world by killing *Mahiṣāsura* and rid the world of evil.

Through the use of the elaborate props, explicit and clear narration, as well as enthusiasm, the fifth graders actively engaged the audience as they shared the story of the great Goddess *Durgā Devī*. This was followed by the singing of the



Mahiṣāsura-mardini
Stotram in praise of
Goddess *Durgā*.



The 10th Grade class provided an elaborate explanation of the significance and the progression of the nine nights of *Navarātrī*. The presentation reminded us



to bring ourselves out of *tamas* and *rajas*, and enhance *sattva guṇa* to ultimately lead us to self-realization. This is done through devotion to *Durgā Devī*, *Lakṣmī Devī*, and *Sarasvatī Devī* respectively, each of who are worshipped for three nights during *navarātrī*. *Vijayadasmi* is celebrated on the tenth day as the victory of our own mind.



These two presentations by the *Bala Vihar* students captured the true essence of the festival of *Navarātrī*.

Sarasvatī Pūjā at Chinmaya Jyoti

The *Sarasvatī Pūjā* was performed in *Samskr̥ti Nilayam* on Oct 21st followed by bhajans, songs and dance.



Dhruv and Kanishka Iyer sing Carnatic *gītā*-s in praise of *Devī*.

Ananya Krishnan shares her experience-

“During the night of the *Sarasvatī Pūjā*, **Solana** and I were graced with the opportunity to offer a dance piece in praise of goddess *Sarasvatī*. The traditional piece, ***Mānavatu Śrī Sarasvatī***, a composition of Mysore Vasudevacharya in *Ragam Hindolam*, is a tribute to mother *Sarasvatī*, who is the goddess of both material and spiritual knowledge, and will ensure safe progress in positive human endeavors through her blessings. “

Vijayadaśamī and Vidyārambha

On the auspicious occasion of *Vijayadaśamī*, **Chinmaya Kala Jyoti**, the art wing of **Chinmaya Jyoti**, added two new classes - Bharatanatyam dance classes and art classes taught by *Sevikā* Aparna Sundaram and *Sevikā* Swaroopa Kalva respectively.

The *vidyārambha* or ceremonious beginning was held on October 22nd, in *Samskr̥ti Nilayam*. Many new and current students enrolled in tabla, Chinmaya Dhvani, CMSD band and Vedanta Study groups attended the ceremony. All the students and teachers performed the *ārati* to *Śri Jyoti Vināyaka*, Goddess *Sarasvatī* and *Pujya Gurudev* invoking their blessings. The new students were very excited to be initiated on this auspicious day and receive their introductory lessons.



Students of **Amarnath Puttur** cheerfully play the tabla during their Saturday morning class.

Dīpāvalī Celebrations

On Nov 11th, *Dīpāvalī* was celebrated at *Chinmaya Jyoti*. The celebrations started with *Śrī Jyoti Vināyaka Pūjā* which was followed by all the children performing the *Lakṣmī Pūjā* along with their parents.

Ashwin Mohan and **Ravi Iyer**, new CMSD members, shared that it was a “delight to see the children participate in the *pūjā*. It was a unique experience since it gave the children and the parents a lot of insight into the meaning behind the various rituals and hymns.”



Chinmaya Dhvani performed bhajans which mellifluously added to the aura of the auspicious occasion.





The *pūjā* was followed by 7th grade students presenting "The Legend of *Kṛṣṇa* and *Narakāśura* "and *garba*.



“...Chinmaya Mission is a school with a difference—and herein lies that difference. Lakshmi-ji—explains each part of the *pūjā*, and instructs the kids (and adults also) on the meaning of each step, and the proper process in which to do the *pūjā*. We all participate in the *pūjā*. Now, I know I am not alone when I say—many of us adults, whether we grew up in India or here—have been to *pūjā*-s, where we sat glassy eyed waiting for the priest to finish his rituals and chants in Sanskrit. Either we were busy socializing during the *pūjā*, or we are dreaming of the delicious meal which usually follows a *pūjā*. However, at Chinmaya Mission, our kids are taught, from a young age, what the meaning and significance of the rituals are, and we all take part in it. The whole experience becomes one of a spiritual nature as it should—and leaves one energized and exhilarated.

While our country celebrated its Veterans, we at the Mission lit *dīya*-s and celebrated Goddess *Lakṣmī* and the triumph of light and goodness over darkness. The evening was complete with singing from Chinmaya Dhvani, our own group of *aṣṭalakṣmī*-s, and the 7th grade class doing their skit on the story of *Dīpāvalī*, and the defeat of the demon *Narakāśura*. Of course there was dancing and the *Mahāprasādam*—a delicious dinner prepared by the current families to welcome the new families to our mission.”

-Bhuvana Garcia



Interstellar- Halloween *Witch-ar* for High School students

On October 30th, 2015, the CHYKs conducted a **Halloween *Witch-ar*** for Bala Vihar high school students where they watched the movie **Interstellar** and then reflected on it. The main goal in the movie was to keep the human species alive.



Aditi Puttur shared her experience at the Sunday Bala Vihar session and tied it to the “food for thought” for that week, **“Every job demands its quota of efforts. Never give up too soon.”** -

“A big, reoccurring theme was persistence. One line in particular, “Rage, rage against the dying of the light,” kept resurfacing throughout the movie. The dying of light represents ignorance in, for example, knowledge. Rage against ignorance is the persistence for knowledge, which translates to not giving up. And in order to fulfill the quota of efforts needed to reach a goal, **one cannot give up.**

In the movie, the characters devised two plans to reach their goal. Plan A was the *right* thing to do, by salvaging the surviving humans from Earth and bringing them to a new, livable planet. On the other hand, Plan B sacrificed all the humans on Earth for the instigation of artificially grown ones on the new planet. The space agency (NASA) back on Earth decided to go with Plan B as it was *easy*. They had already ruled out Plan A, as they presumed that transporting the surviving humans would fail. And so, without even trying, they gave up.

Meanwhile, the astronauts, who had gone into space to find a new livable planet, were determined to reach the goal with Plan A. The astronauts, unlike the agency, had strived to complete their quota of efforts to reach the goal rather than take shortcuts. And sure enough, Plan A succeeded in the end.

From this I have learned to not be anxious about the result, nor the amount of work needed to reach it. All I have to do is start putting forth effort, and soon the result **will** come.”

GITA-thon, Ghar Ghar mein GITA Tapovana Jayanti and Gītā Jayanti

Lord Kṛṣṇa declares in the *Bhagavad Gītā* that teaching, studying, chanting and even mere listening to the *Bhagavad Gītā* brings great merit to oneself and brings the individual closer to HIM.

In this birth centenary year of *Pujya Gurudev*, all CMSD member families participated in the grand *GITA-thon* along with the entire family and friends from Nov 30th to Dec 19th. Everyday families and friends got together and recited and listened to one chapter of the *Bhagavad Gītā* starting with the *Gītā Dhyānam* on Nov. 30th.

Akhila Mangesh- a CMSD parent writes:

“Thank you for the **Gita-Thon** idea. It has been a great learning experience that taught us to be steadfast when we make a goal and to not be distracted regardless of the situations that emerge and make it difficult to attain what we had planned.....

...**Gita-Thon** not only gave us a schedule but a purpose and clear vision. This has been such a great way to tell that no matter what comes our way, we should try to do our best, relentlessly till the end.”

This culminated in the celebration of the Birth Anniversary of *Param Pujya Swami Tapovana Maharaj* and *Śrīmad Bhagavad Gītā* on Sunday December 20th. *Śrī Tapovana aṣṭōttara pūjā*, *Śrī Bhagavad Gītā aṣṭōttara pūjā* were conducted.





“After listening to the importance of *Śrīmad Bhagavad Gītā* in the *Māhātmyam* and its teachings, CMSD members recited the whole *Śrīmad Bhagavad Gītā* – throughout maintaining the same tempo and enthusiasm from start to end. Various families participated in leading this chapter-wise *Bhagavad Gītā* chanting. Chanting was followed by a “*Gītā* –Quiz”, which attracted active participation from the children, youth and parents alike. Devotees enjoyed the experience of positive vibes and wonderful synergy through *en masse* chanting of *Bhagavad Gītā* in the serene premises of *Chinmaya Jyoti Ashram*.”

-Anjali Ghanekar



Over 40 families with 1741 entries were recorded for daily chanting and listening to the individual chapters of the *Śrīmad Bhagavad Gītā*. Eleven families that completed all the 18 chapters were awarded CBCC buttons in recognition.



CMSD in the Community

Workshop: Hinduism & Hindu Culture

The eye-opening Hinduism Workshop was conducted on Saturday, November 21st, 2015. In the short amount of time allotted, the participants were able to get a glimpse of the vast Hindu culture.

The participants learned Hinduism to be a *Sanātana Dharma* practiced by the *āryans* (India was once called *Āryavarta*). They had an introduction to the *veda-s*, the primary hindu scripture and the secondary scriptures like *purana-s*, *itihāsa-s* and *brahmasūtra-s*. The concepts of *Dharma*, *sampradāya*



were also introduced. The workshop emphasized a Hindu as one who does not tolerate violence, aspires for the highest ideals, and rejects the lower with a goal of realizing the universal Ultimate truth with the 4 *yoga-s* or paths to reach it: *karma* (action), *bhakti* (devotion/emotion), *rāja* (mental concentration), and *jñāna* (knowledge). The *Bhagavad Gītā* was described as the essence of the *Upaniṣad-s* and the manual to right conscious living. Prayer is used to tune the mind towards the Lord.

The workshop covered the Distinction between *mantra*, *yantra*, and *tantra* : *mantra* is the auditory representation of the Deities, *yantra* is visual expression of *mantra-s*, and *tantra* is the external worship using rituals. It also discussed the caste/class system is based on disposition of mind (*guṇa-s*), not by birth- the three *guṇa-s* being *sattva* (knowledge, purity), *rajas* (activity, desire-oriented), *tamas* (inertia, ignorance).



“This workshop was the perfect start to the Thanksgiving Break, as it has given us the greatness of being Hindu to be thankful for! As the famous author and playwright George Bernard Shaw said, “The Indian way of life provides the vision of the natural, real way of life. We veil ourselves with unnatural masks. On the face of India are the tender expressions which carry the mark of the Creator’s hand.”

-Aditi Puttur

Yuva Sevak Food Donation Event



On Saturday, December 12, 2015, the *Yuva Sevaks* participated in a food drive by preparing lunch bags for those who need it, through the “**Bread of Life**” organization. Many parents and volunteers supplied the food and packaging items. The *Yuva Sevaks*, including Sree Koya, Surabhi Kulkarni, Ishan Gupta, Aditi Puttur, and Solana Garcia along with *Chyks Mili* and Dheeraj were able to pack 148 sack lunches. Fourth grader Samitha Senthilkumar also joined in with her mom to assemble all the sack lunches together.

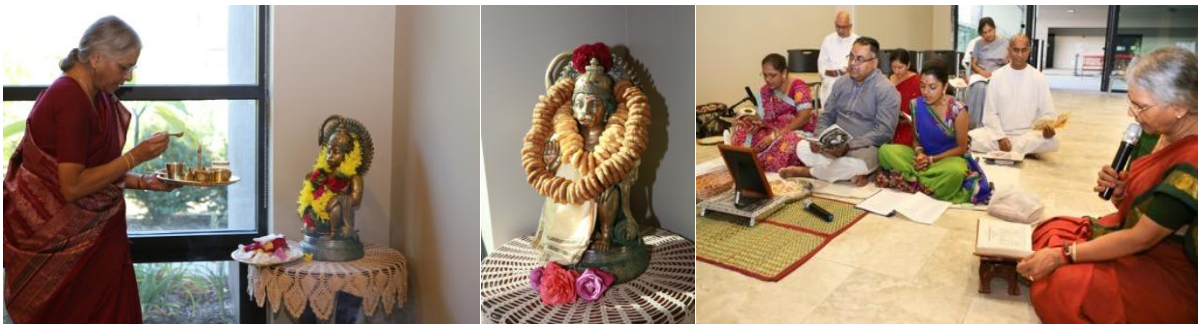
It was truly a Chinmaya Mission experience: while spreading peanut butter and jelly, the conversation evolved from all about the predicate ‘me’ to a chorus chant of *mahāmṛtyuñjaya* mantra.



The completed sack lunches were then delivered by Dheeraj to the organization in Oceanside.

CMSD On-Going Events

Monthly *Sundarakāṇḍa pārayaṇa*

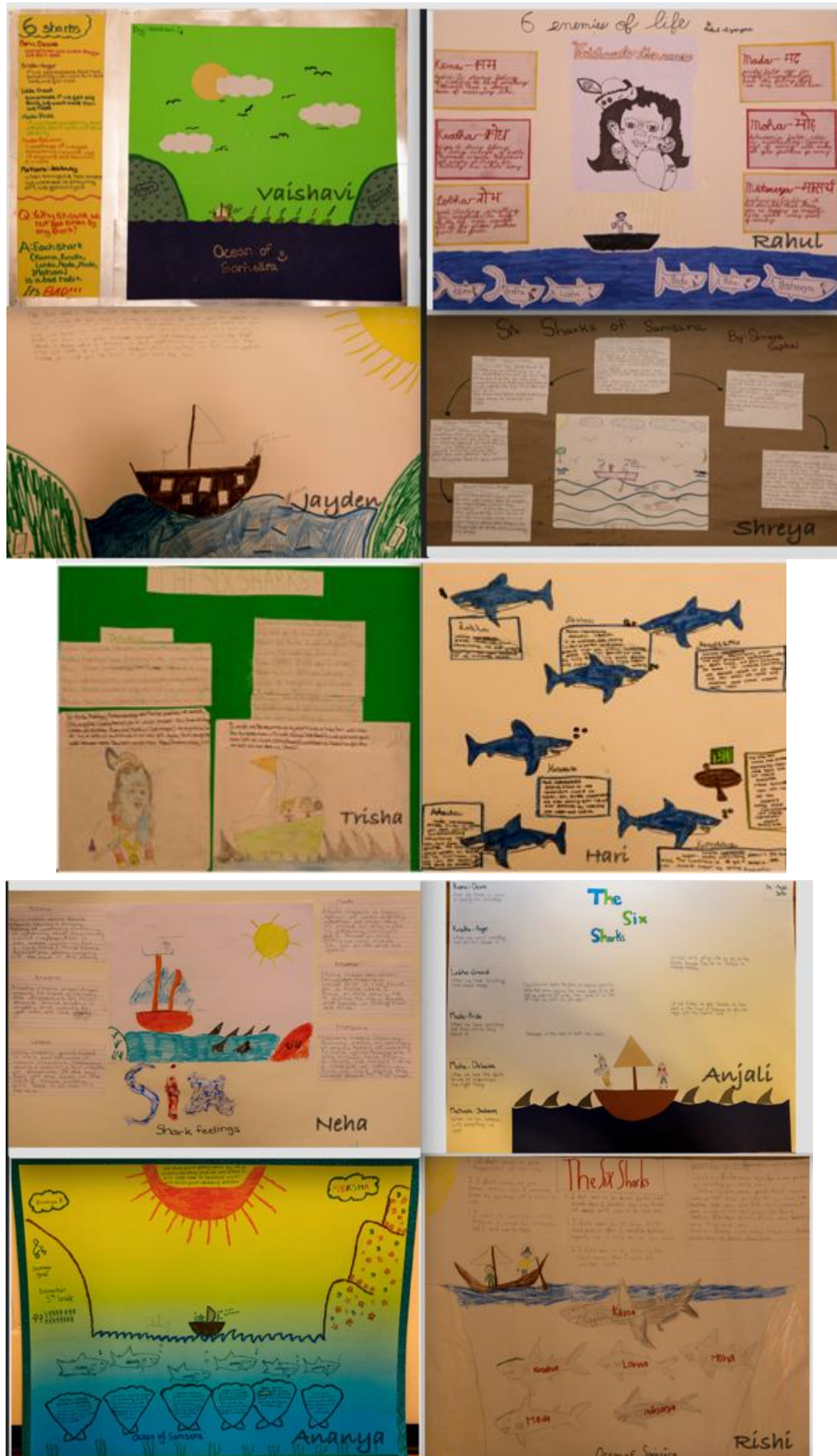


Ghar Ghar mein Gurudev; Ghar Ghar mein Jyoti

The Rungta-s, the Kasibhatla-s, the Pathuri-s and the Puttur family ceremoniously received Pujya Gurudev's *pādukā*-s in their homes. *Chinmaya Jyoti* was lit following the *Guru Pādukā pūjā*.



Bala Vihar Corner



In the past couple of months, the **fifth grade BV** class learnt about the **six sharks (Kāma, Krodha, Lobha, Moha, Mada, and Matsarya)**, which are the obstacles in the Ocean of *Samsāra*, that limit individual's ability to reach the Lord. The students have created the posters depicting the 6 sharks as part of class assignment.

Reflections

Students of the **Sanskṛta Vihar** certificate course express their joy of learning:

I learn a lot from others in class. Most importantly we all have fun together.

-Zil Arya (6th grade)

The class has helped me pronounce Sanskrit words better. I also like that all students regardless of age are treated the same and have fun together.

-Raj Parikh

The class is very interactive and I especially like the dictation.

-Omkaar (7th grade)

The class has helped me become more fluent in reading. I also like that it is a "Vihar".

-Rahul Arya

I liked learning new alphabets and writing them down fast.

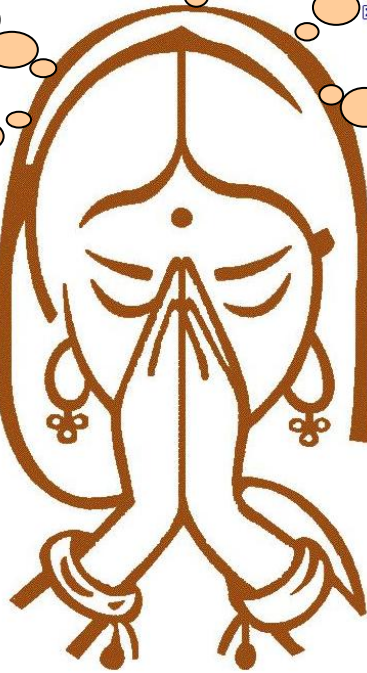
-Sravani Premkumar (4th grade)

The Sanskrit class is amazing and fun to learn. We learn the Siva Sutrani, svaras and vyanjnani.

-Neha Mahesh (5th grade)

I like the dictation that we do in class.

-Samitha Senthilkumar (4th grade)



Learn to read and write; then you can master any subject. Similarly, learn to serve and obey your Guru with devotion and humility. Then you can master any spiritual sadhana, leading you to the realization of the Truth.

-Swami Tejomayananda

