

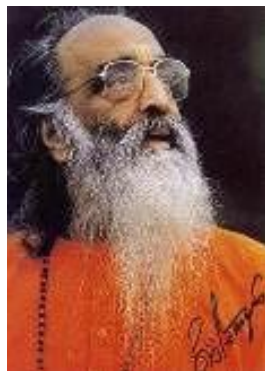


Chinmaya Pradipika

CMSD Quarterly Newsletter



July 2016, No. 19



The Master Speaks:

Forgive liberally your enemies.... in fact, nothing can annoy them so much! They expect you to kick back and so have planned to break your ribs with return kicks. All these planned onslaughts become empty and hollow when you just forgive them! Many enemies become true friends when lavishly and lovingly forgiven!

- **Swami Chinmayananda**

In this issue of *Chinmaya Pradīpikā*

The special highlight of this quarter is the **Chinmaya Birth Centenary Celebrations** (CBCC). The 100th anniversary featured many activities including Guru Paduka Puja, a CBCC grand production, "**Chinmaya Rama**" and a *Jñāna Yajña* on the "**Essential values of Mahatma Gandhi**" by Swami Chidatmananda, Acharya, CM Hyderabad.

Bala Vihar students presented their annual programs to the delight of parents and teachers. The 2015-16 session concluded with graduation ceremony. The annual summer Youth camp was the last major event of this Quarter during the week of Pujya Guruji's birthday and it will be featured in the next issue.

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Pujya Gurudev's 100th Birth Anniversary Celebrations

Pujya Gurudev's 100th Birth Anniversary was celebrated on May 8th in San Diego-the land where HE left HIS Jyoti – with great devotion and reverence. *Samskr̥ti Nilayam* welcomed one and all with a bright *rangoli*, and with tender banana stems with fronds adorning both sides of the gateway. Bright green mango leaves, colorful paper festoons, and the refrain "**Unto Him Our Best**" in glossy letters that were suspended from the trellis created an atmosphere of elation and reverence. Stepping into the festive environment, one saw the imposing garlanded figure of Pujya Gurudev, standing hands crossed, regally surveying the proceedings from the balcony above. On the stage below, at the eastern end of the atrium, He sat enthroned under a gilded arch and golden umbrella, smiling benevolently at His children and at Lord *Jyoti Vināyaka* in *Pranava Nilayam*. In the sacred center of the atrium was a huge gleaming Jyoti, encircled on all sides of the floor by beautiful *rangoli*. It was altogether a beautiful sight to behold!



It was evident that many a *Sevak* and *Sevika*, who had worked behind the scenes for weeks up until the late hours of the night before, had stayed true to the motto "Unto Him Our Best".

Lakshmi Aunty greeted everyone with hariH Om! and through His divine presence the entire Ashram – parents, grand-parents, children – reverberated with a synchronous and melodious unitone "hariH OM" !!! For a split second, one could even hear the sparrows and swallows (that have taken shelter within the Ashram in his grace) tweet in unison almost continuing to thank Gurudev.

Such was the grandeur on Pujya Gurudev Swami Chinmayananda's 100th birth anniversary celebrations.



The mood was set for the 400+ mission members and families joining in the *Guru Pādukā pūjā*, and worship of Chinmaya Jyoti at the center of the octagon in front of the stage. Following *Jyoti Vināyaka pūjā*, families took their seats on the floor next to their personal altars, and the morning's function was led from the stage by our chiefsevak- **Smt. Lakshmi Aunty and Sri. Srinivas Sukumar**. After invocation and bhajans by **Chinmaya Dhvani and CMSD Band**, **Devesh Vashishtha** sang a melodious piece '*Gurudeva tava mahaniya krpa*' a most endearing composition by Pujiya Guruji.





The *Chinmaya Jyoti* lamp was lit, and *ṣodaśa-upacāra pūjā* was conducted to Pujya Gurudev's *Pādukā*-s.

Sixteen *Devī*-s adorned in colorful silk sarees, ornaments and flowers performed *arcana* to the *Chinmaya Jyoti* while the *Guru Pādukā pūjā* was performed on stage. It was as though the *Aṣṭalakṣmī*-s had descended to worship Pujya Gurudev on this most auspicious day, which also coincided with Mothers' Day.

Following *naivedyam* and *ārati*, *nritya upacāra* to the guru as "*Brahmā-viṣṇu- Maheshvara*" was offered gracefully by **Smt. Meenal Chakradeo**. Pujya Guruji's birthday song dedicated to Pujya Gurudev was played in his own voice. *Guru Pādukā stotram* and *Tapovana ṣaṭkam* were also recited by the congregation.

An orange birthday candle in the shape of a flower, and an orange "100th birthday cake" were offered as well.



The sixth grade Bala Vihar students presented on few of the 108 names of Pujya Gurudev that inspired them.

All *Devī*-s and members danced around the *Jyoti* in great joy to the tune of "*Cilanga katti odi odi vayo*" – celebrating the birth of Balakrishna Menon to later bless the world as Swami Chinmayananda Saraswati. To conclude the wondrous morning, the entire *āśrama* recited the Chinmaya Mission pledge in Sanskrit and English followed by the *prārthanā gītaṃ* – "*tvam hi no netā*".

As part of the *ārati* and taking Pujya Gurudev's blessings, various CMSD members offered their pledge cards, at Gurudev's feet. We dedicate our work and result to Him alone with steadfast devotion. Chapter 15 Bhagavad Gita was recited by all. The *mahāprasādam* was partaken by all with great joy and enthusiasm to continue to do **UNTO HIM OUR BEST**.

- Ranga Sampath, Rajasekar Vaidyanathan and Srajan Raghuwanshi

Chinmaya Slokanjali Grand Awards



Two Bala Vihar students, **Ketki Chakradeo** and **Aditi Puttur**, who completed the requirements of Chinmaya Slokanjali-all five levels of the self-paced competition initiated on May 8, 2011, received their trophies on this auspicious day.





CBCC Grand Production “Chinmaya Rama”

*yadā yadā hi dharmasya glānir bhavati bhārata |
abhyutthānam adharmasya tadātmānam śṛjāmyaham ||4.7||*

In the words of the Lord, whenever and wherever there is a decline in righteousness and a predominance of unrighteousness, O descendant of *Bharata*, at that time I manifest Myself. This was the resonating verse that reverberated all throughout the courtyard, as we, the audience, awaited in awe for the birth of Lord *Śrī Rāma*. **Chinmaya Rama**, which took place on May 15th, 2016, was the amazing musical-style production that outlined the life of the Ideal Idol, Lord *Rāma*. **Chinmaya Rama** went through many scenes of the *Rāmāyaṇa*, outlining a different Ideal Aspect of Lord *Rāma*, including the Ideal Birth, the Ideal King, and the Ideal Teacher, among many others. This production really gave the viewers an amazing experience, as it was filled to the brim with singing, narrating, chanting, great acting, and witty teaching from Lord *Rāma*. But what separated this production from other *Rāmāyaṇa* plays, was the interpretation that took place at the end of each scene, giving the audience a higher understanding of the ideologies that Lord *Rāma* lived for. The interpretation was designed to tie together the scenes of the *Rāmāyaṇa* with its core symbolism.

Soon the *Rāmāyaṇa* was no more a mere story, rather it became a lifestyle that one must aim to internalize; it became a wealth of teachings and values. The verse in the beginning really asserted that Lord *Rāma* came down to restore *Dharma*, righteousness, and dispel the darkness of ignorance, in order to introduce the brilliance of integrity and wisdom. In one part of the production, Lord *Rāma* is portrayed speaking wisdom to the fallen *Vālī*. *Vālī* had taken his younger brother's kingdom and wife. He also exiled *Sugrīva* with no mercy. *Vālī* had done actions of *adharma*, and so Lord Rama, the dispeller of *adharma*, had to come and restore *dharma*. Satisfied with these words and purified of all sins, Vali then ascended to heaven. Another notable instance in **Chinmaya Rama** was *Rāma* going after the golden deer to accede to *Sītā devī*'s request. Although, he knew the deer was none other than an *asura*, he still went after it to teach the lesson that objects of desire can cause problems for people in the materialistic world. This of course did cause problems for *Sītā devī* later on. Also, his role as an *avatara* had to be fulfilled, as he knew he would eventually confront *Rāvaṇa*, and this was just one step closer to his goal of incarnation. This section of the *Rāmāyaṇa* was also shown to teach that when the Ego, *Sītā*, is diverted by outwardly pleasures, like the golden deer, it will succumb to them and get separated from the Divine, Lord *Rāma*.

So all throughout the production, scenes like these were shown in full color by the actors, embellished with meaningful verses and songs, and tied together by the narrators and interpreters. In conclusion, through the production **Chinmaya Rama**, the viewers and performers were each able to internalize at least one aspect of Lord *Rāma*'s beneficial manifestation.

- Aditi Putur (Gr.10)

Chinmaya Rama - A blissful experience as a part of birth centennial celebrations for Pujya Gurudev. As the name suggests, it was a perfect blend of important events from Ramayana with clear understanding and its implication in today's world – beautifully depicted by the *Sutradhari*.

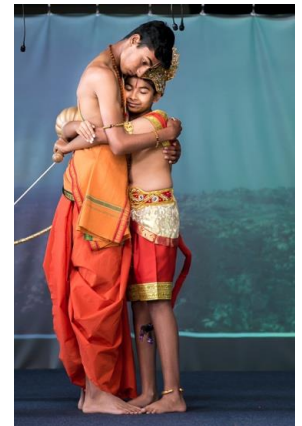
One of my favorite scenes was the one that portrayed Lord *Rāma* crying for *Sītā*'s pain due to abduction and separation. The “*bhāva*” for the actions of the Lord is many times, misunderstood, if not learnt from the true source. The yearning of the Lord for his true *bhakta* was magical and showed the importance of our attitude in all of our work. The divine grace is always present, and it is unto us to do our best. The attitude behind *Karma* is the prime force attracting the divine grace.

Another beautifully portrayed scene was wherein *Kaikeyi* follows the path of destruction as induced with jealousy upon *Manthara*'s advice. It was a captivating performance showing the downfall in one's life as pointed out in the *Bhagavad Gītā* - Chapter 2 (verses 61 to 64).

- Manasi Popat

Chinmaya Rama in Pictures...

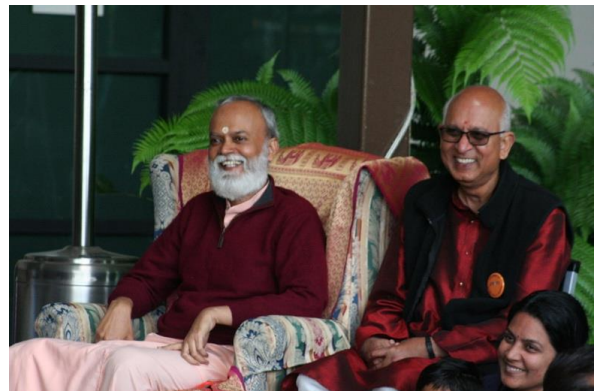






“Chinmaya Rama brought all the members, elders, youth, kids together and excellent performance is the result and joy for all- the organizers, participants and viewers. The team of Sevaks stands out in Excellent and Marvelous silent self-less service which is a unique factor for success of all Programmes.”

-Swami Chidatmananda, Acharya, CM Hyderabad



Jñāna Yajña by Swami Chidatmananda, Acharya, CM Hyderabad

Swami Chidatmananda, Acharya, of CM Hyderabad visited San Diego from May 12 to 15 joining us for the CBCC celebrations.

CMSD members were blessed to hear Swami Chidatmananda-ji's discourses on "**Essential values of Mahatma Gandhi**" and take part in a Guided meditation session.

CMSD member, **Hemadri Tunuguntla**, shares his experience:



"A brilliant question from *Arjuna*, "*Sthita-prajñasya kā bhāṣā ... (Gita 2-54)*" prompted the Lord to pour the nectar of all *Vedas* and *Upaniṣad*-s in a relatively easy to understand language and format, which we all know as the *Bhagavad Gītā*. In spite of detailed answers by Lord Krishna, to all the questions on *Sthita-prajñā* characteristics, it is still very difficult to comprehend these *lakṣaṇa*-s to the extent the common man could practice in his daily life. The common man longed and prayed for a living example for better understanding. *Mohandas Karamchand "Mahatma" Gandhi* is a fitting answer to all those prayers, for he walked on this earth in the contemporary history where effects of *kali yuga* were rampant.

Many first generation Indians residing in USA are very familiar with the *Mahatma* for they have studied him in their course work during their high school and college years. Many might have written essays on him and won prizes in competitions as well. But how many of us could relate his life and the virtues, he believed in and steadfastly practiced, with the teachings of *Upanishads*? Well, it is no longer an issue as Pujya Swami Chidatmananda took upon himself to quench this thirst with his lecture series titled "Essential values of Mahatma Gandhi". Some of us were fortunate enough to attend this discourse during the week of May 12, 2016.

Swami Chidatmananda, the Acharya of Chinmaya mission, Hyderabad and Regional Head of the mission centers in Andhra Pradesh, is very accomplished yet very gentle and easily approachable and I personally appreciated his enigmatic 'Mona Lisa' smile. He demonstrated his thorough understanding of Mahatma Gandhi and could quote even minor incidents of his life with dates and places etc. Swamiji emphasized the values of the Mahatma while constantly drawing our attention to the corresponding vedantic teachings and how they can be put into practice. Gandhiji once paid tribute to *īśopaniṣad* with "If all the Upanishads and all the other scriptures happened all of a sudden to be reduced to ashes, and if only the first verse in the *īśopaniṣad* (... *tena tyaktena bhuñjīthā ...*) were left in the memory of Hindus, Hinduism would live forever". Gandhiji truly imbibed and put into practice the following śloka:

*yastu sarvāṇi bhūtāni ātmanyevānupaśyati
sarva bhūteṣu cātmānaṁ tato na vijugupsate*

Swamiji argued that this belief alone paved the path to Gandhiji's fearlessness, practice of *ahimsa* and his efforts towards eradication of untouchability.

I came out of the discourse fully convinced that Gandhiji's life is a guide to understand the otherwise unfathomable scriptures and their teachings."



Gita Chanting Competition



The Sixteenth Annual *Bhagavad Gītā* chanting competition was held on April 30th. 24 BV students and 10 adults chanted Chapter 16 with great devotion.

Panel of Gods

On May 22, CMSD Yuva Sevaks conducted a special event-Panel of Gods, for the PK-2 grade Bala Vihar children. The children welcomed various gods with great enthusiasm. Each God told a story to entertain the children.

Lord *Gaṇeśa* shared an inspirational story when he had to compete with his brother to win a fruit.

Lord *Viṣṇu* told the story of *Vāmana*.

Lord *Rāma* shared a beautiful story of how squirrels helped build the bridge to Lanka.

Lord *Śiva* and Mother *Pārvatī* also shared stories with the children.



Śrī Rāma Navamī

Śrī Rāma Navamī celebrations at Chinmaya Mission San Diego was a very divine experience. Śrī Rāma aṣṭottara pūjā was performed for the Lord. After the pūjā, several melodious bhajans were sung in praise of Śrī Rāma and Sītā-ji. Overall, the atmosphere was very peaceful and pious. It was a wonderful experience to celebrate one of our most important festivals along with the Chinmaya family. —Ashwin Mohan



Hanumān Jayanti

On April 23 2016, Hanuman Jayanti was celebrated in a very special way. **Hanuman Chalisa-thon** was led by Grade 4 class and families.

“Five other students and I played tabla to the cheerful chanting of the *Hanumān Cālīsā*. The microphones were passed around as all devotees chanted. After some time, you could go outside and eat delicious *prasād* cooked by the *Sevika*-s. The *Hanumān Cālīsā* was chanted 108 times, each time more cheerful than the previous one. Many devotees kept coming and going, each one with sincere devotion. Singing the *Hanumān Cālīsā*, which is personally my favorite prayer, was very uplifting.”

- Aditya Mavalankar, Grade 7



CMSD in the Interfaith community- BEING THE LIGHT



On May 21st, a CMSD Interfaith Youth conference was held on the theme of **“Light”**. This CBCC event was held along with the Poway Interfaith team. CMSD CHYK-s and Yuva Sevaks participated along with other young adults from various faith organizations and presented on the theme of **“Being the Light”**.



Bala Vihar Annual Day Celebrations- June 12 & 19

It is a delight to see the Bala Vihar programs every year- the culmination of a full year's learnings that are presented in a creative manner. **"I am Thine!"** was the theme for the annual day celebrations appropriately chosen to commemorate the CBCC year. The program began with an invocation by Chinmaya *Dhvani*. The PK class children the daily prayers with faith and devotion. The Kindergarten class took us to the land of Gods and Goddesses. The children beamed with joy as they shared what they have learnt.

First graders showed us how to recite the alphabets –the Chinmaya way! The values presented remind us that it starts with an Aspiration to reach a higher goal and the Zeal to walk on the path of *Dharma*.

We can, we must and we will!

Second graders described the charm and sang songs on their sweet Lord *Kṛṣṇa*.



The third and fourth graders presented *Bala Rāmāyaṇa*. The third graders emphasized the importance of always saying the name of Lord *Rāma*. They sang the song "Bolo Ram" and effectively presented "*Khāte bhī Rāma kaho, Pīte bhī Rāma kaho*".

Fourth graders presented the glories of Lord *Hanumān*. The children shared the qualities of Lord *Hanumān*, what they learnt from these values and how they use it in their daily lives.



Fifth graders, who studied the *Bāla Bhāgavatam*, shared the nine modes of devotion sharing examples for each mode.

Sixth graders explained that the grace of the Guru is the grace of God. They enacted the story of Giri who was a student of *Ādi Śaṅkarācārya*. With *śraddhā* and *guru's* grace, Giri was transformed to *Toṭākācārya*.

Seventh graders presented the teachings of *Vibhīṣaṇa Gītā*.





The second week of the annual day program began with an amazing performance by the Tabla Students of **Chinmaya Kala Jyoti**. It was wonderful to see the excellent progress made by these students over the last year under the tutelage of their teacher, **Amarnath Puttur**.

The eighth grade class performed a talk show on controversial topics in the *Mahābhārata*. They had a creative idea of a time machine that brought back *Mahābhārata* characters from the past. The importance of doing one's *dharma* even when it is difficult, was emphasized.

Ninth graders presented a skit on Hindu culture. The theme was "My Salutations to that reverential teacher, who opened my eyes, by applying the divine collyrium of self-knowledge in my eyes which are blinded by the cataract of ignorance" and it was portrayed through the story of a king and how he ruled his kingdom.

Tenth grade class presented "Decision 2016", a presidential candidate debate, where the candidates presented their views on the Environment. Guidance from the *Gītā* was provided in helping making the right choice.

11th and 12th graders presented the values from the *Gītā* in the form of a skit named "Heroes of Bodville".



Bala Vihar Awards and Graduation

The annual CMSD awards ceremony and the graduation of high school senior students were held on June 19, 2016 following the student presentations. Lakshmi Aunty assisted by other teachers and *Sevaks* presented the awards for perfect attendance, Chapter 16 *Gītā* chanting competition, Chinmaya *Slokanjali*, and BV Quiz awards. All the BV teachers were also recognized.



BV Graduation

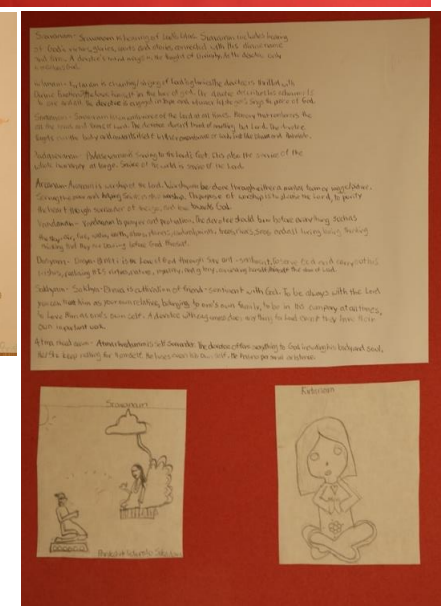
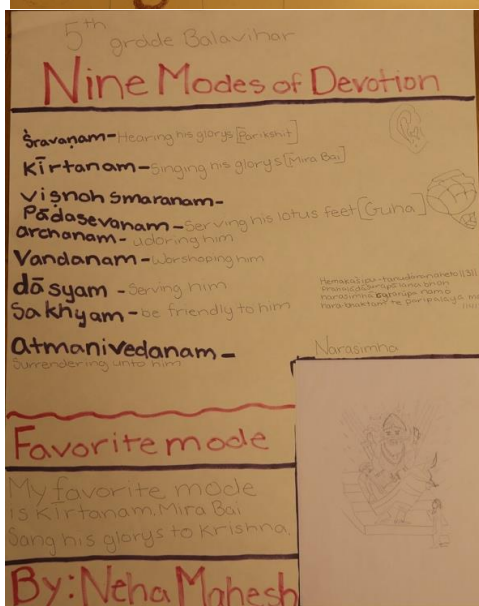
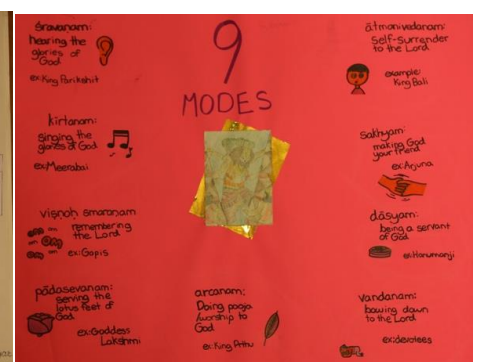
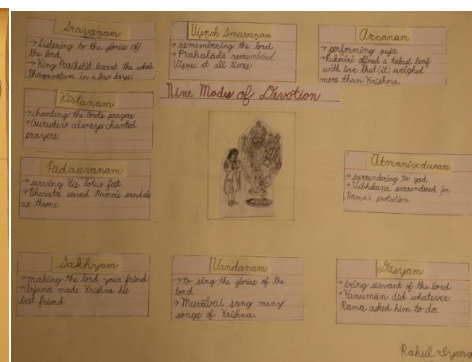
Four graduating high school seniors along with their families performed the *Guru Pādukā pūjā* led by Lakshmi Aunty. The graduating students offered *guru dakṣiṇā* and received their certificates. The families of the graduating class served lunch to all members of the CMSD family.



Yet another year of Bala Vihar came to a grand finale.

Bala Vihar Corner

The second and fifth grade projects are highlighted in this edition. The second grade students have showcased the **stories of Lord Kṛṣṇa** and the fifth graders- the **Nine modes of devotion**.

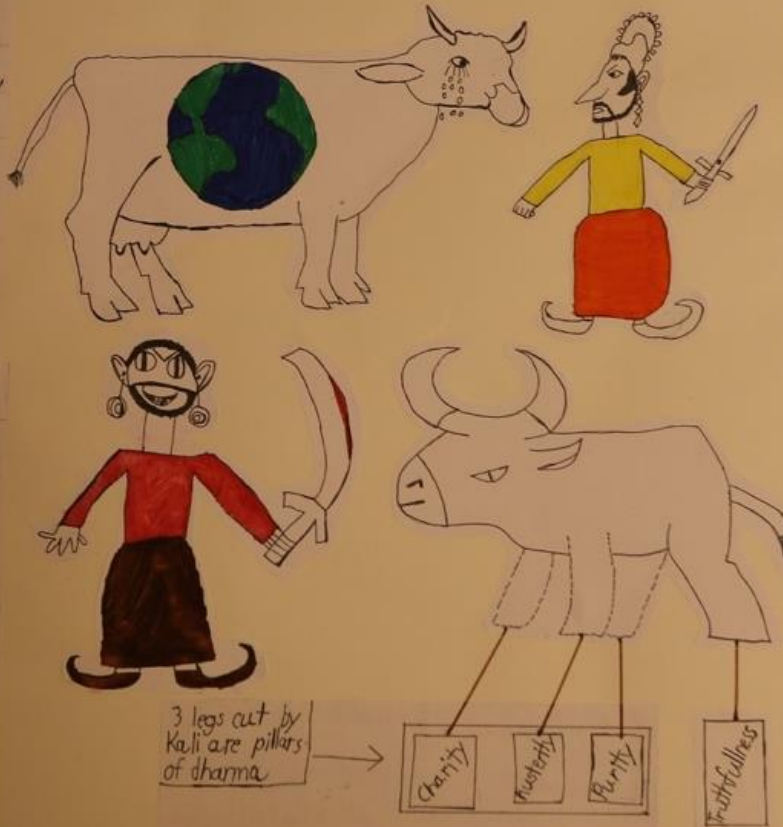


PARIKSHIT MEETS KALI

By: Rahul Chyengar

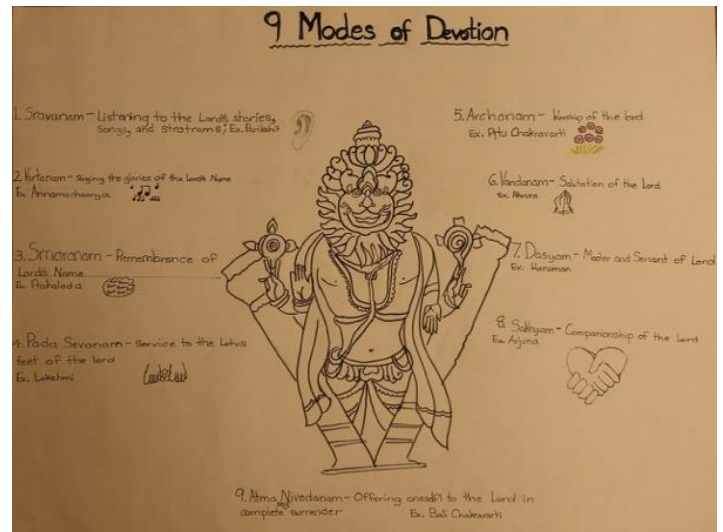
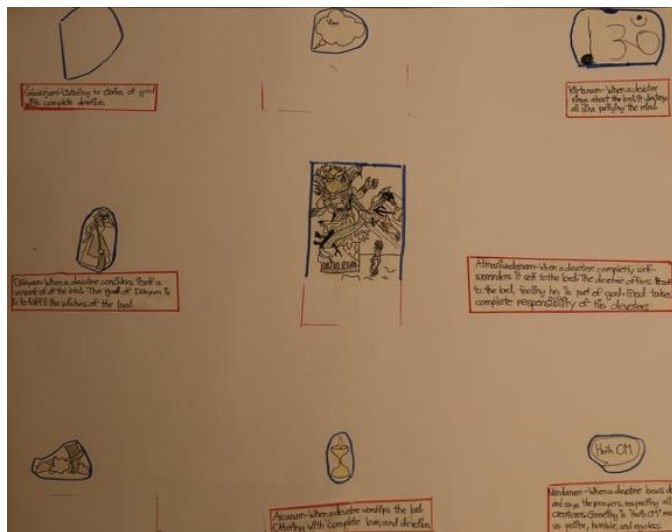
Cow
The cow symbolizes Mother Earth. She's crying because the virtues (the symbolisms of the bull's legs) were cut off by Kali.

Kali
Kali symbolizes all bad elements on Earth that causes destruction. Where he lives, there is pride, jealousy, lust, enmity, and falsehood.



Parikshit
Parikshit symbolizes all the good elements like justice and leadership. He was a great king in Dwapara Yuga.

Bull
The bull symbolizes all the virtues needed for peace and prosperity on Earth. (dharma)



CMSD members speak about *Chinmaya Rama*

It was a very impactful play.
I haven't seen such a play that
conveys teachings of Lord Rama's
virtues to apply in our modern
lifestyle.
Outstanding choreography and
performance by the entire cast,
sevaks and teachers.

- **Panchal family**

Chinmaya Rama play planted the
seeds of learning the Ramayan
values in an entertaining and
educational way. We are all blessed
to have a wonderful setting of our
Ashram to enjoy Chinmaya Rama.
We look forward to annual plays
like it in the future.

- **Mavalankar Family**

Play was marvelous.
Outstanding performance by
everyone. Thoroughly and
professionally executed.
Kudos to the directors and
everyone involved. We need
more such plays in the
future.

- **Magesh Babu and family**

.....One of my favorite scenes was the one
that portrayed Lord Rama crying for Sita's
pain due to abduction and separation.
The yearning of the Lord for his true
bhakta was magical and showed the
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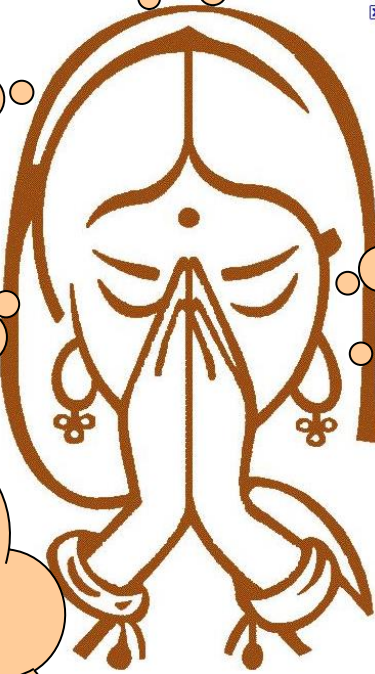
- **Manasi Popat**

Loved the narration of the
sutradhara-s-made me look at
the epic from a different
perspective –how they relate
to our daily life experiences!
Congratulations to the entire
team!

- **Padmaja Menon and
family**

...What struck me is the law
of karma and the need to do
the right action at all times
based on 3 G's (God, Guru
and Gita). And right thinking
follows automatically....

- **Poonam Bhatia**



Have Faith in the inherent goodness of others.

-Swami Tejomayananda

