

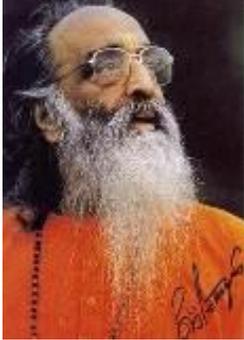


Chinmaya Pradipika

CMSD Quarterly Newsletter



July 2014, No. 11



The Master Speaks:

Even though you have not conquered the battles of the world, you become the world-conquerer when you conquer your mind.

Swami Chinmayananda

In this issue of *Chinmaya Pradīpikā*

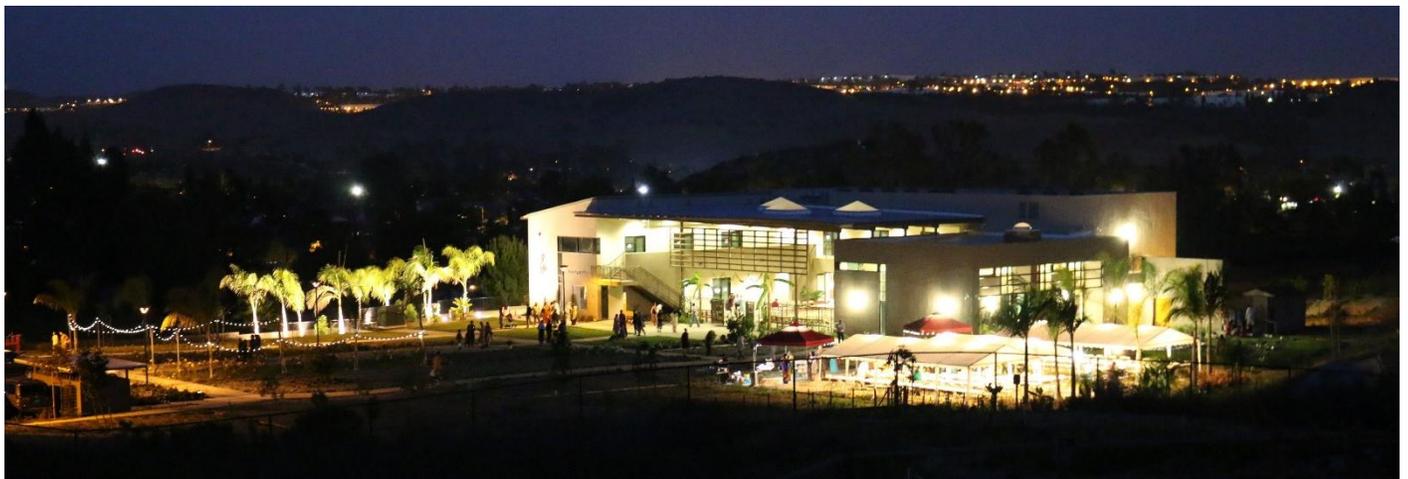
The special feature of this issue is the Inauguration/Blessing ceremony of *Chinmaya Jyoti* by our beloved Pujya Guruji Swami Tejomayananda. Pujya Guruji also conducted a 3-day *yajña* on *Purajana Gītā* and many *satsaṅga-s*. 98th *Chinmaya Jayanti* was celebrated at *Chinmaya Jyoti*.

Also included in the issue are *Śri Rāmanavami* celebrations, *Hanumān Jayanti*, Mothers' Day. *Chinmaya Kala Jyoti* presented the first carnatic music concert. A workshop was conducted specially for the adults on "What is My *Dharma*?" The Bala Vihar classes PK-12 presented their annual program and the quarter concluded with the birthday celebrations of our Pujya Guruji.

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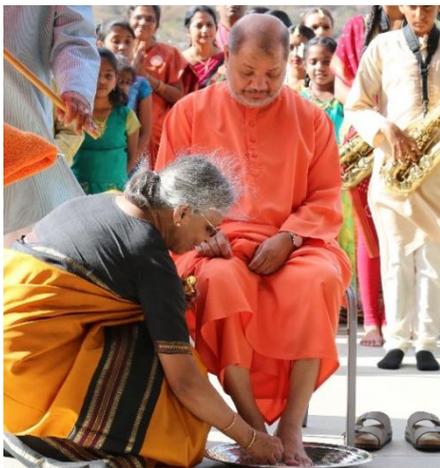
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Chinmaya Jyoti GLOWS!



Blessing of *Chinmaya Jyoti* by Pujya Guruji, Swami Tejomayananda

Pujya Guruji arrived at *Chinmaya Jyoti* at 5 pm on June 21, 2014. He was welcomed by the Chinmaya Band and Chinmaya Dhvani with a very moving song “Aao Guruji ...” which extolled the virtues of the Guru, what he has given us and how we are blessed to have such a wonderful relationship with him.



Smt. Lakshmi Sukumar seated him at the entrance of *Samskr̥ti Nilayam* and Sukumar Uncle washed his feet. After the *pāda pūjā*, Pujya Guruji was received with the *pūr̥ṇa kumbha* by our CHYK-s Akil Rajaratnam, Parthu Kalva and Dheeraj Navani and Arati by Hinal Parikh.



The *Chinmaya Jyoti* lamp was lit first by Pujya Guruji, then by Sukumar-ji and Lakshmi-ji, followed by Ranga Sampath and Acharya Mahadevan of Chinmaya Mission Los Angeles.



Guruji then entered Pranava Nilayam and took his seat in front of Pujya Gurudev. He was flanked by Acharya Mahadevan and his wife Viji and Ashok and Sudha Bhatt of Chinmaya Mission Bakersfield.



After a brief introduction and welcome address by Srinivas Sukumar, Chinmaya Dhvani sang several melodious invocation songs which delighted Swamiji and the audience.



Melodious bhajans accompanied by musical instruments, chanting of *stotram-s*, and *bharatanatyam vandanam* were part of the opening ceremonies and began a weekend of festivities.

Priya Garcia, Solana Garcia, Divya Bhatia and Aditi Puttur danced beautifully to *Gurvaṣṭakam*, a composition by *Ādi Śaṅkarācārya*, choreographed by Maya Sukumar.

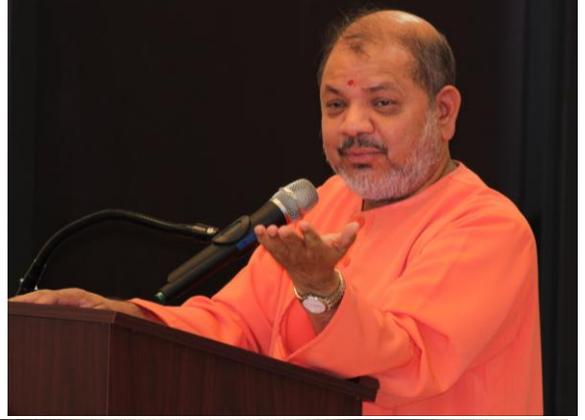
This was followed by a video presentation- a compilation of *Chinmaya Jyoti* development starting with Guruji announcing the name of the Center in January 2006, the land acquisition in January 2009, *Bhūmi Pūjā* in June 2009, *Vāstu Pūjā* and the blessing of the bricks by Swamis in 2012, placement of the blessed bricks in the foundation of Pranava Nilayam in November 2012, Sthapana of *Śrī Jyoti Vināyaka* on June 12, 2013, Inauguration of the Center by Swami Shanatananda on August 3, 2013 and opening of the Samskṛti Nilayam on Sept. 8, 2013 by Swamini Gangananda. The video ended with the promise made by everyone to keep *Chinmaya Jyoti* Glowing. Our Bala Vihar Children sang “*Cinmaya Bāla Vihār layegā navīnatā ...*” and the entire congregation vowed to follow on the path indicated by our Pujya Guruji by singing “*Tvam Hi No Netā ...*”



Priya Garcia was given the Chinmaya Mission San Diego **Award of Excellence** by Pujya Guruji for being an outstanding Bala Vihar student with less than one absence per year over a period of 14 years, participating in all the Chinmaya Mission activities such as Chinmaya Dhvani, *Gītā* Chanting Competition, Summer Youth Camps, *Sevā* Projects and always maintaining a perfect *yajña* Spirit in all her endeavors.

Pujya Guruji blesses *Chinmaya Jyoti*

Guruji then addressed the assembled guests and CMSD members. He congratulated the members and especially the trustees and sevaks for their *yajña* spirit to grow the San Diego mission to its current stature. He underscored that *Parama Pujya Gurudev's* name accomplishes every task when our work is dedicated to Him. Finally he pointed out the opportunities that are still available to sponsor various rooms and activities in the mission.



At the end of the address, Pujya Guruji officially inaugurated *Chinmaya Jyoti* by unveiling the plaque with his universal message to all the centers. He then met with members, visited each classroom in *Samskriti Nilayam*, and toured the *Chinmaya Jyoti* property.



Grade PK- Shishu Vihar



Grade K- Bala Vihar

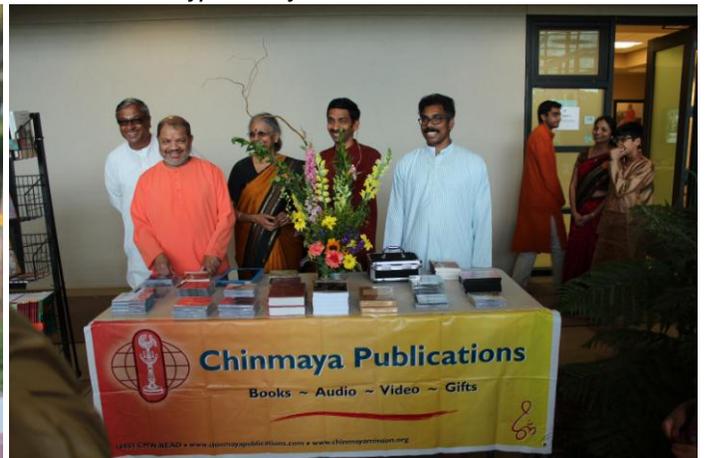


Grades 1-8 Bala Vihar (From left to right)



Pujya Guruji's tour of the property

Pujya Guruji visits the Bookstore





This was followed by *bhikṣā* for Swamiji and all members enjoyed a pot-luck dinner on the *Chinmaya Jyoti* grounds.

The following two days were filled with *satsaṅga* for all. Sunday morning began with Pujya Guruji addressing Bala Vihar Children, Youth and Parents to guide and answer their questions. This was followed by *Chinmaya Pādukā Pūjā*. The children prepared their minds for performing a beautiful *Pādukā Pūjā* with the chanting of ‘Om Śrī Cinnmaya Sadgurave Namaḥ.’

No moment escapes the work of sevaks and sevikas. While some devotees hiked the tranquil mountain of Tapovana Giri, others tended to the vegetable garden at *Chinmaya Jyoti*.



Tabla students of Amarnath Puttur delighted all with their short and sweet performance.



Sunday and Monday evenings were filled with our Pujya Guruji expounding on the *Purajana gītā* found in the Uttara Kanda of the Tulasi *Rāmāyaṇa*. As do all leaders of society address their people, so too upon His coronation *Śrī Rāma* addressed the citizens of Ayodhya regarding their *dharma*. As Lord *Rāma* lived the scriptural values, He wished for the people of Ayodhya to do the same. Without any sense of attachment or authority, *Śrī Rāma* spoke that which was best for all. Via His address to the kingdom, all knew what the king expects and respects.

He first brings to the attention of the people the great Truth that it is a good fortune to be born with a human body. It was said that the human body is a medium for anything to be possible in all fields of experience. And, for the human body liberation from bondage is the highest evolution. By inquiring into the nature of things, try to understand such Truth which is the highest purpose of the intellect. Though materialism can be a part of life; He cautions that it is not the purpose of life. It is said that a life other than this would be throwing away nectar and taking poison. One must inquire into that *brahma vidyā* and *tattva vidyā* and realize that *ānanda ātmā* – this is inner unfoldment.



He goes on to explain the importance of bhakti which is a sure and peaceful path on the journey. While it is very difficult to gain knowledge and successful seekers are rare, the path of bhakti is a sure and peaceful path because it is the path of love understood by all. Knowledge without love is of no use. And, this love cannot be gained without *satsaṅga* – for which one needs meritorious deeds and the Lord's grace. In thought, word, and deed worship the feet of the learned without any deceit. Currently, the *bhakti* is covered much like a banana is covered by its peel – the *bhakti* is covered by attachment to worldly matters.

It is said that one's prayer should be – may I have love for God – as it is this love for God which makes it easier to live a life of *dharma*. God is most compassionate. Along with the instruction manuals as the scriptures, He sends with them a Guru to help understand. The Guru is the captain of the ship – the human body, who guides it well across the ocean of *samsāra* to its destination.

To close the festivities, with great happiness, Pujya Guruji announced to the citizens of *Chinmaya Jyoti* that the decision has been made to begin a pre-school, Chinmaya Blossoms at *Chinmaya Jyoti*. He blessed all so that they may realize Pujya Gurudev's divine vision, keeping the lamps of our children forever lit.

-Nandita Verma
CM Phoenix

Perspective of a visitor from India

San Diego has a significant imprint in our breaths as our master, Pujya Gurdev, HH Swami Chinmayananda ji attained *Mahāsamādhi* here on 3 Aug 1993, 5:45 pm. From the video clips shown at the inaugural function, I learnt that Chinmaya Mission San Diego (CMSD) was inaugurated in the presence of HH Swami Ishwarananda ji, Acharya, Chinmaya Mission Los Angeles on 28 Jan 2001.

CMSD was soon ready to build its own center. Pujya Guruji's congratulatory message on CMSD's fifth anniversary on 28 Jan 2006 said, 'call the new center *Chinmaya Jyoti*'.

And Jyoti, sparkle, it indeed is. What a monument! The pristine vast acreage, twelve Jyotirlingas that are the Bala Vihar classrooms, the central assembly-celebrations-*pūjā* hall, the temple cum discourse room, book-shop, the annakshetram, parking lot and all, flanked by the beautiful mountains, that Pujya Guruji called *Tapovana Giri*. A **Powai in Poway** as Guruji calls it.

Pujya Guruji formally inaugurated *Chinmaya Jyoti* on 21 Jun 2014 by unveiling the inaugural plaque after a host of soul stirring festivities, *pūjā*, rituals, bhajans, Bala Vihar presentations and Gurudev's *pādukā pūjā*, morning through noon and evening with splendid *bhikṣā* for all in majestic outdoor white tents.

A brilliant banner asserted Gurudev's thought "Not to do what you feel like doing is Freedom". Children filled the air with, "we can, we will". Those clearly are the spirits that went into the building of the grand center.

Building the center, and to such perfection, could not have been an easy task. Gurudev emphasized, "Some act till they meet obstacles, others act in spite of obstacles; but some act without fear of meeting obstacles that might arise en route". Those who built it clearly went on and on valiantly without giving a thought to obstacles.

Gurudev had once assured a group of devotees, "Your children will not go astray. They are the best and will grow to be noble and perfect citizen of the world". That thought incessantly resonated my mind as I saw the center with its appealing Bala Vihar classrooms, and after.

It's always the people, and not walls, that make any institution. And the institution expresses the kind of people it has. The spirit of devotees I met and saw at *Chinmaya Jyoti* is amazing. Some names I remember, Harish bhai, Nikhil bhai, all teachers and CHYKs in Bala Vihar classes and of course Smt. Lakshmi aunty and *Śrī* Sukumar uncle. All *Chinmaya Jyoti* members proudly sported an intense saffron insignia that echoed: *Chinmaya Jyoti* ~ We will keep it glowing.

Sure they will!!

-Sunil Rungta

Chinmaya Mission, Kolkata, India

Chinmaya Dhvani Concert by Nikita Akkala and Priya Garcia



On June 12, 2014, Priya Garcia and Nikita Akkala performed a recital of selected bhajans to a captivated audience. Priya and Nikita have been members of Chinmaya Dhvani for ten years. They were accompanied on the tabla by Amarnath Puttur and on the manjira by Aditya Varrier.

The selection of 18 melodious songs included the all-time favorite *Śambho Śankara* and *Cilanga kaṭṭi* ...

Mother's Day-May 4



What is My Dharma?-Workshop for Adults- April 26

What is my *Dharma* or *Svadharmā* is always a question in my hand. I am very glad that CMSD arranged the workshop to understand different aspect of *Dharma* and how it relates to different stages (*āśrama* -s) of life.

Lakshmi aunty, as always, flawlessly explained the details of every stage, with examples and Gurudev's quotes. I liked the approach of examples from real life because it helps to relate more closely. "What is an expectation as a husband, wife, parent, and as a person as you cross the boundary from one stage to another." The session not only touched on the *āśrama* -s in life and expectations, it also discussed marriage and relationship, and responsibilities. After lunch, we spent the last hour and half going over the different questions raised by the participants and it really helped to know the other points of view related to personal as well as professional life.

As we all agreed that we are blessed to have Chinmaya Mission in San Diego, and Lakshmi Aunty and Sukumar uncle to guide us as well as our children in the different times of our lives.

- Pramod Patil

CMSD Tamil Pallikkūdam presentation on Tamil New Years' Day- April 14



It was a crisp sunny morning on April 14, 2014; there were two girls tinkering with a driver-less "google" car. Their older sister checking on them, accidentally hits a combination of buttons, there is a flash and a boom, the three girls are standing near a huge waterfall, everything is slanting with a tilt towards the north. They meet sage *Agastya* and realize that they have been transported several thousand years back in time!!

As the girls attempt to get back to the present, they have a very eventful journey meeting scholars who helped enrich and grow Tamil language since its origin some 3000 years ago.

They first meet Sage *Agastya*, who is considered the Father of Tamil literature, who compiled the first Tamil grammar called *Agattiyam*.

Next, they meet *Tiruvalluvar*, a celebrated Tamil poet and philosopher whose contribution to Tamil literature is the *Tirukkural*. It is an epic masterpiece on ethics which is secular & universal.

Next, they meet *Auvaivār*, one of the most famous and important female poets, who contributed to Tamil literature. She was an ardent devotee of Lord *Muruga*. Her significant contribution is known as *Ātticcuvaḍi*.

Next, they meet Godai (*Āṇḍāl*) in *Śrī Villiputtur*, an ardent devotee of Lord Ranganathan, *Śrī Āṇḍāl* contributed *Tiruppāvai*.

Next, they meet a celebrated Tamil scholar *Kambar*, he wrote *Rāmāyaṇam* in Tamil adapting the epic to the culture and practices acceptable to Tamils.

As they near the present century, they meet Subramaniya Bharati, who was a poet, journalist, Indian independence activist and social reformer from Tamil Nadu, popularly known as "*Mahākavi Bhāratīyār*". With one last flick of a button, the girls return to the present ending their time travel.

That was the Tamil Annual program presentation by CMSD Tamil Language Class children, this year it coincided with the Tamil New Year day. The play was a hit, captivating the audience with colorful backdrop, realistic costume and awesome performance by the kids. Everyone enjoyed the time travel!!

Chinmaya Jayanti- May 8



Pujya Gurudev's pādukā-s were ceremoniously welcomed at *Chinmaya Jyoti* for the first time on May 8 for the *Pādukā pūjā*. CMSD Band played the song "*āo gurudeva daraśana dījo...*" accompanied by Chinmaya Dhvani choir. Sukumar Uncle and Lakshmi aunty performed the *Pādukā pūjā*. 108 names of *Pujya Gurudev* and *bhajans* were melodiously sung by all. *Praṇava Nilayam* was filled with families grateful for having come under the loving grace of such a great Master. The ceremony concluded with *ārati* and *prasādam* for all.

Śrī Rāmanavami Celebrations- April 8



Śrī Rāmanavami was celebrated with the Śrī Rāma pūjā, bhajans, Śrī Rāmarakṣā stotram, ārati and prasādam. Ārati was at 12:00 noon exactly to mark the birth of Śrī Rāma. The Rāmajanma caupai-s were sung by all.

It was particularly nice that many Bala Vihar children attended the pūjā as they were off from school on a spring break.

Upanyāsam by Śrī Hariji- April 11



Chinmaya Jyoti was blessed on Friday, April 11 2014, by the presence of Śrī Hariji, the son of Paranur Mahatma Śrī Krishna Premi Anna, fondly known as Śrī Śrī Anna. Śrī Hariji is a Vedic scholar who has given discourses around the world on Vedic/Vedantic topics, Upaniṣad-s, Purāṇa-s, Itihāsa-s and Śrīmad Bhagavad Gitā. Being the Ekādaśī day, he chose to speak at Chinmaya Jyoti on Ambarīṣa Caritram from Śrīmad Bhāgavatam—the glory of the great devotee king Ambarīṣa.

The story itself needs very little introduction to the CMSD audience.

According to the Bhāgavata Purāṇa, Ambarīṣa was a great devotee of Viṣṇu and adhered firmly to the truth. He performed a yajña with such great devotional fervor that Lord Nārāyaṇa was pleased to bless him with Sudarśana Cakra. Once, he performed a Vrata, which required that he start a fast on Daśami, spend all day on Ekādaśī day in the remembrance of the Lord and break the fast at on Dvādaśī by feeding all the people first, before consuming food within a certain time period. As the moment of breaking the fast was drawing near, the mighty sage Durvāsa arrived and was received with all honors by Ambarīṣa. Durvāsa agreed to the king's request to be his honored guest, and asked the king to wait until he finished his bath in the river and returned. His goal was to test Ambarīṣa's resolve, so he lay hidden in the water. As the tithi, the auspicious moment by when the king had to break his fast to fulfill the vow of the vrata, was passing and Durvāsa did not turn up, on the advice of the sage Vasīṣṭha, the king broke his fast by taking a Tulasī leaf with water, and waited for the arrival of sage Durvāsa to offer him food. Durvāsa, who was well known for his short temper, felt that Ambarīṣa had violated the respect due to a guest by breaking his fast before the guest had taken his meal, and in his rage created a demon to kill Ambarīṣa, out of a strand of his hair. Lord Nārāyaṇa's Sudarśana cakra intervened, destroyed the demon and started chasing Durvāsa himself. Durvāsa went to Brahmā and Śiva for protection. Both pleaded their inability to save him. He went to Lord Nārāyaṇa himself, who said that he

could do nothing as he was bound by the unfaltering devotion of *Ambarīṣa* and suggested to the sage to seek the pardon of the king. *Durvāsa* went to *Ambarīṣa*, who prayed to Lord *Viṣṇu* to recall the *Sudarśana* and save *Durvāsa*.

Throughout the narration of this story, *Śrī Hariji* weaved in relevant stories from other *purāṇas* and *itihāsa*-s that demonstrate the power of *bhakti*, and the *bhakta* whom the Lord himself wants to serve. When such a *bhakta* is insulted, no one, not even the *Trimūrtis* can save the offender! The *upanyāsam* also reminded us the importance of *satsaṅga* with other *bhakta*-s and *jñāni*-s which will bring lasting joy and transform one's own life. He discussed how *Rāvana*, with all his might, rejected *satsaṅga* and as a result lost his kingdom and life, while *Sugrīva*'s life was totally transformed when he sought *satsaṅga* with *Rāma*. *Ekādaśī* day is supposed to be spent in *satsaṅga* and in chanting the Lord's name and those that were able to be at *Chinmaya Jyoti* couldn't have been at a better place.

- Ranga Sampath

The Three Musicateers - the first full-length Carnatic Concert at CMSD

Svara to Īsvara Experience at Chinmaya Jyoti on the Occasion of Śrī Rāmanavami



Pranava Nilayam at *Chinmaya Jyoti* came alive on **Saturday, April 12**, with soulful rendition of Kritis on *Śrī Rāma* by our own CHYK, Devesh Vashishtha. Ajay Ravichandran ably accompanied him on the *mridangam* and Aravind Seshadri on the violin. The three of them transported the audience to the divine experience that is only possible to one immersed in *bhakti* of *Śrī Rāma*. Both the choice of songs and their rendition were excellent and the maturity displayed by the performers belied their youth! The audience appreciated the journey, getting caught up in the tempo and flair of the artists. Devesh is blessed with a powerful, yet soothing voice that maintained control of the *bhāva*, *rāga* and *tāla* at all times. Ajay's hands were magical as they danced to the beats of the *tāla*. Aravind bent his bow almost effortlessly to keep up with the pace and nuances thrown at him and showed he was up for any challenge! Such a musical treat is indeed rare and blessed were those who attended!

Invocation

1. Song on *Hanumān* in *Kānaḍa*
2. *Siddhivināyakam- Shanmukhapriyā-Rūpakam-Mutthuswamy Dikshitar*

Main Program

3. *Jaya Jaya Jaya Jānakī Kānta – Nāṭṭai, khaṇḍa cāpu, Purandara Dāsar*
4. *Rāma Ika Nannu Brovarada –Sahānā—Rūpakam-Patnam Subramaniam Iyer*
5. *Kaddanuvāriki - Toḍi -Ādi-Tyāgarāja*

Solo mridangam

Pallavi

6. *Nī Pādamule Gatiyani- Bhairavi- Ādi - Patnam Subramaniam Iyer*

Conclusion

7. Ode to *Kṛṣṇa- Kṛṣṇa Nī Begane Bāro- Yamunā Kalyāni-Cāpu-Vyāsarāya*
8. *Sompaina Mansuto (Callare Rāmacandru)- Āhiri-Cāpu- Tyāgarāja*
9. *Tillāna- Hindolam*
10. *Maṅgalam- Pavamāna- Saurāṣṭram- Ādi - Tyāgarāja*

To those on the path of *bhakti*, as most of the composers of yore were, personal conversations with the Supreme was natural. Sometimes admiring, sometimes admonishing, they spoke to the Lord with their music. The pureness of their devotion, though, is unmistakable. One such song is Tyagaraja's *Kaddanuvāriki* set to *Toḍi Rāgam*, where Tyagaraja beseeches *Rāma* to appear in front of him! He says: *For the ones who believe "there is," the assurance given by the wise is that "there is," will that assurance be falsified now? How unfortunate that the golden words of the great men have been belied? I am here yearning to see your mirror-cheeked charming face. Why do you not bother to come near me? To such devotees who sing your praises, in the prescribed path, are you not the Protector of the ones who believe "there is?".* Another example is the Pallavi (*Nī Pādamule* in *Bhairavi*) where Patnam Subramaniam Iyer says "*Oh Śrī Rāma , why don't you protect me ? Why are you merciless? You alone should come to my rescue, destroying all six enemies (desire, anger, greed, lust, jealousy and arrogance) . You annihilate my horrible sins and pardon my wicked deeds. Oh all merciful Rāma , who else is there for me?*"

Why wouldn't these deeply philosophical thoughts expressed with such clarity and love, have melted *Śrī Rāma* - he is indeed the protector of his *bhakta*-s. In fact, the belief is that all those who sing this with the same *bhāva* and those that listen to it with devotion are also saved by the Lord- such is the power of *Bhakti*!

CMSD On-Going Events

Host families for the monthly *Sundarakāṇḍa pārayāna* in this quarter were:

April 2014 – Santoshi and Parag Kelkar

May 2014 – Swaroopa and Raja Kalva

June 2014 – Beena and Senthil Chelladurai



CMSD Bala Vihar Annual Program – June 1, 8, 15

All adults and children celebrated the First Bala Vihar Annual Program in *Samskṛti Nilayam*.



It was a colorful fest starting with Pre K "We can; We must" followed by Kindergarten performance of "One Lord, so Many Forms" with colorful costumes of Gods and Goddesses. Then it was the first and second grades performances of our own "Chinmaya Beauty Pageant" and "Our Darling *Kṛṣṇa*".

On the first annual day in *Samskṛti Nilayam*, the presentations took me back to the times when I was learning the same information about Hindu culture. The presentations on daily prayers, the alphabet of *Vedānta* and plays about different gods refreshed my memory and gave me a different view on the same information I've learnt in the past. It was clearly visible that the teachers put a great deal of effort and time into polishing each presentation and it led to a great performance from each class. It was a great experience, watching everyone express their knowledge.

-Ashwath Radhachandran, Grade 9

Today marked the anniversary of our Jyoti Vinayaka's sthāpana in our ashram. This auspicious moment was marked by the initial performances of our first Annual Day at *Chinmaya Jyoti*. Along with bhajans sung by the Chinmaya Dhvani, the **tabla class** students, led by Amarnath Uncle gave their first recital. After the resounding tabla performance, the preschoolers chanted their daily prayers. The kindergarten children then performed several avatars in accordance with their theme of "One God, many forms." In a clever twist, the first grade students spelled out "learning is fun" in their play, The Chinmaya Beauty Pageant. Each contestant represented a core value and explained its meaning to the audience. Naturally, each value was too important to have one individual winner so all of the contestants won the contest. The day's performance concluded with the second graders who performed "My darling Krishna."



-Gopika Mavalankar, Grade 12

The annual programs started with the pre-kindergarten *sishu-s* reciting the daily prayers eloquently; the sishus seemed to have gotten a strong foundation in starting their lives. The Kindergarten kids presented the different gods, their greatness, their duties and responsibilities. The presentation was very colorful and the props were well designed and properly used by the kids. I could see clear communication, organized effort, teamwork and leadership in the kids in presenting this skit.



The 1st grade kids showed the different characteristics and values using a creative presentation theme and organization of a beauty pageant contest. Although the kids were only in 1st grade, the clarity, the communication, the presentation, and the demeanor were clearly showing maturity in them. The 2nd grade kids showed the concept of love for *Kṛṣṇa*; this advanced concept was presented in a jovial yet professional way. I am delighted to see the progression and development taking place in these *sīśu-s* with each grade/year passing by. The dedication, commitment and effort of sevaks/sevikas in training and molding the *sīśu-s*

throughout the year (and every year) to where they are today can be clearly seen in today's presentation; a big salute to them! I thoroughly enjoyed every bit of the program. Thank you to Chinmaya mission for the Bala Vihar!

- Vijay Adapala

Wonderful performance by Pre-K, Kindergarten, 1st and 2nd graders. It was a joyful and proud moment for every parent. I believe it was a true reflection of the learning they had throughout the year.

The day started with Pre-K children's exhibiting the *śloka* chanting and singing. The entire presentation was very well coordinated between teacher and children. With their expressions and hand movements, teachers was able to very well synch up all children. This represents how students are able to work as one team and learn together. Parents were proudly watching their children act and deliver the wonderful moment.

Kindergarten performance reminded all of us about symbolism of different gods in Hindu culture. Every child represented one god and talked about their strengths and why we worship them. It was a wonderful experience to see Gods in front of us in the form of little children. It also reminds us of the philosophy that children are another form of God. They truly win our hearts with their innocence.

ABC beauty contest was a nice way to represent alphabets in the form of ABC of *Vedanta* where A is for Aspiration. It's a wonderful technique to teach values of life that leads to better and bright future.



Darling *Kṛṣṇa* was a wonderful act. Children talked about Lord *Kṛṣṇa*'s qualities and expressed why *Kṛṣṇa* is darling. Totally unforgettable experience.

Overall it was a wonderful demonstration of team work and learning together with discipline. I was proud to see my son perform and demonstrate his learning. Thanks to the opportunity given by CMSD and efforts put in by teachers.

- Ved Bhargava

The kids performances on the second annual day program on **June 8** was exceptional and enriching the mind. The kids showcased what they learnt this year with a very creative and unique approach. The presentation on Vibhishana Gita and their enactment of the chariot or Dharmaratha was delivered with such great energy that I felt like I had a ride in the world of *Dharma*.

- Lavanya Radhachandran



June 8, 2014 was the second part of CMSD's Annual Program with presentations ranging from different aspects of the *Rāmāyaṇa* to the various *guru-s* in the world around us to the diverse facets of *Dharma*. The presentations, done by grades 3 through 7, a transitioning period in a student's life, aptly showed the same religious transition. Each class' presentation sought to link rich and colorful mythologies

with the philosophical ideas that all the myths contain. The students showed the connection between myths and ideas, melding together the concrete with the abstract.

For example, the *Rāmāyaṇa* was shown as a source of a host of vibrant characters, and also a supply of guidance for us on how to live. As the 7th graders put it at the beginning of their skit, we all know the plot of the *Rāmāyaṇa* and how *Rāma* "marries *Sītā*, kills *Rāvaṇa*..." but hidden in these stories are gems of life lessons that we can incorporate in our own lives, which is what all of these presentations showed to us.



The students took it a step further from simply exhibiting the link between myths and ideas by showing us how we can take these concepts and seamlessly incorporate them into our own lives. They showed this through both the clearly-stated presentation of the 6th graders about the 24 gurus, and through the actions seen in the *Dharma Heights* Middle School skit performed by the 5th graders.



From these presentations, we see that myths and philosophy are intertwined, which is what makes Hinduism a beautifully complex religion.

-Mekala Sridhar, Grade 12

High School Annual program, Awards Ceremony, and Senior's graduation-June 15



On Sunday, June 15 2014, the CMSD family gathered with anticipation at *Chinmaya Jyoti*. On this the last day of the school year, we were to witness the high school annual program, the annual CMSD awards ceremony, and the graduation of high school seniors.

The program began in the central courtyard with prayers and the high school annual program. Grades 9-12 each presented skits based on what they had covered in the past year. Broadly speaking, the themes revolved around discussions of spiritual culture vs. material culture, and on internalizing good values. The panel discussion and talk show formats were popular vehicles for communicating the topics to the audience. The protagonists and especially the antagonists played their parts to the hilt, with the audience breaking into laughter from their (sometimes unintentional) comical interludes and punch lines.

Smt. Lakshmi Sukumar, assisted by other sevaks, then handed out awards for perfect attendance, *Gītā* chanting competition, Chinmaya *Slokanjali* and to model class students. It was a joy to celebrate and congratulate the children and adults for their sincerity, perseverance and a job well done. Particular mention must be made of the ever-smiling Priya Garcia, who participated in *Gītā* chanting throughout her 13 years in CMSD, and who only had 12 absences over those years!



The program then moved indoors to Pranava Nilayam. Graduating high school seniors and their families conducted *Guru Pādukā pūjā* led by Smt. Lakshmi Sukumar with the audience following along with the chanting. The convocation address from *Śikṣāvallī* of *Taittiriya Upaniṣad* was then chanted. After 12 years of study when the students left the *gurukula* and set forth into the world, the ancient teacher advised them about right conduct and *dharma*.

It is uplifting to hear the teacher's solemn words year after year with each graduating batch of students. Teachers then felicitated the students one at a time and recalled their fine qualities. The students shared lessons and experiences that they hope to bring with them in their journey forward. Priya Garcia, who has participated since the



day CMSD began, as a member of Chinmaya Dhvani, as a Yuva Sevak, as a CORD volunteer etc., choked with emotion as she spoke about how CMSD is just like a family.



Gopika spoke about how a 'light bulb' went on when she internalized from the *Gītā* what *Ātman* is, how it is the same everywhere, and related to feeling part of the whole when volunteering in CORD Sidhbari. Krishna, Mekala, Jay, and Varun also spoke about their experiences.



Pujya Guruji's graduation song, "*Dīkṣāntakāle abhinandanam*" was then sung for the graduates, and this was followed by the CHYK initiation pledge for the seniors, led by our CHYK-S



Mili, Hinal, Parthu, Akil and Dheeraj.

After *ārati*, the program concluded with a sumptuous lunch arranged by the families of the graduating seniors. A memorable finale for the end of the first school year at *Chinmaya Jyoti*!

BV Students' corner

Second grade BV students taught by Swaroopa Kalva and Sumathi Iyengar depict the “Kṛṣṇa Līlā” in picturesque diorama-s.



Pujya Guruji's Birthday- June 30

About a hundred members of CMSD came together for an evening of Bhajans to celebrate the birthday of our beloved Pujya Guruji. Chinmaya Dhvani choir members led the group in singing melodious bhajans and devotional songs. What better way to celebrate our Pujya Guruji's birthday! Thank you Guruji for teaching us the way to the Lord!

Parents express their joy at the end of a memorable first school year at *Chinmaya Jyoti!*

The speeches by graduating Bala Vihar students was very inspiring. I would really like my child to be able to articulate herself like these graduating seniors.
- Priya Narasingarao

I watched the 1st Annual day performance Pre-K – 2nd grade. It was so nice to see how much they've learnt through the year. The children were well prepared.
- Jay Babla

I enjoyed the 9th grade performance "Koffee with Karan". ...The students presented with so much clarity.
-Hema Subburaman

It was a wonderful experience to see Gods in front of us in the form of little children. It also reminds us of the philosophy that children are another form of God. They truly win our hearts with their innocence.
- Ved Bhargava

The Bal Vihar annual day was a beautiful way to recognize and recount how years of dedication, of the sevaks, sevikas, students, and parents, can progressively mold our children into outstanding human beings.
- Archana Vohra



Hold yourself responsible for maintaining standards greater than what others expect from you.

Swami Tejomayananda

