

॥ ॐ श्री गुरुभ्यो नमः ॥

॥ ॐ श्री भवानीशंकराय नमः ॥

॥ ॐ श्री मात्रे नमः ॥

BANGALORE PRARTHANA VARG JANUARY 16, 2011

SANKRANTI VANABHOJAN

AN OUTING WITH PARAM PUJYA SWAMIJI AT CHITRAKOOT FARMS

- Report by Smt. SADHANA KAIKINI

Prarthana at Chitrakoot Farms

The melodious bhajan 'Guru Aaye Baadal Ban Saawan Mein' resonated all around the Chitrakoot Farm as 52 Prarthana children welcomed their Beloved Swami Dayya!

The 16th of January found 52 homes bustling with activity as kids normally lethargic on a Sunday made their way to the Bengaluru Chitrapur Math and were there by 7 am! The 10 teachers accompanying them soon busied themselves getting them into small, manageable teams. Every child and the teachers assigned to take care of their team proudly wore a different colour ribbon pinned to their dress. The teams being five in number were named by the five sthalas where our Samadhi Maths are found. Thus Gokarn was blue to match the mighty blue sea that skirted its shores; Mallapur was red to match the lovely 'patkali' flowers found in abundance there, purple went to Shirali – a bright beautiful colour for our Mukhya Math, green was for Mangalore to match the green tender coconut abhishek that goes on there and yellow was assigned to Karla – our Tritiya Pujya Parijnanashram Swamiji loved yellow flowers!

Soon the huge group piled itself into two vehicles – a regular bus and a Swaraj Mazda. The buses echoed with 'Om Namaha Parvati Pataye Har Har Mahadev' and "JaiJaikars" as they set off for the Sankranti Vanabhojan.

After a delicious breakfast lovingly packed by our Pradeep Mam, the children soon lined the driveway in wait for our Beloved Swamiji! Each child held a red rose to offer His Holiness. Flanking the entrance were two boys holding swaying sugarcane each while two little girls held beautifully decorated

thaalis filled with Sankranti goodies. When His Holiness arrived and the children burst into song, it did really seem as if there were showers – of sheer happiness!

After that excitement, it was time to get back into the five teams and march off on a nature trail. The Chitrakoot Farms seemed to welcome the children with its huge green trees, smaller plants and rocky hills. Shouts of glee were heard as kids spotted yellow & white butterflies, anthills, brown beetles that lazily crossed the road and birds that flew across the blue sky. Older kids held onto the younger ones as they completed the nature walk. The children had been instructed to **L**isten, **O**bserve, **V**alue, **E**xperience Maa Prakruthi and thus LOVE her!

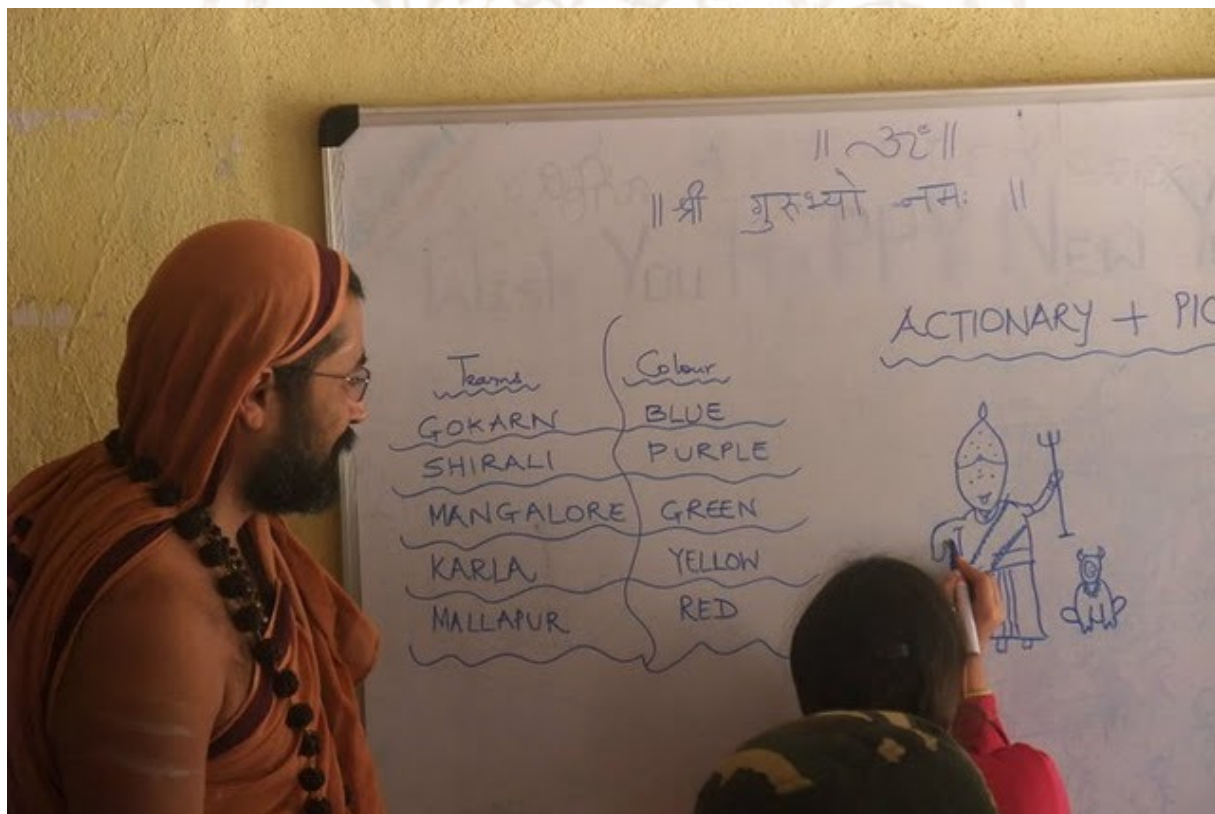


Prarthanaarthis on a Prarkruti Darshanam

A quick washing of hands and all the Prarthanaarthis were ready for games! But just before that there had to be some vimarsh done on the Prakruti Darshanam! And it was indeed heartening to hear so many ideas coming from the children. Their comments moved from what they had seen that morning to what they could do even later to conserve environment & its' flora & fauna! A real eco-friendly group!

And then came the exciting Actionary-Pictionary game. The whole team that already had a leader appointed had to present a term connected to the Math activities or to a particular deity – through action as well as through a picture drawn on the spot! Param Pujya Swamiji watched enthralled as children stood with their hands folded, heads down, while some of their team mates drew a big 'divli' with flickering lights!! Did you guess the word? DEEP NAMASKAAR! Janmashtami had a whole scene enacted with Ma Yashoda holding make-believe Baby Krishna while Gopikaas & Gwalas looked on – another older Krishna had a pretty Radha resting on his shoulder. The whiteboard had the deity with a flute shown to make it easy for the group to guess the word!

The creative scoreboard was in the shape of a conch-shell that had at its end a picture of Lord Bhavanishankar! Every right answer brought a team closer to the Lord! The scorekeeper diplomatically placed all the team ribbons at His Feet at the end of the game, saying they had all answered well!!



Pujya Swamiji watching the tiny hands in action

After a lovely lunch brought in from the Math by some willing & wonderful volunteers, it was time for Prashna Manchaha – a quiz that really tested the

children on what they had learnt in their Prarthana class! Round 1 had them reciting a shloka on a particular deity & the next round had them giving 5 names of the deity named by the quiz master. The third round was based on bhajans from Antarangini that were sung and left incomplete – the team had to complete it! The last round had surnames that had to be guessed by the clue given! Turmeric Town? HALDIPUR! Tantrum shop? HATTANGADI! Fortunately looks like the Prarthana teachers passed - for the kids did so well in all the rounds!

With that it was time for some interaction with His Holiness! The air was filled with laughter as Pujya Swamiji sportingly answered all kinds of innocent queries from the kids! Adults present marveled at the sweet relationship the children shared with His Holiness and also at the immense patience with which He listened to every one of them!

They also got a lot of ideas on conserving environment from Swamiji through real life incidents and stories that were narrated.

When we thought it was time to pack up, we found that His Holiness had a pleasant surprise in store for them! A telescope that had been set up for all to view! And another delight was the park area with swings, slides & see-saws that the hospitable Chandavarkar family had as part of the Chitrakoot Farms! It had been inaugurated just that morning at the 'Divya Hasta' of Param Pujya Swamiji and it was with pleasure that the kids simply enjoyed it! A double treat!

A few more eats like the hot potato bajjis, Sheera sent directly from the Chandavarkar's kitchen and a wonderful treat with bhajans led by His Holiness (Pahi Shiva & Anjaneya Swami) and it was time to move back to the buses.

It was a lot more than the chikkis and Kit Kat chocolate the children had received from Swamiji that they carried with them! Marvelous memories of the Vanabhajan that were definitely going to be remembered for a long time to come, tips on how to conserve water and Nature and more than anything, samskaars that they had received from His Holiness Himself in His usual simple and endearing manner!

'Guru Aaye Baadal Ban Chitrakoot Mein' and all present got drenched in His Grace!

Photographs by Anvita Kodange.

Om Namah Parvati Pataye Har Har Mahadev!