

Quarterly report – Prarthana Class - 36- San Jose, CA, USA

Nov 2009 to Jan 2010

Class schedule: Every Saturday, 3 pm to 4:30 pm

Students: 20 Average attendance: 19

Teacher: Ranjana Kulkarni

Venue: Avanti Kulkarni's community hall, 1340 Hope Drive, Santa Clara, CA

Regular class format:

1. Sabha commencing prayers.
2. Roll call.
3. Counting in Konkani up to 25.
4. Devnagari Alphabet chanting.
5. Writing the alphabet according to the group – Group 1 writes only the Svara, Group 2 has started on Vyanjana K in addition to Svara.
6. Teaching according to the lesson plan for the day
7. Vimarsh
8. Class project for the day
9. Sabha concluding prayers
10. Brahmaarpanam
11. Snacks



San Jose's Prarthana family

We made the akash-gud!



Volunteer parents lending a hand



Our Prarthana Class-room

Our class had a winter vacation in December when three of our students and the teacher went to Shirali for the NRI Shibir. We had a lot of grace from PP Swamiji and lessons from the Shibir to share with the class when we returned.

Topics covered in the class from Nov 2009 to Jan 2010:

1. Shruti Smruti Puranaam, Ishwaro Gururaatmeti shlok, Ganaanaam tvaa Ganapati gum Havaamahe, Ya Kundendu Tushaara Haara Dhavalaa, Om Sahanaa Vavatu, Sarve Bhavantu Sukinah, Asato Maa Sadgamaya, Lokaah Samastaha Sukhino Bhavantu: all with meaning

2. Sankranti: The Sun. How He affects our lives, Gayatri Mantra in His praise. The Zodiac or Rashi: The division of the space - Akash- according to the stars and their positions. Significance of Makara Sankranti.

3. Our visit to the Math: We showed photos and videos from the NRI shibir at Shirali. Mihika and Tejas talked about their experience with Swamiji (15 mins). We showed a copy of the photo book that we presented to PP Swamiji at Shirali.

4. The Indian Republic Day, Why India is important to us (NRIs)- Discussion (children gave some of the following reasons: It is our parents' country, it is our ancestors' country, it is our HOMELAND, we have Gods there who take care of India, we get knowledge from there! Arnav Hemmady pointed to PP Swamiji's photo and said, "Because God lives there!").

Taught Vande Mataram!, Bharat Mataki Jai!, Zanda ooncha rahe hamara, Vijayi Vishwa Tiranga Pyara!

The Indian flag:

(adopted on July 22, 1947, before Independence Day on Aug. 15th), Tiranga, means Tricolor: color saffron represents knowledge, white in the middle= purity, green at the bottom for prosperity, navy blue wheel of 24 spokes signifies righteousness and therefore it is known as Dharma Chakra, the wheel of righteousness. The spokes radiating from the center represent the diversity of people and the center holding them together in unity.

India:

India is considered to be one of the world's most ancient civilizations.

Indian thinkers pioneered discoveries in medicine, astrology, astronomy and mathematics long before the emergence of these disciplines in other nations. We are known for our art, music, painting, and sculpture, and Sanskrit language which has the sophistication of a highly evolved society. Knowledge is considered supreme and bhakti , devotion is a big part of Indian life.

(When I was talking about the ancient sculptures that are centuries old, Mihika quickly brought the booklet that she had got from the Chitrapur museum and said, "See these? They are ancient artifacts (she remembered the words) from India that our Swamiji has kept in the Chitrapur museum! Ranjanpachi, you are lucky that I brought this with me!")

28 states and 9 union territories: some of the states are Punjab, Sindh, Gujarat, Maharashtra, Orissa, Bengal, Karnatak, Tamilnadu, Andhra (Divya said, "Isn't Mumbai in Maharashtra? I was born there!" Mihika said, " Oh ya, we flew from Mumbai which is in Maharashtra, to Bangalore in Karnataka, when we were in India this time!")

Some rivers are: Ganga, Yamuna, Kaveri, Brahmaputra, Krishna, Narmada, Godavari, Sharayu (Ruchi told us about a river called Sharavati)

Crown of Himalayas on the top and oceans on the sides and bottom, touching Mother India's feet (Three year old Sanika regaled us with her singing of the Indian National Anthem in perfect tune and diction! Everyone joined in for the last JAYA JAYA JAYA JAYA HE with gusto! Jai Hind!)

Stories covered: Shankaracharya's story, Crawley's Dilemma, Story of Valmiki and Ram

Vimarsh:

1. Sadhana: What we can do for our personal sadhana
 2. Why silence and meditation is important for our personal growth
 3. Importance of God and Guru in our lives
 4. Importance of our ancestral land – Mother India
 5. The Sun. How He affects our lives
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Projects:

1. Learned to draw and color a picture of Surya Narayan
2. Made Indian Flags
3. Draw and color a Monarch butterfly