



# ਚਿਨਮਯਾ ਮਿਸ਼ਨ ਈਨ ਜੋੜੇ

## e-Newsletter

### Christmas Family Camp

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“When I come to Krishnalaya camps, the first thing I do is to put away my wallet, cell phone, all the keys and anything I usually carry with me all the time into a table drawer, and expect not to look at it for the next few days. I enter a new world. This is such a relief that cannot be explained in words.” This is a common expression among those who attend the Chinmaya Family Camps – especially in Piercy.

These Chinmaya family camps are really like a family reunion with all the fun of a reunion, and none of the problems between people. The setting is most beautiful – Krishnalaya is located on the banks of the beautiful Eel river, set in the valley between luscious green mountains.



## 2006 Christmas Camp

By Gautham Ganesan

The 2006 Chinmaya Mission Christmas camp held at the Chinmaya West headquarters in Piercy, CA proved to be an extremely fulfilling experience for me and I am certain that many fellow campers will echo my impression. Even based solely on the knowledge gained by attending the enlightening vedantic classes, the camp was a tremendous experience. However, when complemented by productive group discussions, melodious bhajans, enjoyable activities and, most importantly, feasts that would satiate even the most captious epicure, the camp was a prodigious success. The natural beauty and serenity of the location further enhanced what was truly an elevating event.

Brahmachari Prabodhji's edifying lectures on the spiritual texts Amrita Bindu Upanishad as well as the Hamsa Gita were indescribably enlightening and bestowed upon the listeners a perspective of life that supercedes any other. The classes imparted paramount truths that would stimulate even the most unmotivated individual to actively pursue eternal happiness. Group discussions in which the texts were analyzed were extremely refreshing and educational. Although given specific questions to discuss, the groups would often go on a tangent about related subjects. However, it was on those seemingly unrelated side discussions that many group members attained an immensely better understanding of the texts.

The camp also included several other activities, such as a morning yoga class which was fairly excruciating and put several campers, including myself, in agonizing pain, yet also taught us valuable breathing techniques and poses. Bala vihar classes for children proved valuable to the younger campers and final day presentations comprehensively showcased all that they had learned. Separate youth discussions on the text "Right Thinking" by Swami Tejomayanandji were also held. A bhajan class in the morning provided tuneful songs accompanied by the beautiful sound of a harmonium. A thrilling treasure hunt was conducted on the final day, with tensions and emotions running high as campers struggled to deduce the hidden locations implied by confusing clues. Additionally, there were a few hours each day with no specific activities assigned, allowing campers to wander off the property and take invigorating walks along Freeway 271 to survey the natural beauty of the surrounding area.

Of course, no camp is complete without the delicious meals, and a team of volunteer cooks was able to consistently manufacture exotic dishes from pasta salad to mattar paneer to satisfy the voracious hunger of the campers. By the time everyone finished chanting the 15th chapter of the Bhagavad Geeta, most were ravenous, yet all were eventually stuffed.

Departing from the camp proved to be a very difficult experience for almost every camp member. Despite a brief power outage and freezing temperatures, it was likely the most fulfilling vacation possible, and I am certain that just about every camper will attest to that. Most camp members were reunited mere days after the camp for a New Year's eve puja at Sandeepany in San Jose which included a Vishnu Sahasranama archana and an extended meditation session that heralded 2007. The New Year celebration was preceded on the morning of the 31st by a puja for the good health of Pujya Guruji Swami Tejomayanandaji.





Each of the two segments of the camp started with the traditional welcome of the Acharya to the Shruti Mandir, where the lectures were held. Br. Prabodhji then taught the Amrita Bindu Upanishad during the first session and the Hamsa Gita from Bhagavatam during the second session. Other activities included several group discussions, Bhajan sessions, children's performances, Christmas celebrations, etc..





The camp provided plenty of opportunities for adults and children to learn and express their talents. After bhajans every day, both adults and children did aarati to the deities. At the conclusion of each segment of the camp, families went together to offer the Guru Dakshina and receive Yagna Prasad from our Acharya. The volunteers who cooked, served and cleaned in the kitchen helped in running the camp very well.





Every Christmas camp is blessed with an extraordinary event that brings all the families together through a memorable gift from mother nature. This time, we lost electric power for a day and a half, and we pulled together with the help of two small generators. During nights when the temperature was down to twenties, many families with elderly and small children were accommodated in the better heated Shruti Mandir, giving everyone a real camping experience.



Our dear Lord Krishna delighted us every day with different colorful robes.

**Chinmaya Mission, San Jose is a registered 501(c)(3) non-profit organization (Tax ID # 77-0315648)**

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