



SAMSKRITAM AS A FOREIGN LANGUAGE (SAFL)

NEWSLETTER

April 15, 2019

SAFL Entering 10th Year

namassarvebhyaH,

As the Samskritam As a Foreign Language (SAFL) program celebrates 10 years since its inception in the Fall of 2009, we volunteers cannot help but reflect on all that the program has accomplished. No matter the role of administrator, teacher, parent, student; we have all played an important part in promoting Indian culture and Samskritam as a spoken language.

I have had the great fortune of being both a student and a teacher of the SAFL program in the past few years. My own first Samskritam classes were the Samskrita Bharati weekly adult classes I attended with my father. However, in 2011, I was informed about the new SAFL program for high school students, and I began SAMS201 with Sowmya Joisa, and then eventually Vinita Sharma and Shreekrishna Rao throughout SAMS300. As I've taught SAMS100 for the past 3 years and have listened to students complaining about the SAFL homework-load now, I recall my own experience in SAFL. I remember homework being an involved affair that took a few hours per week.

At the time I really had to motivate myself to keep up with the writing homework assignments while 10th- and 11th- grade

coursework and exams and robotics competitions also kept me occupied. But Samskritam class was something I looked forward to every single week, because we'd be analyzing fascinating patterns—whether they were in the verb conjugations, or in case (*vibhakti*) endings, or even in the structuring of the Devanagari alphabet! And I quickly realized that one of the best moments in language learning is recognizing words in usage, a phenomenon that frequently arose as we parsed stanzas of the *Bhagavad Gita* and *Kumārasambhavam* in our last year.

Needless to say, I went on to major in both Linguistics and Mathematics at the University of Washington in Seattle, and continued my Samskritam education by minoring in Sanskrit (formally, South Asian Languages and Literature). My professors taught me how to understand commentaries as we read parts of *Raghuvamśam* and *Nalopākhyana*.

I also saw that while western university Sanskrit curriculum cements clarity of grammar, it isolates the language from its culture as a classical relic. Now, I am a PhD student of Dr. Clemency Montelle at the University of Canterbury in Christchurch, New Zealand studying the history of mathematics in India.

IN THIS ISSUE

[SAFL Entering 10th Year](#)

[Important Dates](#)

[सुभाषितम्](#)

[Articles](#)

Specifically, I read numerical tables and astronomical treatises (*siddhānta* texts). I also have to balance preserving ancient scholars' thought processes and explaining their methods to modern mathematicians. My supervisor values the Sanskrit tradition and demands we preserve its original oral form, so I am currently learning how to identify different meters (*chandas*) and memorizing stanzas encapsulating key values (such as the Rsine of 3 degrees!).

My only advice to current students and parents is that Samskritam truly is a vast ocean that is in dire need of exploring. There's something in it for everyone, and SAFL provided a solid springboard for me to find my passion. Jayatu Samskritam!

Sahana Cidambi
SAFL Class of 2013

SAFL Teacher

**Currently Pursuing PH.D at University
of Canterbury, Christchurch,
New Zealand**

IMPORTANT DATES

Second Semester - Spring 2019

May 18 – 21, 2019– Final Exams (All courses)

Important Information for SAFL2019-20 Academic Year

April 10, 2019: Combined Registration for SAFL2019-20 Class and Summer Camp/Camp Waiver with Early Discount

April 10, 2019 - Medha Camp Registration begins

April 30, 2019 - Early registration discount ends for SAFL2019-20 Class and Camp/Waiver Registration

May 1, 2019 - Regular Registration fee applies for SAFL2019-20 Class and Camp/Waiver Registration

May 31, 2019 - SAFL 2019-20 Class and Camp/Waiver

Registration deadline. (May close earlier without notice if classes are full)

June 16-22, 2019 - Prajnaa camp (Saratoga, CA)

June 24, 2019 - Registration deadline for Medhaa camp

July 7-13, 2019 - Shraddhaa camp (Ewing, NJ)

July 21 - August 4, 2019 - Medhaa camp (Bengaluru, India. Open to only those who have passed SAMS302 and fulfilled the requirements).

Aug 24/25/26/27, 2019– Mandatory online orientation for

all classes (SAMS100/200/300) during respective class times.

Sep 7, 2019 - SAFL 2019-20 Online classes begin.

REGISTRATION FOR 2019-20

**Combined
Registration for
SAFL 2019-20
academic year and
camps opens April
10, 2019 and closes
on May 31, 2019. We
may close
registrations earlier
without notice once
classes are full.**

सुभाषितम्

अभ्यासेन क्रियाः सर्वाः अभ्यासात् सकलाः कलाः ।
अभ्यासाद् ध्यानमौनादि किमभ्यासस्य दुष्करम् ॥ (हठयोगप्रदीपिका)

अभ्यासेन सर्वविधानि कार्याणि सिध्यन्ति । अभ्यासेन सम्पूर्णाः कलाः सिध्यन्ति । अभ्यासात् ध्यानं मौनं ज्ञानादयः च प्राप्यन्ते । अतः अभ्यासेन किं कार्यं न सिध्यति अर्थात् सर्वं सिध्यति ।

All kinds of work such as knowledge, art, meditation, and even silence are achieved through practice. Nothing is impossible with practice.

Articles

शान्तिपाठस्य विषये किञ्चित्

"सह नावतु ...", "पूर्णमदः पूर्णमिदम् ..." "सर्वे भवन्तु सुखिनः ..." इत्यादयः श्लोकाः शान्तिमन्त्राः इव अस्माभिः पठ्यन्ते । प्रतिशान्तिमन्त्रम् अन्ते ॐ शान्तिः शान्तिः शान्तिः इति त्रिवारम् "शान्तिः" उच्यते । त्रिवारं किमर्थं शान्तिः उच्चार्यते इति कुतूहलं स्यात् । तद्विषये एवं वदन्ति अस्माकं माननीयाः ऋषयः ।

अस्माकं जीवनेषु त्रिविधानि तापानि (problems/obstacles) अनुभवामः । तानि सन्ति "अध्यात्मिकम्", "अधिदैविकम्", "अधिभौतिकम्" चेति । वैदिकसाम्प्रदाये "अध्यात्मिकं तापं" नाम शारीरिकं मानसिकं वा समस्याः इति, "अधिदैविकं तापं" नाम देवैः वा नक्षत्र-ग्रह-तारैः इत्यादिभिः वा कारिताः समस्याः इति, "अधिभौतिकं तापं" नाम याः समस्याः भूत-पिशाचैः वा नैसर्गिक-शक्तिभिः (भूकम्पः, दावाग्निः ...) कारिताः ताः इति च ।

अपरदृष्ट्या "अध्यात्मिकं तापं" इत्युक्ते अध्यात्मिकजीवने अनुभूताः समस्याः, "अधिदैविकं तापं" नाम बहिष्ठात् उद्भूताः समस्याः, "अधिभौतिकं तापं" इत्युक्ते पञ्चभूत-निर्मितस्य शरीरस्य समस्याः इत्यपि वदन्ति । अथवा स्थूल-सूक्ष्म-कारण-शरीराणां समस्याः, उत मनो-बुद्धि-अहङ्कार-नामभिः अधिकरणैः कल्पिताः मिथ्याज्ञान-समस्याः इत्यपि केचन वदन्ति ।

एवं दैनन्दन-जीवने नित्यम् अनुभूयमानानां त्रिविधानां समस्यानां निवारणार्थं त्रिवारं शान्तिः उच्चार्यते ।

प्रत्युपनिषद् आदौ अन्ते च शान्तिमन्त्रः उच्यते । मुख्यतया पञ्च शान्तिमन्त्राः श्रूयन्ते । कया उपनिषदा सह कः मन्त्रः वक्तव्यः इति प्रश्नः भवितुम् अर्हति । तन्निमित्तम् एवं सूचना अस्ति - कस्मिन् वेदे का उपनिषत् लभ्यते इति दृष्ट्वा तस्य शान्तिमन्त्रः कः इति वक्तुं शक्यते ।

ऋग्वेदस्य उपनिषदां (ऐतरेयं) "वाङ् मे मनसि ..." इति, शुक्लयजुर्वेदस्य उपनिषदां (ईशावास्यं, बृहदारण्यकम् इत्यादि) "पूर्णमदः..." इति, कृष्णयजुर्वेदस्य उपनिषदां (तैत्तिरीयं, कठम् इत्यादि) "सह नावतु..." इति, सामवेदस्य उपनिषदां (केन, छान्दोग्यम् इत्यादि) "आप्यायन्तु ममाङ्गानि ..." इति, अथर्ववेदस्य उपनिषदां (प्रश्न, माण्डूक्यं, मुण्डकम् इत्यादि) " भद्रं कर्णेभिः..." इति शान्तिमन्त्राः उच्यन्ते ।

अस्माकं पूर्वजाः सर्वत्र शान्तिमेव इच्छन्ति स्म । एवं शान्तिमन्त्राणां वाचनेन वयमपि विश्वशान्त्यै प्रार्थयामः ।

ॐ शान्तिः शान्तिः शान्तिः ।

Courtesy: Harichandan Mantripragada, SAFL Teacher

My SAFL Experience

Nearly five years after my last class as a SAFL student, I recall my experience in the program fondly. Much has taken place in my life since, including college to grad school. Some of my belief systems have been remolded and some of my interests have been honed. Yet my love and passion for Samskritam has remained unwavering.

Participating in SAFL allowed me to broaden my global outlook and analyze the simple and complex, the broad and narrow, and the reality and abstract. Samskritam has instilled in me a sense of immense pride for Indian culture, the richness it contains, and the diversity it represents. Thanks to the program, Samskritam has had a tremendous practical impact on my life as well. For example, the nature of the sandhis and grammatical rules has greatly simplified and accelerated foreign language learning.

To me, SAFL wasn't just Samskritam As a Foreign Language. It was also Samskritam As a Fun Language. The instructors, who volunteered time out of their schedules to teach us, epitomized what it meant to be compassionate, helpful, and selfless. They had a certain knack for tailoring their teaching methods to incorporate specific student needs and interests. As such, classes created a sense of excitement, and their immersive nature truly accelerated my rate of learning. All my gurus at Samskrita Bharati have played an integral role in shaping me into who I am today.

Additionally, I eagerly looked forward to the annual summer camps, shraddhā and medhā shibiram, both of which so beautifully represented *gurukulam* styles of living. Particularly, I remember how fortunate we were as SAFL students, to have attended the former at Swami Dayananda Saraswati's Arsha Vidya Gurukulam, when Swamiji still graced the world with his physical presence.

Furthermore, how can one talk about SAFL without mentioning the camaraderie? The communal class environments facilitated interaction between one another, which, in the process, forged strong friendships for a lifetime. Summer camps were a time of togetherness, where we worked cohesively to uplift each other and improve our Samskritam skills.

As such, through SAFL, I came to realize that Samskritam is an art. It is precision of the highest order. It is the epitome of linguistic beauty. And most importantly, it is not an intimidating language to learn.

jayatu jayatu samskrutam!

*Abhinav Seetharaman
SAFL Class of 2014
Ashburn, VA
Currently pursuing Masters at Columbia University*

Why SAFL?

Learning a language is a really useful skill. Learning the root of all languages is an even more useful skill. That root language is Sanskrit. Using Sanskrit, you can understand the deep meaning of all of the ancient Hindu scriptures. This was my motivation to start learning Sanskrit. At first, it was hard for me to enjoy learning, but SAFL changed everything. I am now interested and eager to learn more about Sanskrit. Now, I can easily converse using basic Sanskrit. Before I used to recite shlokas but needed my grandmother to translate in order for me to understand the meaning. Now, after some experience with SAFL, I can get a feeling for what the sloka is saying without a translation, and I am sure I will get better in the upcoming years. When I see long and complex words, my mind can now see it as many small words combined together.

I have also realized that Indian heritage is completely related to Sanskrit. Most of the Indian words have Sanskrit root. Many of the Indian dialects, names, and culture are derived from Sanskrit; so, I am able to understand these better. For example, after learning Sanskrit, I have been able to understand Kannada and Telugu better. In the same way, I also have a better understanding of some common Indian names.

From grammar to vocabulary to common conversational and cultural lessons at the beginning of every chapter, I have been able to improve my speaking, reading, and writing, and understanding abilities. The teachers in the program are really helpful and make sure every student understands the material. SAFL can also give college credit, which can be really helpful to fulfill the foreign language or elective credits requirement in high school.

Overall, SAFL has made a big impact on my life in the way I think about my heritage and culture.

Prajval Sharma
SAFL 100 Level Student
Grade 8

अविस्मरणीयः अनुभवः

एकदा 2018 ग्रीष्मकाले, अहं New Jersey नगरे "श्रद्धा" शिबिरं गतवान्। मम कुटुम्बात् दूरं गन्तुं न इष्टवान्। परन्तु एतत् शिबिरं बहु स्मरणीयम् आसीत्। अहं तदा एकवर्षतः SAFL विद्यार्थी आसं, परन्तु मम मनसि चिन्ता आसीत् यत् शिबिरे वारं वारं कथं संस्कृतेन सम्भाषणं करोमि इति।

आरम्भे पञ्जीकरणकार्यक्रमः आसीत्। अन्यविद्यार्थिनः अपि तत्र आगतवन्तः। एतेन कारणेन अहं बहु सन्तुष्टः आसम्। पङ्क्त्यां बहवः जनाः आसन्। एतस्य शिबिरस्य चालनं सुलभं नास्ति इति अहं चिन्तयामि स्म। किन्तु बहवः अध्यापकाः, पूर्वविद्यार्थिनः कार्यकर्तारः च तत्र शिबिरे साहाय्यार्थम् आसन्। अतः पञ्जीकरणं बहु शीघ्रमेव अभवत्। तदनन्तरं वयं स्वप्रकोष्ठदर्शनार्थं गतवन्तः। मम सामग्रीः प्रकोष्ठे स्थापयित्वा तत्र एकेन अन्यछात्रेण सह मिलितवान्। सः न्यूयार्क नगरतः आगतवान्। अन्ते सः मम प्रियमित्रम् अभवत्।

तदनन्तरं वयं सभाङ्गणं गतवन्तः। गिरिमहोदयः शिबिरव्यवस्थां, शिबिरनियमान् च ज्ञापितवान् आसीत्। अनन्तरं अहं मम कुटुम्बात् विरम्य अन्यविद्यार्थिभिः सह गतवान्। तदनन्तरम् वयं अनेकासु भाषाक्रीडासु भागं ऊढवन्तः। अहं बहु आनन्दं प्राप्तवान्। प्रथमदिनं एवमेव शीघ्रं गतम्। परन्तु अग्रिमदिने प्रातःकाले उत्थाय योगाभ्यासं करणीयमिति चिन्तयित्वा मम निद्रा सम्यक् न अभवत्।

अनन्तरदिने प्रातःकाले शीघ्रम् उत्थितवन्तः। सर्वे योगाभ्यासं कृतवन्तः। एवं प्रतिदिनं कृत्वा शिबिरस्य अन्ते एव योगाभ्यासस्य लाभः कः इति अहं सम्यक् अवगतवान्। शिबिरात् आरभ्य अधुनापि अहं नियमितरूपेण प्रतिदिनं योगाभ्यासं करोमि। योगाभ्यासानन्तरं बहु रुचिकरं अल्पाहारं खादित्वा वयं सर्वे बहु सन्तुष्टाः।

कालक्रमेण अहं सम्पूर्णतया संस्कृतभाषापठनस्य प्रयोजनं किमिति अवगतवान्। यदि अन्यजनानां संस्कृतसम्भाषणेषु दोषान् पश्यामः तर्हि अस्माकं कृते बहु परिहासास्पदम् भवति। परन्तु स्वस्यभाषणे दोषाः सन्ति चेदेव इतोऽपि कियान् अभ्यासः आवश्यकः इति वयं जानीमः। एवं वयं सर्वे मिलित्वा सम्यक् पठित्वा, क्रीडित्वा, सम्भाषणं कृत्वा च क्रमेण एकस्य संस्कृतकुटुम्बस्य सदस्याः इव आचरितवन्तः। अहम् अद्यापि एकं विषयं न विस्मरामि - कस्यचित् जन्मदिने वयं "जन्मदिनमिदम्" गीतमपि गीतवन्तः।

शिबिरस्य अन्ते वयं सर्वे संस्कृतसम्भाषणे किञ्चित् नैपुण्यं प्राप्तवन्तः। तदुपरि क्रीडाः, शाद्वलेषु मित्रैः सह विश्रमणं जल्पनं च सर्वं कृत्वा एकाकी अस्मि इति भावना अपि अपगता। एते सर्वे शिबिरे स्मरणीयाः अंशाः। अहम् अधुनैव कुतूहलेन चिन्तयन् अस्मि मेधा शिबिरं कदा भविष्यति तत्र किं करिष्यामि इति।

Ritvik Pulya
SAFL 300 Level Student
Grade 10



Newsletter

SAFL

Sanskrita Bharati

2068 Walsh Avenue, Suite B2,
Santa Clara CA 95050

Contact:

safl.sanskritabharatiusa.org

safl@sanskritabharatiusa.org

408 752 2182