

SB all set to make Memorial Day weekend a memorable one

Organizing its fourth annual US-east-coast residential camp - "Bhaagiirathii" - Samskrita Bharati has run into a hitherto unfamiliar scenario. *"Previously even though we used to have early registration, we would reach a total of about 75 attendees just before the camp starts. This year we implemented online registration and we hit the maximum intake of 100 registrations, two weeks before the camp start date, and we have had to close the online registration"* says one of the registration committee members

Samskrita Bharati(SB) is a non-profit, voluntary organization, started by three young graduates from Tirupati University, India in 1981 to popularize spoken Sanskrit in daily conversation and eventually bring Sanskrit back to the mainstream. To date it has reached out to about 5 million people and trained 10,000 teachers- about 120 of whom are fulltime teachers. Its US activities started in 1995 in the west coast. In addition to conducting free spoken Sanskrit classes and workshops, SB has, in the past organized four residential Sanskrit camps - "Alakaananda" - a ten-day camp in 2000 organized near Sacramento, CA, "Gangotri" - a three-day camp in 2002 organized at Epping, NH, "Paavanii " - a five-day camp in 2003 organized in western Massachusetts" , "Sindu" - a three-day camp during 2004 at Dracut, MA.

This year, the Vraj temple at Pennsylvania was chosen as the location, considering increased activities in and around the area, including a recently active Sanskrit group at University of Maryland, in collaboration with the student organization DESI (Develop Empower Synergize India) . DESI is also helping SB with the online registration process for this year's camp.



Photo : Vraj campsite in PA where the 4-day residential Sanskrit camp will be held

So, what does the camp have to offer? It will be four-days of fun filled learning experience with five different levels from beginner to advanced and two groups for children based on age - claim the organizers. The teacher to student ratio is better than 1 to 10, ensuring personal attention and as has always been the SB approach, all learning will be very interactive and informal in a friendly atmosphere. Its "tested and testified" approach of listen-speak-read-write method will be followed in the camp too.

An added attraction of the camp is that Shri. Krishna Shastry, founder of SB is flying all the way from India specifically for the camp, which starts on the night of 25th and ends around noontime on the 29th, of May 2006. He will also be taking part in some local events in the Washington DC Metro area on the 24th and the 30th.

Talking about the camp Prof Jyotsna Kalavar of Penn State University said *"I am thrilled that the opportunity to learn spoken Samskritam has manifested. Our class in Pittsburgh had a septuagenarian couple- they were very interested in learning Samskritam. I would like to do my bit to spread the enthusiasm. For a start, my family - husband, sons, and septuagenarian mother- will be attending the camp"* . Add to it the organizers claim that a quarter of the registrants are children below the age of 15, and over a dozen are University students, the camp seem to have attracted Gen-all.

More information is available at <http://www.sanskrita-bharati.org> .
or contact: Dr. Govinda Rao Yelagalawadi, Secretary, Samskrita Bharati, USA.
408-871-0351 ; bhaagiiirathii2006@gmail.com / sanskritabharati@yahoo.com