Second Annual San Francisco Children's Summer Camp Held
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The second annual San Francisco Summer Camp for children of members of Saiva Siddhanta Church was held in both San Francisco and Marin counties in California. The children of the Nandi Devam family, Sundari, Reshma, and Kamala; of the Nathan Palani family, Satya and baby Ananta, and of Soma Sundaram, Suriya and Nale, and participated as well as the newly-weds-to-be, Ravi and Shakti Nadesan, who served as counselors. As reported to The New Saivite World by enthused participants, the first three days of camp were begun with noon puja at the San Francisco Ganesha Temple. Following the puja and blessing from Lord Ganapati, a luscious rice and curry lunch was served. Pujari Kumar Aditya conducted a children's class in how to conduct a puja; later all they young boys offered a helping hand in assisting the pujari in the evening Ganesha puja. One at a time, each would help bathe the Deity and then decorate Him. The children also heard readings from the Saivite Shastras, took a tour of the monastery's aviary, visited the frame shop where pictures of the deities are put into fine frames, and were shown through the Hindu Books and Supplies warehouse and shipping room. Each of the children selected a set of comic books from India on classical stories of saints and Gods and sent them to one of their distant friends.

In Marin the camp participants visited the Ali Akbar School of music where they were guests for a special concert with Sitar, Tambura and Tabla. The talented excellent sitar player had studied with Ali Akbar since 1969. The musicians were very pleased with their young audience and spent much time after the concert explaining the instruments and music to them.

Much of the fun and inspiration for the summer camp came from Swami Jivanmukti, known to the children as Swami Superduper Man, that daring defender of the Saivite faith. Each of the children wore a Swami Superduper Man T-shirt. On Friday, the Fourth of July, they held a puja at the Palani's home, watched fireworks for a while at the Marina and then went to see the movie Superman.

The grand finale was the performance of a puppet show from the Panchatantra Stories, traditional Hindu stories for children. Days of preparation went into the fine show. They selected the story of the cobra and the crow - how a mother crow outsmarted a mean cobra who was stealing her eggs, and the story of the turtle who fell off a stick which he held on to with his mouth - the stick being carried high in the sky by two bird friends so that the three could move to a new home. Because he couldn't keep quiet and finally said something, the undisciplined turtle fell to the ground and to his death. The children made the puppets and the stage (with the help of the grown-ups) and played the characters themselves. This all transpired Sunday after the noon puja at the temple and Satsang. A feast of curries was prepared by the ladies with assistance from the children and enjoyed by all. The monastics who live at the San Francisco monastery participated in these activities, watching the puppet show, enjoying the curries, and later given the children a tour of the uncloistered parts of the monastery. The children gathered together to perform a lovely puja at the special shrine in the monastery's garden courtyard which surrounds a lingam shrine made for the express purpose of teaching puja to children. The puja was offered with such purity and devotion that all who attended were deeply moved. Families all spoke of the wonderful experience of the Second Annual Children's Summer Camp, and plans are already set in motion for 1981.

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