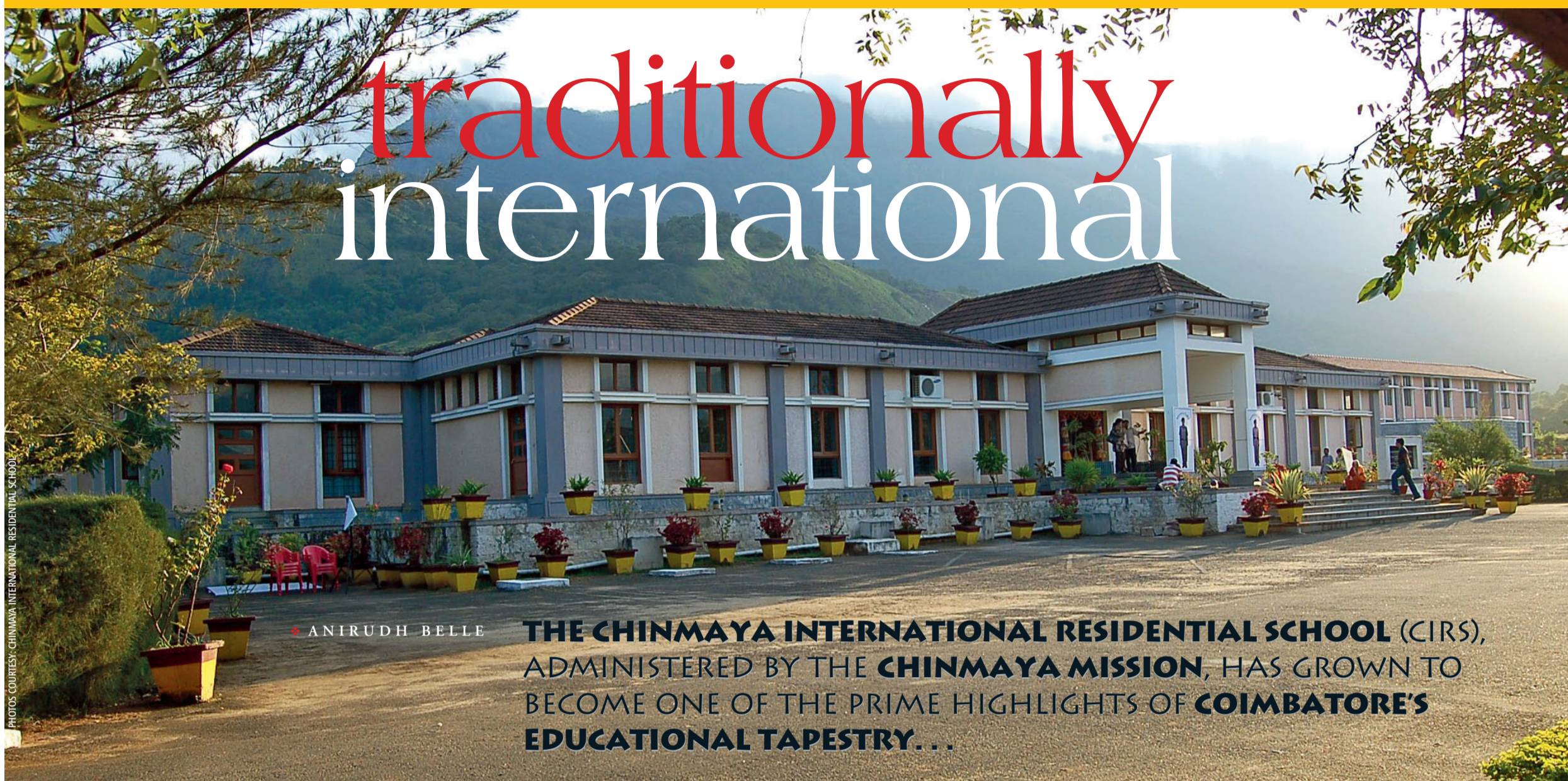




# Identity

CIRS has grown from being a school with just about 94 students and eight teachers to an established institution with 550 students and 64 qualified and experienced staff

## traditionally international



PHOTOS: COURTESY CHINMAYA INTERNATIONAL RESIDENTIAL SCHOOL

ANIRUDH BELLE

**THE CHINMAYA INTERNATIONAL RESIDENTIAL SCHOOL (CIRS), ADMINISTERED BY THE CHINMAYA MISSION, HAS GROWN TO BECOME ONE OF THE PRIME HIGHLIGHTS OF COIMBATORE'S EDUCATIONAL TAPESTRY...**

Established on an ideology that nurtures, in the minds of the youth, a sensitivity for, and an understanding of, the Indian cultural, moral and philosophical systems, the Chinmaya International Residential School (CIRS) was founded by one of India's most respected visionaries and sages, Swami Chinmayananda, on June 6, 1996.

Affiliated to the International Baccalaureate Organisation (IBO) and the Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE), CIRS has grown from being a school with just about 94 students and eight teachers to an established institution with 550

lessons that are taught to them." CIRS follows, in tandem with its regular educational curriculum, a unique programme called the Chinmaya Vision Program me (CVP). "The CVP is tailored to go beyond the textbook and the classroom; it aims at exposing students to a more comprehensive and practical perspective," says Shanti. "The programme helps in the development of the physical, emotional, intellectual and spiritual facets of the student through the various academic and non-academic activities of the school."

One of the highlights of the school's academic provisions is the International Baccalaureate Diploma

of Knowledge (ToK) Essay and the Extended Essay (EE), and the committed pursuit of co-curricular initiatives like the Creativity, Action and Service (CAS) programme are among the few enriching aspects of the IB programme at CIRS."

The most unique aspect of CIRS is its proclivity for Indian culture and spirituality. Value education lessons and spiritual classes are conducted on a daily basis and they aim at creating awareness about the culture and wisdom imparted by Indian scriptures and texts. Brahmachari Rishi Chaitanya, the Spiritual Guide of the school, says, "Texts like the Ramayana, the Bhagawatam and the Mahabharata are taught to the junior children in the form of stories and musicals; senior students are exposed to more philosophical texts like the Bhagavad Gita."

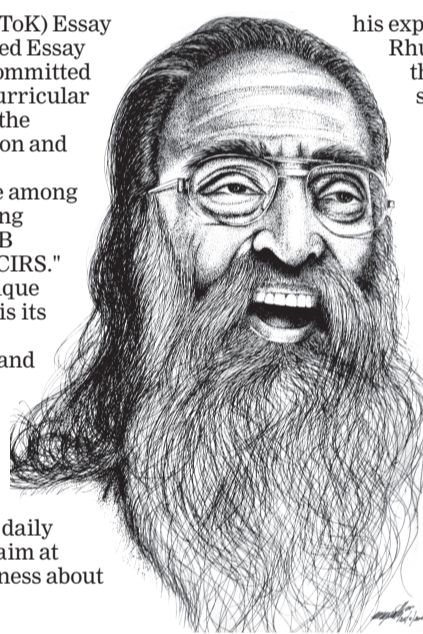
The evening aarti is one of the most important aspects of the school's daily schedule. The students get together at this time, for half an hour, to sing Bhajans, chant hymns and pray. "For an alumnus, the aarti is possibly one of the most cherished memories of

his experience at CIRS," says Rhuteyu Marfatia, one of the oldest alumni of the school. "Those 30 minutes are incredible and the sense of peace that prevails in those precious minutes, is priceless."

The pomp and ceremony with which each Indian festival and national event is celebrated at CIRS is unparalleled. Ranging from cultural events and competitions to the poojas and aartis, the essence of each festival is brought out through the complete involvement and participation of the student

community. Surrounded by cloud-clad mountains and lush forests, CIRS offers its students with the best of amenities - hi-tech classrooms, state-of-the-art teaching technology, an advanced physical education department and well-equipped living facilities, just to name a few.

Recollecting her experiences at CIRS, Kokila Annamalai, an alumnus of the school, says, "CIRS has opened my eyes to the deeper dimensions of life, and started me on a process of self-inquiry that continues even today.



Swami Chinmayananda: the Founder of CIRS



CIRS has opened my eyes to the deeper dimensions of life, and started me on a process of self-inquiry that continues even today. Being here is like living in a fairytale; you forget the world outside while you are within the serene and sprawling campus of the school



students and 64 qualified and experienced staff. Shanti Krishnamurthy, Principal of the school, says, "CIRS houses a diverse peer group from around the world and each student brings to the table, a unique set of thoughts and cultural perspectives. Since this is a residential campus, the value systems of the school are ingrained in the lifestyle of the students, be it in their academic and co-curricular pursuits, or in their respective dormitory lives. Through this provision, the students are convinced of the values and

Programme (IBDP). The IBDP is an international curriculum, headquartered at Geneva, Switzerland, and is deemed as one of the most comprehensive and respected systems of high school education prevalent today. "I am not exaggerating when I say that my decision to pursue the IB in CIRS has shaped my future and moulded me into the individual I am today," says Sriram Iyer, the school topper of the IB May Examinations in 2010. "The wholesome approach towards internal assessments, like the Theory



Being in CIRS is like living in a fairytale; you forget the world outside while you are within the serene and sprawling campus of the school. CIRS has introduced me to myself in a way that nothing else could have ever done. Living in India for the first time, I never missed home even for a moment. The teachers always had time for us, even if it was past midnight, and the rapport among students was almost intangible. Things like those are hard to come by, these days. In CIRS, there's magic in the air!"

## nostalgic musings

LIPI MEHTA

abundant memories that I have created for myself in that campus. What I miss the most right now is those ten minutes of solitude on the swings outside my dormitory, where I would have the freedom to think independently about issues that mattered and those that didn't.

The relationships with my friends and teachers at school continue to be the base for all my present interactions. What strikes me the most

supported my actions in a way that nobody ever could. I am reminded of an incident where just a reassuring look from my favourite teacher gave me the confidence to win a quiz that I was so nervous about. Needless to say, I attribute a lot of my success to people like these, who have moulded me into the person I am today.

Some of the best moments of my stay at CIRS are associated with the dorms where we used to live. My dorm mates were like my extended family. I remember plenty of instances where we've collectively taken responsibility for our mistakes only because of the selfless love we shared as friends. Another place where we spent a lot of our time in was the dining hall. Over a meal of barely half an hour, I have managed to strike the most interesting, and sometimes absurd, conversations about topics like the Nazi Regime, Murphy's Law and William Shakespeare.

The spiritual classes in the morning and the aartis in the evening have taken me on a journey of self-inquiry - one that I would never have undertaken if it weren't for the serene atmosphere at CIRS. The stories that I've heard and the songs that I have sung at aartis are now etched in my mind. Apart from our classrooms and our dorms, I have had the best times playing various inter-house games. I



feel a tinge of nostalgia when I think of the year that I captained my house (the entire student body at CIRS is divided into four distinct houses). I have never felt as passionate about achieving my goals as I did that year. The experience led to a metamorphosis so huge that I was left thoroughly inspired. I still remember the time when our school's star athlete, Swapnam Kajaria, forfeited winning the monthly cross-country race just so he could run with another friend and help him finish the race in time. Instances like these come along with the sporting spirit that is inculcated in us naturally at school.

The best decision that I have made at CIRS was joining the IB curriculum. The curriculum has honed my creative skills and linguistic abilities. Presently, I am pursuing a degree in Media Studies at the Symbiosis College of Media and Communication, Pune. The course is comprehensive and challenging. However, I find myself managing everything here with the sense of independence and responsibility that I imbibed from CIRS. As I write this, I am grateful for those beautiful memories that I will always cherish.

The writer is an alumnus of the batch of 2009-2010 at CIRS



In the summer of 2005, I joined the Chinmaya International Residential School (CIRS) without any idea of the extent to which it would change my life. When I think of my

school, I am reminded of the mountains, the trees, the meandering paths and the long walks. Apart from the people that I met there, and now know intimately, I am amazed at the

is that my friends were never limited to my class or grade. My juniors, seniors and teachers have shaped my personality and made me more accepting and open-minded. They have

