

## Seven-Days Camp of Pujya Swamiji on Hastāmalakīyam at Dayananda Ashram Rishikesh

Pujya Swamiji took Hastāmalakīyam text for the seven days camp from the 31<sup>st</sup> of March to the 6<sup>th</sup> of April 2009 at Dayananda Ashram Rishikesh. This text consists of only 14 verses but its content is deep and full of significance. Actually the story of a boy of thirteen becoming ācāryā Hastāmalaka is interesting. As per details given in Śaṅkara digvijaya written by śaṅkarācārya of Shringeri Svāmi Vidhyāranyā, when Ādi Śaṅkarācārya was travelling in Karnataka, he meets a dumb boy of thirteen. Śaṅkara asks the boy lovingly:

कस्त्वं शिशो कस्य कुतोऽसि गन्ता  
किं नाम ते त्वं कुत आगतोऽसि ।  
एतन्मयोक्तं वद चार्भक त्वम्  
मत्प्रीत्ये प्रीतिविवर्धनोऽसि ॥

“ Oh boy! Whose child are you, what is your name, from where have you come & where will you go. You are bright and you look attractive and loving to me. Please give reply to me for my pleasure. “

The reply given by the boy to the query of Ācāryā Śaṅkarā in twelve verses is what is known as Hastāmalakīya stotram. He specifically says that I am not jada (an inert object) but am self-aware consciousness. At the end of each of the twelve verses it is said that-

स नित्योपलब्धिः स्वरूपोऽहमात्मा ।

I am that Ātmā whose nature is everlasting knowledge consciousness..

Pujya Swamiji at the outset gave the background of the story and two sets of details available about the incident of the young boy. In his characteristic style, he made the text complete. The text mainly deals with individual or tvaṁ pada. But Pujya Swamiji took diversion and spoke at length about Īśvarā tatva or Tat pada to make the presentation complete.

In this camp there were 250 participants. The participants from abroad were around 40 and the rest were from different States of India.

Pujya Swamiji conducted meditation classes in the morning. He was taking three classes on Vedanta during day and satsang at night. Last three classes were devoted for take home material for the campers. Everybody felt a great sense of participation and fulfillment by attending the camp.