

Inauguration of Ashram at Washington DC

This was a day of potent rituals, intense feelings, and coming together for the sake of the knowledge. Every moment was filled with meaning, and every heart was filled with promise of what is to come. Many seeds were planted to prepare us all to receive the knowledge from our beloved teacher. Sadhviji's presence and light filled our minds with devotion and the faith that we will one day have this knowledge for ourselves.

The day began with Sadhviji offering worship to Swamiji's image, whose glance looked up towards Dakshinamurti.. I was fortunate to witness her lovingly place the Tilaks onto the beautiful picture of Swamiji. His self-effulgent image glistened to all corners of the room as so many of us could not take our eyes off of his magnificence. Swamiji further blessed us all with his grace by allowing us to perform some very significant and powerful rituals.

The first ritual, which installed the Ashram with the Grace of the Guru and the lineage of the teachers was the Guru Pada Puja. It was performed by the priests, and thankfully assisted by the devotees present who each offered water and flowers to wash the Teacher's feet. To be able to participate in this ceremony was a very high honor, and will never be forgotten by those present. The feet of the guru, representing the highest knowledge, act as a magnet to all who seek the highest self. This ritual assisted myself and others in connecting this knowledge with total devotion to the teacher.

As this was ending, almost immediately was begun the Sankalpa (stating the intention for Yajna) for the Homas. Two devotees Dr Vishwanathan and Krishnamurti recited sankalpa as directed by the pundit, Sri. K. Venkatesh.

The Ganapati homam followed which was for the removal of obstacles. The **Avahanti Homam** followed which was to invite all heavenly hosts to bless all those who come to the ashram for health, prosperity, awakening by the knowledge and Moksha. All devotees present offered flowers along with the priests. The priest beautifully intoned all the correct mantras and blessed all present with perfect recitations of the Vedic Hymns.

Following this was a talk by Sadhviji on the significance of the homas and the day's events. Everyone had something very touching to say and the emotion built up as each person poured out their heart to those present.

Devotional songs were sung throughout the day including a song composed by Sadhviji that was sung by Srimati Thara Viswanathan. Later in the afternoon came the chanting of Vishnu and Lalita Sahasranamam and performances by the Purna Vidya Group.

All told about 150 devotees attended from the beginning to the end.