

Week long Vedanta retreat in Manjakkudi

A group of 47 students from Surat, Gujarat attended a Vedanta programme from 8th December 2019 to 15th December 2019 at the *Jnana Pravaha* in Pujya Swamiji's *Janmabhoomi*—Manjakkudi.

The focus was on inculcating a routine for the study group whereby they can live a meaningful life - *ishvaraarpanabuddhi-prasadabuddhi-karmayoga*; temple visits and *pooja* exemplified these aspects and Vedanta study - *shravanam, mananam, dhyanam, satsang*; classes elaborated these aspects of study.



Course content, pedagogy and schedule

The course was conducted by Swami Pratyagbodhanandaji, a direct disciple of Pujya Swami Dayananda Saraswati in the Arsha Vidya tradition. The medium of instruction was Gujarati with the main texts being *Kaivalya Upanisad* with *Shankara Bhashyam*. Swamini Vibhavananda took classes on *Bhagavad Gita* (Chapter 14) while Bramachari Suryanarayana took classes on *Aparokshanubhuti* text in Hindi.

The day began with meditation by the Vedanta group at Pujya Swamiji's shrine at the *Jnana Pravaha*. This was followed by *Pancaayatana Pooja* conducted by priests from the Swami Dayananda Vedapatashala, Kodavasa, Tamil Nadu.

After breakfast, the Vedanta classes went on till lunch.

The retreat members and acaryas were also briefed about the structure of *Jnana Pravaha*, the availability of a reading room facility where AVR & PT (Arsha Vidya Research & Publication Trust) books are made available for study anytime of the day and access to Pujya Swamiji's talks on Vedanta texts spread over six 3-year courses at Gurukulams and also public talks and satsangs - over 7000 hours of talks are available for repeated *shravanam* and *mananam*. Some of the members made use of the facilities.



Manjakkudi tour

The participants witnessed first-hand how a tiny hamlet in the Kaveri delta transformed into a model village in the last decade and half. They took a tour of our Goshala and organic rice fields and spent time with our Chatralayam students and came to know their dreams and aspirations.



Satsangs and temple tours

In the evenings, the study group embarked on temple tours. The participants were amazed to see how local life revolved around temple routines and how our tradition continues to be maintained and followed in these religious structures. Satsangs were conducted after dinner.



Address by the Chairperson and Managing Trustee

In her heartfelt address (10th December 2019) to the acaryas and other members assembled at the Jnana Pravaha, Smt. Sheela Balaji, Chairperson and Managing Trustee of the Swami Dayananda Educational Trust (SDET) said she was inspired by Swamiji's vision and joined his movement of Seva. The result was transformative — both at a personal level as well as from the community standpoint — the way Manjakkudi evolved itself from a sleepy hamlet to a knowledge hub in the last 15 years.

Concluding note

On the penultimate day, Sri. Sambamurthy and Smt. Sambamurthy, ardent devotees of Pujya Swamiji from Tiruvalayaru, Tamil Nadu sang a few abhangs — Marathi devotional songs. The audience also joined in and participated in the group singing.

At the end of the retreat, the acaryas and some of the retreat members shared their experiences and had a word of appreciation for the excellent facilities provided in terms of accommodation, food and other arrangements.

On their part, representatives from the Swami Dayananda Educational Trust (SDET) welcomed the participants and acaryas to visit the village again to keep the tradition of teaching and Seva flourish at Pujya Swamiji's birth place. The acaryas also addressed SDET teachers and blessed them in a separate function.