

Bhandara at Rishikesh

On 17th march, a bhandara (feeding the sadhus) was organized at the Rishikesh ashram. As many as 3000 sanyasis participated and had lunch in the ashram. Arranging such bhandaras is nothing new for ashram or its office bearers. However, what surprised me and all the campers on 17th, was the scale on which bhandara was planned. Every time 100 to 300 sadhus were offered food but this time, there was open invitation. Every sadhu/ residing in Rishikesh, can have lunch. This is known as *samsthi bhandara*.

Preparations for the bhandara started 72 hours before i.e. on the evening of the 14th. Three types of sweets were prepared and offered. Tons of flour, ghee and sugar continued to arrive and were consumed as soon as they reached the



cooking area. As many as 15 sweet makers worked for more than 48 hours. Another team prepared vegetables, puris; dal and rice. However, their work began on 16th only so that stale food is not served to the sanyasis.

The food was delicious. Every one enjoyed it. Serving of food was done in batches. Mahatmas /managing various ashrams of Rishikesh had special seats and lunch with Pujya Swamiji.. Their immediate followers also got special attention. This was followed by the other sanyasis. After the lunch every sanyasi was given a dakshina of Rs. 100/ and a shawl.

The whole serving program took more than three hours and it was amazingly well organised..

Report by Vipin Trivedi

