

August is a special month for two reasons; the first being the month that gave us our Guru Pujya Sri Swamiji whose birthday falls right in the middle of the month and the other being India's Independence Day 17 years later. But we'll come to that.

There was quite a buzz this month in the Ashram as before the release of his latest movie Jailor, Rajnikanth spent a few days in the Ashram and paid homage to Pujya Sri Swamiji. He mingled freely with the students and the residents of the Ashram and paid obeisance to Pujya Swamiji at the adisthana.

Not to be overshadowed, the Ganga paid us a visit overflowing its banks a few days prior to Pujya Sri Swamiji's jayanti and returned back to its banks though the levels remained substantially higher during the month.

Acharya Jaishankar organised for his students because last year our Acarya Swami Sakshatanandaji during the Arsha Vidya meet requested all of Swamiji's students to regularly conduct retreats in Rishikesh for their own students. Based on that we decided to have a retreat from last year. The retreat has a packed daily curriculum of two classes of Kaivalya UpaniSad and Bhagavad Gita Chapter 4 each and one class of Sadhana Pan-chakam are being taught. As part of the retreat they also conduct guided meditations in the morning and satsang for QnA in the night which means seven sessions everyday. This routine is based on what they were doing in the course with Pujya Sri Swamiji in Annaikatti during the second three year course there.

Talking about the facilities in Rishikesh at Swami Dayananda Ashram, Jai Shankar felt blessed as he was conducting classes in the satsang hall of Pujya Sri Swamiji which is located in the original place where Pujya Sri Swamiji's grass hut was located where he taught in the 1960s. The satsang hall located in Swamiji's kutia is a special place where so many memories are displayed through photographs as a permanent display here in the gallery. They have formed the Arsha Vidya Varshini Trust, an Ashram is being set up inspired and due to Pujya Sri Swamiji's wishes expressed originally in 1988 with a caveat that setting up an Ashram is like holding onto the Tiger's tail. Pujya Sri Swamiji expressed this wish again in 2015 when they went to meet him due to his failing health. Any donations will help bring this important facility to function quicker.

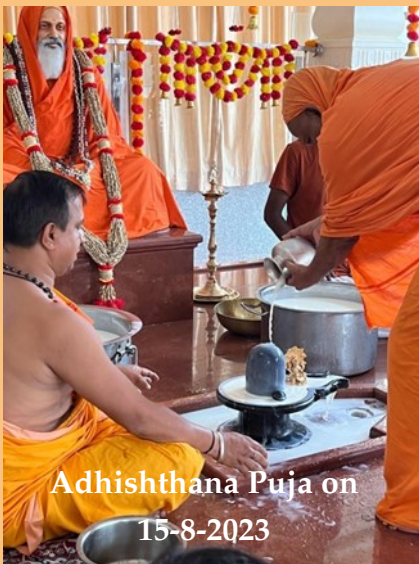
When asked about Ashrams in the day of internet connectivity, he replied that often we don't see the faces of the participants so we don't know whether they are understanding what we teach. Also on social media you get the number of views but don't know who they are - there is no substitute for direct teaching with the student present.

On Pujya Sri Swamiji's jayanti a special puja was held in the adhistahana where Acarya Swami Sakshatkritanandaji performed abhishek followed by all the students attending the six month course paid homage to Pujya Sri Swamiji by performing milk abhishekam.

During the month some of the students put together an Onam Special Cultural program inspired by Priya Krishnamurthy who also sang beautifully as part of the program but the

highlight by far was the demonstration of Kalaripayattu with Arjun mesmerizing the audience wielding a stick which Pujya Sri Swamiji learnt as a child to do and has often mentioned himself. Beautiful pookalams or flower arrangements were made by the students in the lecture hall, temple and adhisthana. In the afternoon the Swamis and Swaminis were served lunch on banana leaves with some traditional items as part of the festivities. The celebrations ended with a unique Thiruvathurakali group dance performances first by the women; then the men ending with the women joining in the men in revelry. Acharya Swami Sakshatkritananda ended the evening with his blessings and expressing joy and delight at the performances and said he was encouraged to have more such cultural programs in the future.

During the month study of the Mundaka Upanishad was completed and the study of Kathopanishad commenced. Gita classes continued online as Swamini Svatmavidyananda is currently visiting the USA. Chanting classes by Swamini Vimuktananda and Gopalji for Rudram continued. Yoga classes by Arpan and Mohan were conducted in the evening and morning respectively.



Adhishthana Puja on  
15-8-2023



Sri. Rajnikant's visit to  
Swami Dayananda Ashram



Onam decoration



Floods in Ganga when waters  
touched the temple gate.