

Labor Day Patrons' Retreat II 2013

The Labor Day Patrons' Vedanta Retreat II was held at Saylorsburg PA from August 30th to September 2nd. This camp was conducted during the days the Kumbhabhisek celebration was also held at the Gurukulam. Approximately 80 adults and 30 children attended the camp. Pujya Swami Dayananda Saraswati taught Sankara's Sadhana Pancakam and Swami Tattvaivananda Saraswati continued teaching Gita Chapter II on Stithaprajnata from last week. Pujya Swamiji held satsang sessions every day. Suddhatmaji taught Vedantic chanting. Irene conducted Yoga classes.

Registration was complete during the day on August 30th. Suddhatmaji held the orientation in the evening. Suddhatmaji explained the schedule for the camp and gave information about the Gurukulam facilities.

Sadhana Pancakam has five verses and forty items that constitute the Vedantic Sadhana. Pujya Swamiji expounded on selected items. Pujya Swamiji said that freedom from struggling to be different leads to Moksha. A person strives to change things in Samsara. He has a feeling of incompleteness. One has to realize that God is everywhere. Everything is given to you. Swamiji expounded on some of the items from Pancakam. These were: Study Vedas. Do your duty. Try to neutralize



desires. Do not say unpleasant things. Do not talk unless it is required. Do not own anything. Accept whatever comes to you. Have Shradha. Have Samadhana. Study with Guru. Do Guru Seva. Do not get involved in arguments with learned persons, instead learn from them. Reflect upon the meaning of Upanisadic

Commandments. Take refuge in the truth of Brahman. Live in solitude joyously. Do Swakarmas and dedicate them to Iswara. Swami Tattvavidananda Saraswati continued the teaching of Gita Chapter II Stithaprajnata. What are the qualities of a Stithaprajna and what we are to learn? Swamiji said our worldly knowledge in goals, desires, fears etc. is entirely different from the truth. Human mind prevents one from knowing the truth. One needs silence of mind. One needs a steadfast mind. This is cheerful silence. This is Atmanishta. This is Stithaprajnata.

Suddhatmaji taught Vedic Chanting. In guided chanting, the class chanted verses from Shanti Mantras, Sadhana Pancakam, Gita Chapter II Stithaprajnata and Purusottamayoga.

The children were grouped according to their ages as the junior group 6 to 11 and senior group from 12 and above. Each group had its own activities such as Vedic chanting, yoga, stories, games, arts and crafts, Vedic Heritage, Vedic Chanting, aarati, Sanskrit and camp fires administered by the temple staff and volunteers. Suddhatmaji, Lance Daniels, Jayantyji, Andres, and Savithri Auntie contributed to the children's programs. Savithriji arranged a Janmastami Puja for the children on August 31st at the Activity Center. Children participated in the Puja.

Those who attended this camp also participated in the Kumbhbhisekam



ceremony, an auspicious event at the Gurukulam this year. Suddhatmaji, the staff, the teachers, and volunteers worked hard during the camp to make it an enjoyable event.

The camp ended on September 2, 2013.

Reported by Arvind Bagal