



November 2014 - Volume 12 Number 11

日本ヴェダンタ協会ニュースレター

The Vedanta Kyokai Newsletter

NEWS, UPDATES AND MISCELLANY FROM THE VEDANTA SOCIETY OF JAPAN

DECEMBER Calendar



Birthdays

Sri Sri Ma Sarada Devi

Saturday, 13 December

Swami Shivananda

Thursday, 18 December

Christmas Eve

Wednesday, 24 December

Swami Saradananda

Saturday, 27 December

Zushi Centre Events

• **December •**
Zushi Retreat

Sunday, 21 December

10:30 ~ 16:30

The Holy Mother

Sri Sri Sarada Devi

Birth Celebration

• **Christmas Eve •**

Weds., 24 December

19:00~21:00

Worship/Talk/ Carols

Light Prasad Dinner

• **New Year Kalpataru •**

Annual Programme

New Years Day 2015

Zushi - 12 Noon

Talk, Lunch, Walk

All are welcome to each
& every Zushi event!

✧ Thus Spake ✧

“God can be realized through all paths. All religions are true. The important thing is to reach the roof. You can reach it by stone stairs or by wooden stairs or by bamboo steps or by a rope. You can also climb up by a bamboo pole.”

- Sri Ramakrishna

“There are only two mistakes one can make along the road to truth; not going all the way, and not starting.”

- Gautama Buddha



Kali Puja

In this Issue:

- Thus Spake ... page 1
- Monthly Calendar ... page 1
- Kali Puja ... page 2
- Thought of the Month ... page 3
- Medhasanandaji Visits India ... page 4
- A Story to Remember ... page 8

Vedanta Society of Japan Celebrates *Kali Puja*

On Thursday evening, October 23, the Vedanta Society of Japan (Nippon Vedanta Kyokai) celebrated Kali Puja at the Society's Annex building in Zushi City from 19:00 to 21:30.

The schedule is as brief as practicable, concluding with a light prasada dinner at 21:30, so that as many attendees as possible might reach their Tokyo and beyond destinations home by train that night. The many hours of selfless service in planning and preparation for this event by so many volunteers is, as always, very much appreciated by all.

The altar was set up in the Annexe building with decorative Indian fabrics of crimson with golden threads, sequins and traditional prints. On the upper tier of the altar a framed photograph of Mother Kali was centred between photos of Sri Ramakrishna and Sri Sarada Devi. These



were carefully draped and adorned in carnation garlands and each topped with a single dahlia bloom. Rose, iris, lilly, orchid, carnation and dahlia bouquets and clusters with blooms of red, pink and yellow hues accented the offerings of food preparations, sliced and whole fruits and sweets.

To the right of the altar a raised platform had been prepared with all the vessels, utensils, flower blooms, leaves and other articles of the Puja arranged for Swami Medhasananda (Maharaj) to conduct the worship. The worship proceeded with Maharaj reciting mantras, executing mudras, and placing various offerings into a vessel assisted (Tantradharak) again this year by Mr. Anirban Mukherjee.

Each of the five elements comprising the
(con't page 3)



Kali Puja (from page 2)

earth; ether, air, fire, water and earth were offered to the photos at the altar, represented by flames, an oxtail fan, woven cloth, etc., while ringing a bell and accompanied by conch and cymbals. At the conclusion of formal worship, Ms. Shanti Izumida then led the congregation in singing Sarva Mangala Mangalye, a Sanskrit hymn to the Divine Mother.

Finally, a flower and leaf each were distributed to the congregation and Maharaj led them in a mantra to Mother Kali. He then urged all to make their offering and prayer at the altar (pushpanjali) as expeditiously as possible as the homa-fire would begin as soon as possible.

As the congregation took their seats the platform had been resupplied with flowers, leaves and other items for the homa-fire. With short wood bars neatly stacked for igniting in square vessel upon a heat shield, Maharaj called for the congregation to be silent. Conch shells sounded the launch of the ritual as Maharaj recited mantras as flowers were placed into the vessel at prescribed locations. Two wooden bars, their ends wrapped in ghee-soaked tissue were then lit and placed into the vessel. Mantras continued as more flowers, incense sticks, bits of fruit and ghee-doused leaves were added to the growing flames. The flames grew and danced in appreciation with each mantra consecrated addition to the homa for several minutes.

• **Thought of the Month** •

A prudent question
is one half of wisdom.

- Francis Bacon

With the congregation reciting a Ma Kali mantra 108 times as Maharaj continued to add items with each chant. Most of the wood consumed, more ghee and leaves maintained a more subdued flame as more chants and offerings were made. Maharaj and tantradharak then rose to pour a final mixture of ghee and offered items onto the diminishing flames. Sitting again, Maharaj mixed yogurt and water in a copper vessel and hand-full by hand-full dousing the fire as the flames hissed complaints and surrendered in billows of smoke. Maharaj selected some of the sacred ash, added more ghee and crushed the mixture for vibhuti (sacred ash).

He then offered final prayers and alighting from the platform prostrated before the altar before calling everyone to receive a dab of vibhuti on the forehead. Dabbing each of the three altar photos first and then the tantradharak, Maharaj briefly acknowledged and dabbed each with vibhuti and urged them to go over to the main Ashrama building where a prasad dinner was being served.

Despite the best efforts to maintain a tight schedule, with about 100 people in attendance, the Kali Puja and Homa ran a little overtime. As such, attendees had to depart soon after taking prasad. •



SWAMI MEDHASANANDA VISITS INDIA

(SEPTEMBER 25 ~ OCTOBER 19)

Itinerary

Sep 25~27	New Delhi : R.K. Mission
Sep 28 ~ Oct 6	Kankhal (Haridwar): R.K. Mission / Uttarkashi
Oct 7 ~ 15	Varanasi : R.K. Mission
Oct 16 ~ 18	Belur Math
Oct 19	Return flight from New Delhi to Narita by Air India
Oct 20	Arrival in the morning at the Narita Airport



Ramakrishna Kutir build on the banks of the Ganga in Uttarkashi
(Smaller than an ashrama, a kutir is a residence for introspection.)



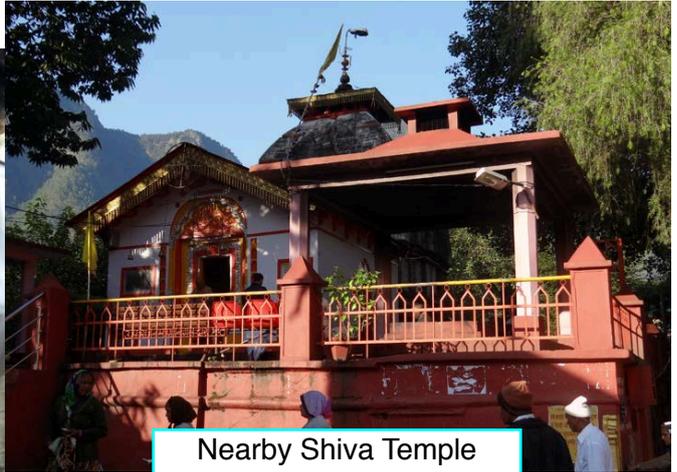
Swami Medhasananda's technique is studied in the Kutir kitchen



Students from the Japanese 'Jinen' Yoga group enjoy breakfast at the Kutir



Worshiping Shiva



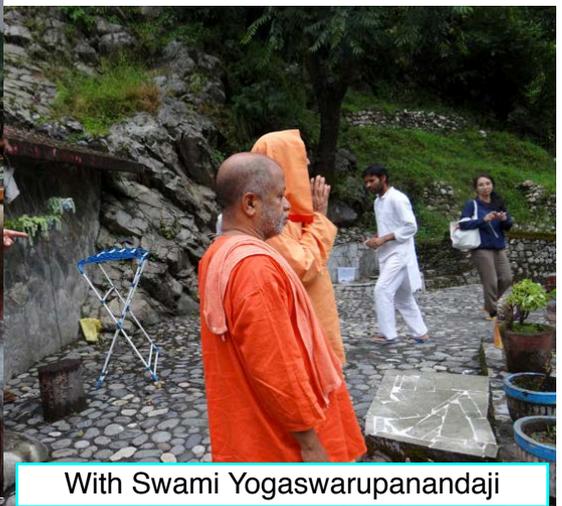
Nearby Shiva Temple



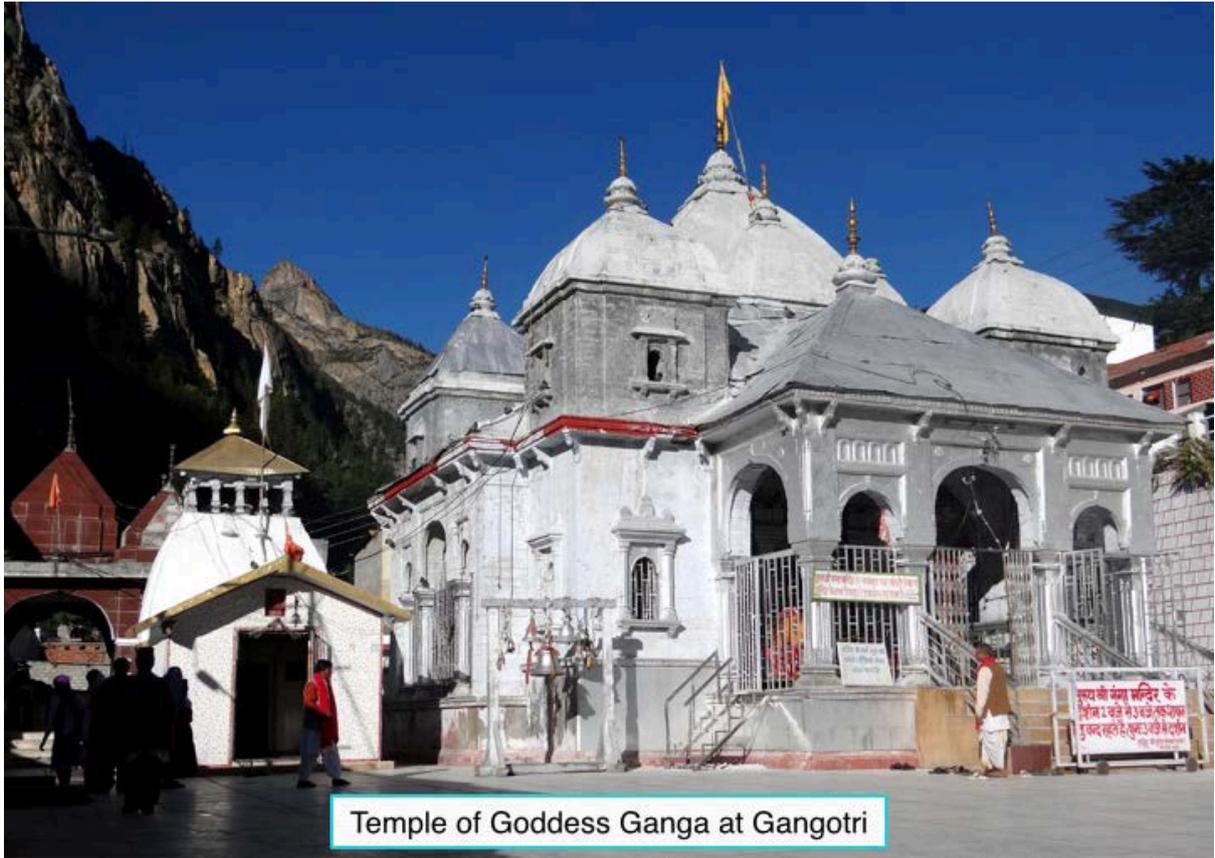
Mother Durga Temple at Uttarkashi



Swami Medhasanandaji Visits with Swami Premanandaji of the Shivananda Ashrama



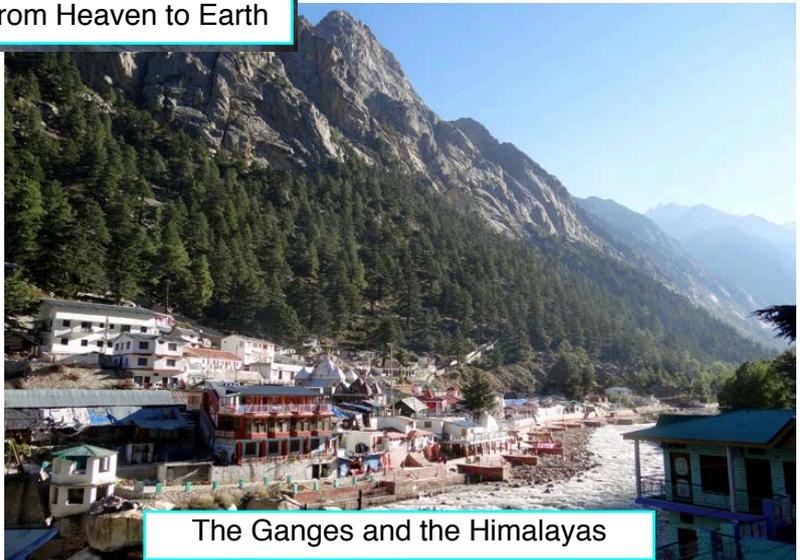
With Swami Yogaswarupanandaji



Temple of Goddess Ganga at Gangotri



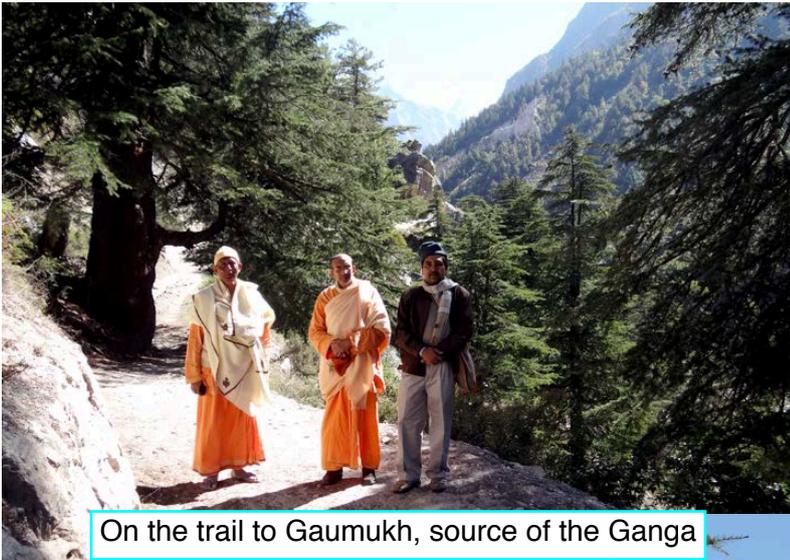
Depicting the descent of the divine from Heaven to Earth



The Ganges and the Himalayas



Viewing the Ganga River



On the trail to Gaumukh, source of the Ganga



Bhagirathi peaks rise along the trail to Gaumukh

• A Story to Remember •

The Three Dolls

On a very special holiday honouring the ruling family, a sage presented a prince with a set of three small dolls. This gift did not amuse the prince. "Am I a girl that you give me dolls?" he quipped.

"This is a gift for a future king," said the sage. "If you look carefully, you'll see a hole in the ear of each doll."

"How is this so special?"

The sage handed him a piece of string. "Pass this string through the hole in the ear of each doll," he said.

Intrigued, the prince picked up the first doll and put the string into the ear. It came out from the other ear.

"This is one type of person," said the sage. "Whatever you tell him just comes out the other ear - in one ear and out the other. He doesn't retain anything. Now try the second doll," he said.

The prince put the string into the ear the second doll. It came out from its mouth. "This is the second type of person," said the sage. "Whatever you tell him, he tells everybody else."

Anxious to hear the conclusion, the prince picked up the third doll and repeated the process. The string stopped and did not reappear from anywhere else. "This is the third type of person," said the sage. "Whatever you tell him is locked up within him. It never comes out."

"What is the best type of person?" asked the prince.

The man handed him a fourth doll in answer. When the prince put the string into the doll, it too came out from the other ear. "Do it again," said the sage.

The prince repeated the process. This time the string emerged from the mouth, but when he inserted the string a third time, it stopped and did not come out at all.

"This is the best type of person," said the sage. "To be trustworthy, a man must know when not to listen, when to remain silent and when to speak out."

- author unknown

Issued by: **The Vedanta Society of Japan** (Nippon Vedanta Kyokai)
4-18-1 Hisagi, Zushi-shi, Kanagawa-ken 249-0001 JAPAN
Phone: 81-46-873-0428 Fax: 81-46-873-0592
Website: <http://www.vedanta.jp> / Email: info@vedanta.jp