



July 2015 - Volume 13 Number 07

The Vedanta Kyokai Newsletter

NEWS, UPDATES AND MISCELLANY FROM THE VEDANTA SOCIETY OF JAPAN

AUGUST Calendar

Birthdays

**Swami
Ramakrishananda**
Wed, Aug 12
**Swami
Niranjanananda**
Sat, Aug 29

Kyokai Events

※ NOTE: All discourses
and discussions are now
in the Japanese language.

• Bhagavad Gita • Study

Aug 1 (Sat)
Indian Embassy Tokyo
日本語 only/14:00 - 17:00
(bring photo ID)

• August • Zushi Retreat

Sunday Aug 16 - 11AM
**Sri Krishna
Birth Celebration**
Talk:
Swami Medhasananda
Lunch Prasad
All are welcome!

• Upanishads Study •

Aug 22 (Sat)
Indian Embassy Tokyo
日本語 only/13:00 - 17:30
(bring photo ID)

• Nara Narayan • Service to Homeless Narayan

August Meet Cancelled

**• More Society Events in
August Listed on Page 10**

✧ Thus Spake ✧

"To work without attachment is to work without the expectation of reward or fear of any punishment in this world or the next. Work so done is a means to the end, and God is the end."

Sri Ramakrishna

"For everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, and everyone who humbles himself will be exalted."

Jesus Christ

May Zushi Retreat 2015 Celebrating the Birth of Gautama Buddha 'I Am Awakened' A talk by Swami Medhasananda

Swami Medhasananda (Maharaj) asked the congregation to follow in chanting the Trisharan Mantra of Buddhism.

*Buddham sharanam gacchami,
(Buddha is our refuge)
Dharmam sharanam gacchami,
(The teachings of Buddha are our refuge)
Sangham sharanam gacchami,
(The monastery of Buddha is our refuge)*

This was followed by readings from the Teachings of Buddha, after which Maharaj began his discussion:

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Awakened (from page 1)

"Today we are celebrating the birth of Lord Buddha. Traditionally it is celebrated during full moon in the first month of the Indian calendar year which is around the Gregorian calendar month of May. Originating in India, the teachings of the Buddha spread throughout Asia. Adopted in the north of India firstly, which includes present day Nepal, and moving southward through India to Sri Lanka, formerly Ceylon. Buddhism spread eastward through Bengal to Burma, and the area of present day countries of Laos, Cambodia and Vietnam. From the Nepal area Buddhism spread north and east to Tibet and into China, where it spread to the Korean Peninsula and on to Japan. Eventually Lord Buddha's teachings had spread throughout the whole of Asia.

The teachings of Buddha have now spread and become popular in modern day Europe and America as well. Sir Edward Arnold's book 'The Light of Asia,' first published in 1879, became very popular in Europe and America, and introduced Lord Buddha, his life, character and philosophy in a series of poetic verses to westerners. Buddhism is now more popular in America than in Europe. It may be that the popularity of Buddhism in the West may be attributed to the teachings of Lord Buddha where we find no mention of God, of whom the general public today also do not show much interest. Buddha's teachings are, however, deeply spiritual and many of its followers practice the ancient traditions of meditation and upasana (worship) to this day.

In the West Swami Vivekananda (Swamiji) not only talked on Vedanta philosophy, but also on the life and teachings of Lord Buddha. When Swamiji first came to Japan, some were surprised at how Swami's face compared to that of many images of Lord Buddha. The impression was so strong that they referred to Swamiji as the second Buddha.

Almost every year we invite a Buddhist priest to speak at our Zushi Monthly Retreat celebrating Lord Buddha's birth. Since no Buddhist priest was available this month I will do my best to talk on Lord Buddha. (laughter) However, a talk on Buddha by a Hindu monk is not unusual at all. In Hinduism Buddha is regarded as one of ten great incarnations of God and, His birth is celebrated at our Indian headquarters and at all our worldwide centres.

Bodh Gaya, in the Bihar State of India, is the location where Buddha became enlightened,

and since ancient times the famous mandir (temple) of Lord Buddha there has been a place of pilgrimage for Buddhists and Hindus alike. One interesting fact is that at the same temple three times a day a Hindu Brahmin priest will offer a traditional Hindu worship, while at other times of the day Buddhist priests offer traditional Buddhist worship. Throughout the world, the observing of two different religious traditions at the same temple everyday probably only occurs here.

When people asked Jesus, 'Who are you?' He is most often cited as replying, 'I am the only begotten son of God.' This is the tradition. If asked, Sri Ramakrishna would always reply, 'I am the son of Mother Kali.' When Buddha was asked, 'Who are you? Are you God?'

'No,' he answered.

'Are you God Incarnate?'

'No.'

'Are you an angel?'

'No.'

'Are you a saint?'

'No.'

'Who, then, are you?'

'I am one who is awakened,' He replied.

That was His answer. I am the Awakened One. No special name or type of sage, or reincarnation of God. Buddha answered that He was the Awakened One. One who is awakened is enlightened. The meaning is the very same.

In English He is known as Buddha, in Japanese it is Hotokesama or Osakashama. In India we call Him Buddha. Prior to enlightenment his name was Siddhārtha Gautama and He became known as Gautama Buddha and Tathāgata afterward. The name Buddha is derived from the word bodhi, which has two meanings; One of which is 'awake' and the other is 'knowledge.' These two meanings of bodhi are appropriate for the Buddha who was both awakened and a knower of Truth.

What are the characteristics of the Buddha? Firstly, He is known as a deep thinker. Most people think on a shallow level, but Buddha was always thinking deeply. Of course,

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Awakened (from page 2)

scientists are also renowned deep thinkers. To derive a theory on the laws of gravity from observing an apple fall is not commonplace. Newton observed this and thought deeply on this common occurrence and formulated the first laws of gravity. How? He thought about it deeply and the law of gravity flashed in his mind. Others also observed the same events many times, but never wondered and reasoned like Newton why the fruit fell to the earth. Hence, scientists also ponder deeply. However, the thinking of scientists concerns the physical plane, while saints and philosophers dwell on the meaning and purpose of life.

When Gautama was born astrologers were called upon to divine the infant's future. They predicted that this was a very special child with two great possible futures; one being that if properly nurtured he would become a very famous monarch. The other being that if he renounced the world, he would become a world teacher, a teacher of humanity. His father, the king of a small realm, of course, dreamt of his son becoming a great monarch and expanding the realm and its influence. Learning that should his son be exposed to the sufferings of the world he would renounce the world, King Śhuddodana took every precaution to keep any form of suffering away from his eyes.

The king built three seasonal palaces of fun and enjoyment for him with beautiful grounds and gardens and high palace walls. One palace was staffed with countless beautiful dancing girls, always dancing and singing. From morning till night, every single day, life was full of music and fun. Even on his walks and on horseback off the palace grounds the way was lined with healthy youth, beauty and vigour, no elderly, or ailing, or needy, or dead were allowed within eyesight along the Prince Siddhartha's pathway.

Buddha was born for a purpose, to lead humankind to peace. So one day, some say it was just by chance, while others say it was divine will, Siddhartha's handlers were distracted and

he ordered his charioteer, Chandaka, to venture off the prepared route. There for the first time he saw a sick man and was deeply shocked. He turned to Chandaka and asked, 'What is this I see? What is wrong with this man?' Chandaka explained that he was sick. Surprised, the prince asked why he was sick. Chandaka answered that when one has a body, it is impossible to avoid disease.

'Really? I did not know this,' replied Gautama. 'I never thought that disease affected all; that the body stayed in a state of good health.'

'No, my Prince,' Chandaka replied, 'for everyone there is the probability of illness and disease.'

After this discussion Gautama reflected intensely upon his return to the palace. He had already married a very beautiful woman. Her name was Gopa.



On another venture into the capital, Gautama witnessed an elderly man tottering on his walking stick.

'What is this?' he asked his charioteer.

'Old age,' was the reply.

'Old age! Is it possible that I, too, may fall into that state?' Gautama.

'Yes,' he answered.

'And my wife, Gopa, too?'

'Yes, my Prince, there is no exception.'

King Śhuddodana upon learning that Gautama had strayed and been exposed to the realities of the human condition after he had taken so much care to shield the prince from this, asked him what he had seen. The prince answered that he had seen old age and that the elderly, unable to stand straight, walked with canes. Their hair had turned white and their skin was very thin, pale, and not only wrinkled, but generally unhealthy looking; not like a young person's bright and healthy skin. These encounters and realisations made the young prince

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ever more thoughtful.

Despite the king's injunctions to the contrary, the prince ordered his charioteer off the planned route again. This time he witnessed the dead. In India when a Hindu dies a 4-cornered pallet is made and four people carry the deceased to the funeral pyre chanting 'Ram Nam Satya Hai, Ram Nam Satya Hai'. The young prince witnessed such a procession.

'What are those four people carrying and chanting so?' Gautama asked Chandaka.

'My Prince, that is a dead person and he is being carried to the funeral pyre.'

'Will this happen to me as well?' asked Gautama.

'Yes.'

'Gopa?'

'Absolutely. The same end comes to everyone.'

Gautama became more pensive. His father had created all the prince's surroundings to be pleasurable and full of fun. But now the prince felt these preparations had been a mockery; all meaningless diversions. Gautama began to think ever more deeply about the meaning of life.

Out again the next day, he noticed a shaved-headed man walking along dressed in saffron robes and smiling brightly. Not only was his smile bright, but he also carried a very peaceful air about him with his begging bowl in hand. Seeing such a person for the first time, he asked Chandaka, 'What manner of person is this?'

'He is a mendicant, a monk,' he answered.

'What is a monk?'

'The man has abandoned hearth and home to know truth. He has relinquished all and dwells on God.'

Upon returning to the palace, Gautama found that he took no pleasure in the damsels or their art. Late that night he even observed some among them had fallen asleep exhausted with their heavy makeup cracking and eyeliner running, some snoring, drooling or with runny noses. Seeing this disgusting scene the prince

thought, 'So this is the true state of beauty under the makeup and other preparations.' Thus thinking, the illusive facade of the world around him began to fade.

What did he reflect upon then? It was about the appearance of things and what they really were; the apparent and the real. For example, we may go to a restaurant, or attend a party or concert. What is our state of mind then? We think life is full of fun, though it is not really so and we face many painful things. Most things are not what they seem. The bodies of some people look so beautiful, but is the body really beautiful? The body has nine gates; two eyes, two nostrils, two ears, one mouth and two of waste elimination. This is the natural state of the body, seven gates for information or nutrient intake and two for necessary elimination. Now if we examine our body closely we find that not only through the two gates are body wastes are eliminated, but other forms of waste are eliminated via the remaining seven gates as well. The body only looks clean because we regularly and meticulously clean our body and all its gates. Our conclusion must be that the body is not really very clean, but quite dirty.

Another conclusion Gautama reached is that everything is temporary. Everything changes from second to second. Nothing stays the same. The water in a running river, is not the same water from moment to moment as it flowing continuously. Even though invisible to us, our body changes constantly, some cells being born while others die, till the final change and it disappears. What is one of the great teachings of Buddhism? That all of existence is but a second. Why? Because the next moment there is change; second to second, moment to moment, change. Hence, momentariness and impermanence are the very nature of this world and constitute the entirety of its sentient and insentient phenomena.

What were His other of conclusions? All life is sorrow. There is no lasting joy in life. That which is enjoyable now will surely bring sorrow later. Pleasure will bring pain and pleasure and pain are but two sides of the same coin. This moment's enjoyment will turn to suffering the next moment.

How does joy turn to sorrow? When we meet a dear friend it makes us quite happy. Then when this friend has to leave, how do we feel? Do not we feel sad? Thus, the source of joy verily becomes a source of pain. All the worldly

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things which give us pleasure will also bring us pain.

Let's use a delicious meal as a common example. We all delight at a feast of our favourite dishes. Sashimi and grilled eel and some sake are served and you and everyone are happy. Then some concerns arise. If I am not careful and overeat, I may experience some stomach trouble. We may worry, 'This is a great meal, did I bring enough cash to pay the bill?' Afterward if we have a stomachache; the fun of eating turns into the cause of suffering. So the conclusion Buddha reached is that nothing is truly fun, as every type of fun ends in suffering.

So with deep thought, Buddha identified the ideas that 'fun' has no true meaning, as it ends in sorrow. What we see is not real, it is temporary and changing moment to moment. Nevertheless, Buddha showed us the way, or path, to transcend this state, without which Buddhism would only reflect a philosophy of pessimism. In fact, some criticise Buddhism as a philosophy of pessimism, focusing on suffering. But this is not so. Buddha implores us to stop suffering and wants us to learn how to transcend this suffering.

What is so special about the life and teachings of Lord Buddha? He sacrificed all not for himself, but for everyone else. He taught all how to transcend the sufferings of life. A common holy man is concerned with his own happiness and enlightenment. He thought and worked 'for the happiness of the many, for the welfare of the many,' or 'bahujana sukhaya bahujana hitaya cha.' This is the greatness of Lord Buddha.

What's more? We like truth, but are not always willing to abandon everything for the sake of truth. We are not willing to do whatever it takes to get to truth. Not being ready to pay the price of truth is a great contradiction. I do not want to transform my life, yet I want truth. This is a kind of, 'armchair thining.' Sitting back, relaxing, and imagining how nice enlightenment would be; to know truth, to know God; drifting in and out of these ideas, knowing full well our unwillingness to change our lifestyles one iota. It is very important for seekers to understand that an easy and effortless process of growth and transformation is a self-contradiction.

All the successful seekers after truth succeeded because they never shunned or shrank away

from, nor compromised with, anything or anyone in their search for truth. Much determination and sacrifice make all the difference between them and ordinary people with armchair dreams and imaginings. The latter view the slightest change in the way of life they are used to as bothersome. Buddha, for example, gave up everything; his beautiful wife, his child and all the comforts, pleasures and grandeurs of princely life for the sake of truth. Moreover, ordinary saints think of finding truth for themselves. But from the very beginning Gautama's deepest thoughts were on how his finding the truth could help a suffering humanity to relieve their suffering. Such universal compassion was one of the most important character traits of Buddha, which was often praised by Swami Vivekananda (Swamiji) who himself possessed such a compassionate heart.

Buddha engaged in harsh austerities of penance, tapas (deep meditation and reasoned self-discipline), fasting and such, which made him thin and weak over some years, and he realised that by such severe austerities alone he would not reach enlightenment. He then took some food which helped him to regain strength and he determined to sit at the base of a bodhi tree and vowed not to arise until enlightenment.

The vow which he took then was expressed in the following famous Sanskrit verse:

Ihāsane shushyatu ma sariram
Tvagasthi māṅsam pralyancha jātum
Aprapyabodhi bahukalpadurlabham
Naivāsanāt kāyamata schalishyate

'I will sit in this spot until my body dries and my flesh and bones are blown away, if need be, until I attain enlightenment. I will meditate and not move from my seat'

In English there is also the phrase, 'Do or die.' A familiar Sanskrit adage expresses these same ideas: 'Mantram vā sādhyat, sariram vā pātayet,' meaning I shall strive to the best of my ability to do my spiritual sadhana and don't mind even to give up my body in the undertaking such sadhana.' With such determination a priest becomes Sri Ramakrishna; a carpenter becomes Jesus Christ; a prince becomes the Buddha; and a camel driver becomes the Prophet Muhammad.

The place where Buddha sat for meditation until His enlightenment is called Buddha Gaya, popularly known as Bodhgaya. Upon

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enlightenment for seven days He stayed immersed in supreme bliss which is an entirely

different type of joy than that commonly experienced by ordinary people, which is mostly material in nature and conditioned by time, space and people.

But the kind of joy experienced by Buddha comes from within, issuing from the innermost part of our being, known as the Atman, according to the Bhagavad Gita. Buddha paced up and back in a state of absolute bliss, and it was noted that as he paced, a lotus bloomed at each step He took. This spot where He walked is still there called the Ratnachakarma or Jewel Walk at Bodhi Gaya. After spending days in such a state, Buddha set out to share his wisdom as He had originally intended.

There are two types of paramahansa or realised souls, premi-paramahansa and jnani-paramahansa. The jnani-paramahansa is satisfied with his own realisation of the Atman, while the premi-paramahansa wants to share the joy and knowledge of his realisation with others. A jnani-paramahansa may find a delicious mango and enjoy eating it. A premi-paramahansa upon finding such a mango is impelled to share it with others. Lord Buddha, too, was such a premi-paramahansa.

Buddha is said to be a practical philosopher. Why so? Because he formulated his teachings in a simple, precise, practical and rational way. His four noble truths are 'the truth of suffering, the truth of the cause of suffering, the truth of the end of suffering, and the truth of the path that leads to the end of suffering.' Buddha did not discuss the nature of previous lives, or of an afterlife or God. He did not engage in long discussions on philosophy or God as these were not indispensable in removing the sufferings of life. He asked us to understand the source of our troubles and sufferings in order for us to solve them ourselves.

He taught that the primary cause of our suffering is attachment – mistaking the temporary for the eternal. How can we end our suffering? By practising detachment, by becoming unattached. Avoid attachment to all that is temporary. Also important is to always remain alert; practicing effort and

self-confidence and not depending upon any other agency of being.

One of Buddha's last messages, proclaimed on His deathbed, was: 'Ananda (His most beloved disciple), atmadipo bhava' meaning Ananda, you become your own light. Why should you depend on some sage or God? You, yourself, become your lamp. Swamiji also preached the same gospel of self-confidence. 'Believe in yourself! If you don't believe in your own power, you become an atheist. If you don't have self-confidence, belief in gods will not help you at all.' Buddha told His disciples to not mourn at His passing. 'The body of Buddha will die,' He said. 'My teachings will live on.' Swamiji said, 'I am a voice without any form,' meaning that his body may die, but not His message.

According to Lord Buddha, everything is temporary, and only one thing is eternal and that is the pure mind. An interesting thing about Buddha is that he did not use the word 'atman' or 'soul,' he spoke of the 'pure mind.' What is the state of the ordinary mind? It is always restless, wandering, attached and deluded. With this state of mind one cannot find the truth which is eternal and infinite. However, there is the eternal, pure mind in us, about which we are aware when our heart becomes pure. He never spoke of the eternal Atman or soul since there was a possibility of confusion and argumentation centring on Atman. He spoke of a pure mind. In the Yoga Sutras of Patanjali we also find great emphasis on the control and purification of mind, which will lead us to enlightenment.

So let us be ever aware of the purpose of life; let us have self-confidence; let us be pure and controlled and strive for realising truth without making any compromise. These will finally lead us to enlightenment and we become fully awakened as Buddha himself was, and had beckoned us to become, as well. •

• Thought of the Month •

"Goodness is the only investment that never fails."

Henry David Thoreau

Public Celebration May 17, 2015
Auditorium, Indian Embassy, Tokyo
Swami Vivekananda: 152nd Birth Anniversary
Theme: “Indian Culture in Japan”

‘Indian Food’

by Mr. J. S. Chandrani, president of Japan Business Service,
and founder of Indian Restaurants, ‘Spice Magic Calcutta’

Namashkaar!

Before I start, may I take the liberty to ask you my audience one question? How many of you have eaten or tasted Indian food? Wow! So many! And how many of you like it? Again, most of you.

When asked to talk about Indian Food, I wondered what to do? Where to start? Maybe describing what Indian Food is would be a good starting point, so I ask you to name food which you consider Indian food. Answers like Nan, Tandoori Chicken, Curry Rice, etc., are all correct! And if asked what you like about Indian food, most will answer the spiciness, textures, colours and variety of flavours.

Food, like everything else, has a history and reason for becoming food. Where Indian food differs from food of most other regions of the world is that it was conceived and based on a philosophical treatise! Ayurveda!

Research tells us that the present form of human beings came about around 50,000 years ago, and that about 12,000 years ago mankind started sedentary agriculture, whereby they domesticated plants and animals, which led to the establishment of civilizations.

When we talk of India, then one has to begin with the Indus Valley Civilization. This was a Bronze Age civilization starting from 3300 BCE and continuing to 1300 BCE. The population of India is very large now,

more than 1.2 billion inhabitants, but this is nothing new. During its mature period five to four thousand years ago, the population of the Indus Valley Civilization was more than 5 million people living in over 1.25 million sq. km. of land area. It was by far the largest of the ancient civilizations. Just for comparison, the land and water area of Japan today is 374,834 sq. km or one third the area occupied by the Indus Valley Civilization.

This civilisation created new techniques in metallurgy (copper, bronze, lead, and tin) domestication of animals, birds, plants, and created cities which even today are noted for their urban planning, baked brick houses, elaborate drainage systems, water supply systems, and clusters of large non-residential buildings.

To be able to provide nutrition for five million people and keep them in good health physically, and keep the society in harmony, not only the supply of food ingredients and water was essential and critical to the sustenance of the civilization a philosophy, a science of health was equally, if not more, essential and important.

We all are aware that when a large number of people live together disease and stress are bound to happen, and the people living there begin to suffer from a myriad of problems which, if not handled or treated properly, could lead to the destruction of

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Indian Food (from page 7)

the way of life of the people. People would become ill and suffer untimely deaths due to disease.

"Prevention is better than cure" is a old saying even in Japan "Chiyō yori yobō." The need for prevention or preventative ways was strongly felt even then, 5,000 years ago. Wise people, thinkers, sages all got together to consider the various factors which were leading to or could lead to problems and diseases in society. They understood life is dear to all, and even more dear is a life of longevity, good health and well-being.

By doing a lot of research, thinking and experimenting they began developing a philosophy or science of how a human being should lead life. This science includes what rules to follow so that both mental and physical health could be main-

tained in a good stable condition allowing a person could live a fruitful, happy and long life in harmony with surrounding people and the natural environment.

This science or philosophy was called "Ayur Veda" the Science of Life; "Ayu" meaning life and "Veda" meaning Science. The thought behind Ayur Veda is "hitam ayu" or healthy life span, which is the prerequisite for "sukham ayu" or happy longevity.

So what has this science of Ayur Veda developed 5,000 years ago got to do with Indian food?! You see, the Indian food we eat

today; the recipes and ingredients we use: grains, vegetables, spices, leafs, herbs, seeds, roots, barks, fruits, flowers, plant resins, salt, fish, poultry, meat, game, oils and fats, milk and milk based products like yogurt etc., alcohol, juices; and the way we cook: frying, stir-frying, boiling, sprouting, fermenting; and the utensils we use; and the concept of hygiene and cleanliness, are all the core of Indian food. In fact most the Indian food dishes, were conceptualized and created 5,000 years ago based on the principles and philosophy of Ayur Veda!

So what did Ayur Veda do, how does it work in relation to Indian food? Like any scientific approach, Ayur Veda is the result

of researching both the "eater" and what was "eaten".

Ayur Veda took a holistic approach, as it was apparent that no two human beings were the same. But was this so? Research under Ayur Veda on humans found

that there were three prominent groups under which most humans could be classified - the Pitta, Vata and Kapha "dosha" or types.

Similarly, food ingredients were studied for their effects on the human body and the differences of these effects on the types of human beings classified above. Sure enough, it was found that the same substance had a positive or supportive action on the body when partaken by one type of person, but did not have such a supportive or positive effect on another type or types.

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Indian Food (from page 8)

Under this process all the ingredients used in cooking food which were available at that time were studied and classified for suitability over a number of parameters, such as digestibility, the effect on the body upon ingestion; heating or cooling of the body, among others.

With this Ayur Veda a concept of nutrition was put forth that differed from calorie counts and the importance of vitamin and mineral supplements of today. Of course these are important, however, in Ayur Veda the key lies in the balance of "rasas" or tastes. Ayur Veda identified six "rasas" or tastes, which had to be present in every meal. These tastes were:

- Sweet - found in onions, cardamom and prawns
- Sour - found in lemons, oranges, tamarind and vinegar
- Salty - found in different types of salts
- Spicy-Hot - found in ginger, garlic, pepper and cloves
- Bitter - found in cumin, fenugreek, mustard seed and bitter gourd
- Astringent - found in pomegranates and egg plants

These "rasas" had to be used in different proportions in different seasons, when some of the ingredients would not be available in their fresh form. This led to techniques of preservation, mostly by drying and pickling in vinegar or brine. Foods thus preserved came to be known as spices. Spices became the supplements to provide the necessary tastes outside their growing season. Almost all spices grow in the tropical and sub-

tropical regions of the world. India has the largest variety of spices and herbs in the world.

So we find that Indian Food is:

1. Based on a highly developed and holistic Philosophy - Ayur Veda, the Science of Life
2. It originated 5,000 years ago
3. It has continuously existed throughout this period without any break
4. Its principles and methods are universal and perennial
5. Based on this philosophy new food ingredients and preparations introduced from other cultures from different parts of the world can be evaluated and assimilated into Indian Food
6. It has had 5,000 years to find different ingredients from all over the world and incorporate it
7. Over these 5,000 years the tastes of Indian food have been tried and tested over and over again to make it palatable to all humans

Maybe I have been able to give you some understanding about Indian Food. Ms. Kaoru Katori will be talking about actual Indian Food preparations in the later part today. Hope that will be of practical use for all.

I would like to convey my sincere gratitude to Her Excellency the Ambassador, the DCM Embassy of India, the Vendata Society of Japan and all guests present for this opportunity to speak on this subject and for patiently hearing me out.

Thank you.

List of Society Events

August 2015

1st (Sat)
Discourse on Bhagavad Gita
Indian Embassy Tokyo
14:00 pm- 16:00pm - 日本語 only

2nd (Sun)
Satsanga in Sapporo
Contact: Tanabe
(080-1180-8121)

2nd, 9th, 23th, 30th (Sun)
Yoga-Asana Session
Zushi Annexe (11:00~12:30)
Contact: Hanari (080-6702-2308)

4th **Cancelled**, 18th (Tue)
Study class at Zushi
10:00 ~ 12:30

August Zushi Retreat
16th (Sun) 10:30 ~ 16:30
Sri Krishna Birth Celebration
Speaker: Swami Medhasananda

22nd (Sat)
Discourse on Upanishads
Indian Embassy Tokyo
14:00 - 15:30 / 日本語 only

23rd (Sun)
Satsanga at Padma Yoga
<http://www.padma-yoga.jp/kenshukai/index.html>

29~30th
Satsanga in Imabari
Contact: Shioji (090-9542-1477)

28th (Fri) **CANCELLED**
Service to Homeless Narayan
Yoko Sato (090-6544-9304)

• A Story to Remember •

The Meaning of Prayer

The Moghul Emperor, Akbar, was one day out hunting in the forest. When it was time for evening prayer he dismounted, spread his mat on the earth and knelt to pray in the manner of devout Muslims everywhere.

Now it was precisely at this time that a peasant woman, perturbed by the disappearance of her husband who had left home that morning and hadn't returned, went rushing by, anxiously searching for her husband. In her pre-occupation she did not notice the kneeling figure of the Emperor and tripped over him, then got up and without a word of apology rushed further into the forest.

Akbar was annoyed at this interruption but, being a good Muslim, he observed the rule of speaking to no one during the namaaz.

Now just about the time that his prayer was over the woman returned, joyful in the company of her husband whom she had found. She was surprised and frightened to see the Emperor and his entourage there. Akbar gave vent to his anger against her and shouted, "Explain your disrespectful behaviour or you will be punished."

The woman suddenly turned fearless, looked into the Emperor's eyes and said, "Your Majesty, I was so absorbed in the thought of my husband that I did not even see you here, not even when, as you say, I stumbled over you. Now while you were at namaaz, you were absorbed in one who is infinitely more precious than my husband. And how is it you noticed.

The Emperor was shamed into silence and later confided to his friends that a peasant woman, who was neither a scholar nor a Mullah, had taught him the meaning of prayer.

from Prayer of the Frog by Fr. Anthony de Mello

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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