



AUGUST 2015 - Volume 13 Number 08

# The Vedanta Kyokai Newsletter

NEWS, UPDATES AND MISCELLANY FROM THE VEDANTA SOCIETY OF JAPAN

## SEPTEMBER Calendar

### Birthdays

**Sri Krishna  
Janmashtami**

Sat, Sep 5

**Swami**

**Advaitanandaji**

Sat, Sep 12

### Kyokai Events

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

#### • Zushi Study Class •

1st & 15th Tuesday  
(10:00~12:30)

#### • Iizuka Satsanga

#### • Fukuoka Satsanga

#### • Osaka Discourse

#### • Kyoto Discourse

#### • Tokyo Yoga Center (see page 9 for details)

#### • Bhagavad Gita •

Indian Embassy Tokyo  
(see page 9 for details)

#### • September •

#### Zushi Retreat

Sunday Sep 13th - 11AM

NOTE 2nd SUNDAY

All are welcome!

#### • Nara Narayan •

Service to Homeless  
Narayan

(see page 9 for details)

#### • Ganga Bookstore •

NAMASTE INDIA

Yogogi Park

(see page 9 for details)

## ✧ Thus Spake ✧

*"My child, this mind is just like a wild elephant. It races with the wind. Therefore one should discriminate all the time. One should work hard for the realization of God."*

- Sri Sarada Devi

*"When meditation is mastered, the mind is unwavering like the flame of a lamp in a windless place."*

- Sri Krishna

## Sapporo Satsanga

Reported by Ms. Miwako Tanabe

(Translated by Ms. Satsuki Yokota)

Swami Medhasanandaji (Maharaj) gave a discourse on the Laws of Karma and Rebirth at the Sapporo L Plaza from 1:30 pm to 5 pm on Sunday, August 2, 2015. The satsanga (holy company) is organised by attendees from past meetings on a voluntary basis. This ninth satsanga was supported by Sapporo City again as last year, and was attended by 31 people. Half of these were those who joined for the first time, or hadn't attended in a few years, and many came from quite some distance, such as Kushiro, Asahikawa, Tomakomai, Niseko and Ishikari. Reference materials for the discourse were prepared and handed out for the first time. With an in-depth and broad theme, Ma-

(con't page 2)

## In this Issue:

- Thus Spake ... page 1
- Monthly Calendar ... page 1
- Swami Visits Sapporo Again in August ... page 1
- Thought of the Month ... page 4
- Society Events for September 2015 ... page 5
- A Story to Remember ... page 6



**Sapporo** (from page 1)

haraj gave an inspiring and easy for everyone to understand discourse limited to 90 minutes.

The satsanga began with chanting Vedic mantras. Maharaj started his discourse with a true story of a young girl who talked in some detail about her previous life, such as where she had lived, her family and occupation. This was in India about 80 years ago and Mahatma Gandhi set up an investigation committee that found all the details of her remembrances proved to be true.

He pointed out that twins may have identical genes, but their personalities are different. These differences are determined by the laws of karma. Karma means thoughts, actions and results. Some people stand out with great musical or other talents even when young. These examples cannot be explained by material reasons such as genes, environment and practice. Also explaining the existence of ghosts is impossible. Every religion says people continue to exist after death. Funeral and 'obon' traditions have been handed down from generation to generation. If death was just

the end to everything, how could such rituals for the dead be followed for such a long period of time? They have been continuing because there is something correct about them at their base.

Maharaj said that we need to think on this deeply, as it is very important for us. We definitely die once we were born. He said he was not

discussing a negative and pessimistic theme but a holistic topic. It is to live well in one part and to die well in the other part. Both parts are important to us.

His points on how to have a good death were to, 1) to die with knowledge; 2) to die with courage; and 3) to die with peace of mind and happiness. Considering death something we cannot avoid or do not want to think of is a negative approach towards it. If we have knowledge on death we can understand that it actually means just losing a body and that 'we' continue to exist. So we will die with courage. God looks after us even after we die, just as he does while we are alive.

In part Maharaj also said, 'To have knowledge on death we need to first understand our personality is composed of the soul and three different bodies: gross, subtle and causal bodies. The gross body refers to the physical body, the subtle body represents life energy, senses, mind, intelligence and memory and the causal body means self. The soul is the inner self or Atman and the source and foundation of the body. Its true nature

(con't page 3)



**Sapporo** (from page 2)

is consciousness and non-material. Although the three bodies have no consciousness and are just material, the body and mind are working by 'borrowing the soul's consciousness'. They are material, hence finite and temporary, whereas the soul or consciousness is eternal, infinite and free.'

'If we understand that, it will be easy to understand death means that the soul leaves its gross body carrying the subtle and causal bodies, and rebirth means entering a new gross body. So death is not sad or scary. People struggle with their old body as it gets diseased and gets older. So they enter a new body where they can enjoy new energy, and experience and learn new things. If we think that way, death is just the end of a chapter of a large book called life. It is also the beginning of a new chapter. If we think this way, we will not be afraid of it and rather may find it pleasant.'

'Then how long are we dead after we die? How is it decided whether we go to heaven or hell? That is the theory of Karma. Karma means work or thought in Sanskrit. When we say karma, it represents both karma itself and its results. There are three kinds of karma: Sanchita or our stock of karma accumulated from all our previous lives; Prarabdha, which is

that part of the stock of Sanchita which makes this life possible; and Kriya-mana, the karma we accrue in this life which is added to our stock of Sanchit karma, making the process an endless cycle.

Karma also causes inclinations. If good karma builds up repeatedly, this leads to good inclinations, whereas bad karma accu-

mulations cause bad inclinations. When we die we carry our subtle and causal bodies, as well as our karma and inclinations. Karma continues to accumulate throughout life as we always want something or other, and work to fulfil our wishes. It seems like it continues in a cycle; desires and the fulfilment of them; our works, the results of works, new desires and on and on. As long as the cycle continues we keep being reborn.'

'What is wrong with that? By discrimination we can see that 90 percent of life is full of suffering and sorrow and only the remaining 10 percent is fun. Most people seek hope from the 10 percent and do not care about the 90 percent of suffering. However, spiritual seekers care about bondage, such as having to eat, drink and sleep and want to avoid it, because our true nature is the soul. The soul is free but becomes a slave to the body once it enters into it, which is a great contradiction.

'Wise people do not want rebirth, but liberation. Liberation means not being reborn. A negative interpretation of liberation would be the avoidance of suffering and sorrow. A positive interpretation of it is bliss, the greatest happiness, the greatest intelligence or Satchitananda.

That is the real nature of the soul, hence

(con't page 4)





**Sapporo** (from page 3)

people want liberation.'

'We cannot achieve liberation just by hoping for it though. Practice is important. We need to practice avoiding or losing secular desires and hoping for liberation instead. We should try to discriminate in losing desires and to focus on Truth such as God, Atman and Brahman. If we continue to practice this and lose all desires before we die, we can attain liberation. Then all suffering and sorrow are gone and we can achieve Satchitananda.'

The discourse was followed by a Q&A session where so many questions were asked; such as whether we can achieve liberation or go to the highest Heaven if we die thinking of God; and whether we can still make it even if we start spiritual practice after we become sick. Maharaj responded smoothly, faithfully and in an easy-to-understand manner.

At the end of the programme, Maharaj explained mantras and we chanted Om and the Gayatri Mantra. After the entire programme ended, 14 people enjoyed dinner with Maharaj at a nearby restaurant all sharing how they felt about the discourse.

The Sapporo discourse has been held once a year thus far, but this year a lecture on the Bhagavad Gita was organised in April. Those who are regular attendees of the discourses have been increasing in number each year. That is probably a sign of a growing interest and awareness that this is a valuable opportunity to learn of Truth. We appreciate Maharaj coming all the way up to Sapporo and

speaking for such a long time without even taking a break. We thank Thakur, Mother and Swamiji from our hearts.

Last, but not least, I would like to share the following comment from one member of the audience, "This satsanga always provides the root of my heart with a volume of water called peace of mind. This water continues to hydrate the root of my heart for years." •

• **Thought of the Month** •

"Start by doing what's necessary; then do what's possible; and suddenly you're doing the impossible."

- St. Francis of Assisi



Vedanta Society of Japan  
September 2015  
**Schedule of Activities**

**1st & 15th (Tuesdays)**

**Study Class at Zushi**

With Swami Medhasananda  
at the Zushi Centre  
Discussion in Japanese  
(10:00~12:30)

**5th (Sat)**

**Satsanga in Iizuka**

Swami Medhasananda visits Iizuka City in  
Fukuoka-ken (prefecture), on Kyushu  
Please Contact: Kobayashi (090-8624-  
1145)

**6th (Sun)**

**Satsanga in Fukuoka**

Swami Medhasananda visits Fukuoka City  
in Fukuoka-ken, on Kyushu  
Please Contact: Sari  
(090-4982-3522)

**6th (Sun) 13th (Sun)**

**20th (Sun) 27th (Sun)**

**Yoga-Asana Class -**

Zushi Centre Annexe (14:00-15:30)  
Please Contact: Mr. Hanari (080-6702-  
2308)

**12th (Sat)**

**Discourse on Bhagavad Gita**

**Embassy of India in Tokyo**

With Swami Medhasananda  
Japanese Language Only (14:00~16:00)  
**Bring photo ID**

**13th (Sun) PLEASE NOTE -**  
**2nd Sunday of September)**

**Monthly Zushi Retreat**

Zushi Centre (10:30-16:30)  
with Swami Medhasananda  
AM Talk / Lunch / PM session

All, with family and friends, are cordially  
invited to attend!

**17th ~ 21st**

**Swami visits Manila Centre**

Ramakrishna Vedanta Society  
of the Philippines

<http://www.vedanta-philippines.org/>

**25th (Fri)**

**Nara Narayan:**

**Service to Homeless Narayan**

Please Contact: Yoko Sato (090-6544-  
9304)

**26th (Sat)**

**Discourses in Osaka**

Discourses on “Bhagavad Gita” and  
“Upanishads” are now given in Osaka and  
Kyoto on a monthly basis.  
For details please see [What's Special](#).  
(Japanese Language Only)

**27th (Sun)**

**Satsanga at Tokyo Yoga Center**

With Swami Medhasananda at Yotsuya  
Gyoen Apartments 9FI No. 906  
1-26-12 Shinjuku, Shinjuku-ku, Tokyo  
03-3354-4701

Link: <http://www.tokyo-yogacenter.com/>

**26th~27th (Sat~Sun)**

**Ganga Bookstore**

Namaste India Festival / Incredible India  
Tokyo's Yoyogi Park

- Bring the family!
- Extensive schedule of events and a wide  
variety both carrying Indian items and  
food offerings.
- Discounts offered at Ganga Bookstore!

<http://www.indofestival.com/index.html>

• Story to Remember •

**Parable of the Weaver Woman**

Sri Ramakrishna : "Listen to a story. Once a woman went to see her weaver friend. The weaver, who had been spinning different kinds of silk thread, was very happy to see her friend and said to her: 'Friend, I can't tell you how happy I am to see you. Let me get you some refreshments.' She left the room.

The woman looked at the threads of different colours and was tempted. She hid a bundle of thread under one arm. The weaver returned presently with the refreshments and began to feed her guest with great enthusiasm. But, looking at the thread, she realized that her friend had taken a bundle.

Hitting upon a plan to get it back, she said: 'Friend, it is so long since I have seen you. This is a day of great joy for me. I feel very much like asking you to dance with me.' The friend said, 'Sister, I am feeling very happy too.' So the two friends began to dance together. When the weaver saw that her friend danced without raising her hands, she said: 'Friend, let us dance with both hands raised. This is a day of great joy.'

But the guest pressed one arm to her side and danced raising only the other. The weaver said: 'How is this, friend? Why should you dance with only one hand raised? Dance with me raising both hands. Look at me. See how I dance with both hands raised.' But the guest still pressed one arm to her side. She danced with the other hand raised and said with a smile, 'This is all I know of dancing.' "

The Sri Ramakrishna continued: "I don't press my arm to my side. Both my hands are free. I am not afraid of anything. I accept both the Nitya and the Lila, both the Absolute and the Relative.

Source: "The Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna"

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](mailto:info@vedanta.jp)