



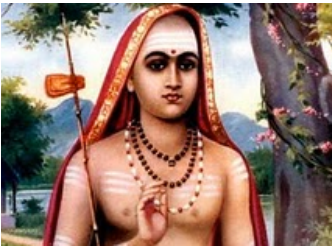
APRIL 2016 - Volume 14 Number 04

# The Vedanta Kyokai Newsletter

NEWS, UPDATES AND MISCELLANY FROM THE VEDANTA SOCIETY OF JAPAN

## APRIL Calendar

### Birthdays



**Sri Shankaracharya**  
Wednesday, May 11

**Sri Buddhadeva**  
Saturday, May 21

### Kyokai Events

#### May Zushi Retreat

Sunday, May 15  
10:30~16:30

Talk by  
Leonardo Alvarez  
"St Francis of Assisi the  
Embodiment of Divine  
Love and Service"

**Service to Homeless  
Nara Naryan**  
Friday, April 22

**Osaka Study Group**  
Discourses on 'Bhagavad  
Gita' and 'Upanishad' in  
Osaka and Kyoto

**For Details and More  
Events See Page 11.**

## ✠ Thus Spake ✠

*"God is everywhere but He is most manifest in man. So serve man as God. That is as good as worshipping God."*

- Sri Ramakrishna

*"Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve."*

- Jesus, the Christ

March Zushi Retreat 2016

Celebrating

### Sri Ramakrishna's 181st Birth Anniversary

On Sunday, March 20, the Vedanta Society of Japan's monthly Zushi Retreat was the venue for a daylong programme in celebration of the 181st birth anniversary of Sri Ramakrishna.

From 05:00 devotees began arriving at the shrine room of the main Ashrama building. At 06:00 the lights came on and Swami Medhasananda (Maharaj) led mangalarati, chanting, reading from the Gita and bhajans. As Sri Ramakrishna's birth celebration enjoys the highest attendance of all Zushi Centre events Maharaj reviewed all the volunteer assignments from the duty list.

(con't page 2)

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## Ramakrishna Celebration (from page 1)

Thereafter the assigned tasks were busily attended to. Teams strung garlands and arranged bouquets in the Main Ashrama's Meeting Room, others coordinated packaged food offerings from provisions also arrayed in the Meeting Room with those prepared in the Kitchen to be offered to Sri Ramakrishna, Sri Sarada Devi and Swami Vivekananda on the altar being set up by a crew in the Annexe Building. There the worship platform was being assembled, tested and draped by others along with placing the rows of folding chairs for attendees. The audio/video team prepared mic stands, junction boxes, cables, cordless microphone batteries, and tested, adjusted and set lighting. Small flower-buds and leaves selected and set aside in trays for offering after worship (pushpanjali).

A conch shell (shankha) was blown to signal the beginning of the worship (puja). Maharaj then took his seat on the platform and began employing the vessels and items of offering with the prescribed mantras of the puja, accompanied by the bellowing of conch shells when he employed a handbell.

The puja ended after a little more than an hour. Maharaj then conducted the Arati with symbolic offerings of the five elements as the congregation sang "Khandana Bhava Bandhana" a song to Sri Ramakrishna by Swami Vivekananda (Swamiji) led by Ms. Shanti Izumida on synthesizer as the conch shells continued to resound:

"Khandana bhava-bhandhana jaga-vandana vandi-tomay;  
Niranjana nara-rupa-dhara nirguna guna-may ||01||

"Mocana agha-dusana jaga-bhusana cid-ghana-kay;  
Jnananana vimala-nayana viksane moha jay ||02||

"Bhasvara bhava-sagara cira-unmada prema-pathar;  
Bhaktarjana yugala-carana tarana bhava-par ||03||

"Jrmbhita yuga-isvara jagad-isvara yoga-sahay;  
Nirodhana samahita-mana nirakhi tava krpay ||04||

"Bhanjana duhkha-ganjana karunaghana karma kathor;  
Pran' arpana jagata-tarana krntana kali-dor ||05||

"Vancana kama-kancana ati-nindita indriya-rag;  
Tyagisvara he nara-vara deha pade anurag ||06||

"Nirbhaya gata-samsaya drdha-niscaya manasavan;  
Niskarana bhakata-sarana tyaji jati-kula-man ||07||

"Sampada tava sripada bhava gopadavari yathay;  
Prem'arpana sama-darsana jaga-jana duhkha jay ||08||

"Namo namo prabhu vakya-mana-ti mano-vacan'aikadhar;  
Jyotira-jyoti ujala hradi-kandara tumi tama bhanjana har;  
Prabhu tumi tama bhanjana har ||09||

"Dhe dhe dhe langa ranga bhanga baje anga sanga mrdanga  
Gayiche chanda bhakata-vrnda arati tomar ||10||

"Khandana bhava-bandhana jagavandana vandi tomay ||11||

"Jai Sri Guru maharaj ji ki jai!"

Translation:

(con't page 3)

## **Ramakrishna Celebration** (from page 2)

We adore Thee, O snapper of worldly bondages!  
O honoured of all mankind!  
Thou art at once the transcendent attributeless being  
and the Divine Person with attributes,  
O sinless one embodied as man!

O redeemer of all sins! O adornment for all the worlds!  
O pure consciousness condensed!  
Thy eyes, sanctified with the collyrium of Jnana,  
Shatter the delusion of ignorance by their very look.

Thou art verily an ocean of luminous and lofty spiritual sentiments,  
Ever lashed into waves of inebriating love.  
Thy holy feet, devotion's reward,  
Form a veritable boat for crossing the ocean of Samsara.

Thou art the Lord of the universe,  
Manifested as the incarnation for the modern age,  
For helping mankind in its spiritual endeavour.  
By Thy grace I clearly see this,  
O Thou whose mind is ever established in transcendent Samadhi!

O shatterer of the mass of mankind's sorrows!  
O mercy conensed!  
O worker tremendous!  
Thy life is an offering of love for the redemption of mankind,  
And a power that shatters the bondage of the dark age of Kali.

Thou art the conqueror of lust and greed,  
And the spurner of all enticements of sensuous attractions.  
Bestow on us unflinching love for Thy Blessed Feet,  
O Lord of all renouncers and the noblest of mankind!

Thy mind is above all fears,  
Devoid of all doubts, and firm in its resolves.  
Innocent of pride of birth and race,  
Thy universal love offers shelter to all devotees who seek it.

O offerings of love!  
O paragon of same-sightedness!  
To those who treasure Thy holy feet in their hearts,  
The ocean of Samsara is but a puddle  
Formed by the hoof-print of a calf!  
Their sorrows take to wings!

Repeated salutations to Thee,  
O Lord who art beyond the reach of speech and mind,  
But yet the common basis of them both.  
Light of all lights, ever resplendent in the cavity of the heart!  
Destroy the darkness of ignorance therein,  
O Lord! Destroy the darkness!

Victory to the Great Guru!

(con't page 4)

## Ramakrishna Celebration (from page 3)

Maharaj then joined the congregation as Ms. Shanti continued with Sarva Mangala Mangalye / Hymn to the Divine Mother:

Om sarvamangala mangalye shive sarvarthasadhike,  
Sharanye tryambake Gauri Narayani namo'stu te.  
Srishti sthiti vinashanam shaktibhute sanatani,  
Gunashraye Gunamaye Narayani namo'stu te.  
Sharanagata dinarta paritrana parayane,  
Sarvasyartihare Devi Narayani namo'stu te.  
Jaya Narayani namo'stu te, Jaya Narayani namo'stu te,  
Jaya Narayani namo'stu te, Jaya Narayani namo'stu te.

Jai Sri Bhagavan Sri Ramakrishna ji ki jai!  
Jai Maha Mai ki jai!  
Jai Swamiji Maharaj ji ki jai  
Jai Ganga Mai ki jai  
Jai Sri Buddha Dev ki jai!

Translation:

*Salutations to Thee O Narayani,  
Who is the auspiciousness in all that is auspicious,  
You are auspiciousness Herself,  
Replete with all auspicious attributes,  
Who fulfills all objectives of devotees,  
(Purusharthas, Dharma, Artha, Kama and Moksha),  
You are the Giver of Refuge,  
With three eyes and a shining face;  
Salutations to Thee O Narayani.*

At the conclusion, volunteers went into the congregation with trays of flowers and leaves to be offered to Sri Ramakrishna (Pushpanjali). This took some effort as there were so many crowded into the new Annexe and up into 2nd floor mezzanine, where a large contingent of young devotees and friends from Kailas Yoga School in Yokohama observed the proceedings from. Once everyone had received their offering, all rose; and standing with our left hand supporting our cupped right hand holding our offerings, Maharaj led the congregation in the pushpanjali mantra to Sri Ramakrishna repeated three times in a call and response. Afterward the food offerings were collected from the altar and sent to the Main Ashrama kitchen and the congregation by twos, threes and fours knelt, offered prayer and placed their offering in the trays at the altar.

As the pushpanjali continued the worship platform was busily transformed into the homa-fire platform with fire retardant matting, ritual implements, and items to be offered to the flames; wood, leaves, fruit, etc. One volunteer is assigned the task of keeping a supply of liquified ghee at the ready so that Maharaj can feed the flames at the required moments; and yoghurt and water to douse the flames at the conclusion.

The flames danced as Maharaj conducted the homa, then calling on the congregation to chant a mantra 108 times as he continued with the ritual additions to the controlled blaze. Despite the March chill, windows and doors were opened ajar as a pungent haze rose past the mezzanine and began to accumulate in the room. Maharaj then stood offering more ghee, fruits and mantras to the flame. Sitting again he made few more offerings and the yoghurt preparation to douse the fire with great bursts of flame and smoke. Later with more prescribed prayers, mudras and offerings completed, Maharaj prepared the vibhuti (ash) to be placed on everyone's forehead.

(con't page 5)

## Ramakrishna Celebration (from page 4)

Leaving the platform, Maharaj asked all to rise and he walked into the crowd sprinkling all with sacred Ganges water and then to come forward to receive their vibhuti. All were encouraged to stay for lunch prasad in the Main Ashrama before returning to the Annexe for the Afternoon Session. The platform was then again refitted to accomodate talks, mic stands were made ready and all the chairs were put up as many from the yoga group took lunch in the Annexe as the Ashrama's eating areas were filled to capacity.

Lunch prasad completed, the tables were folded and put away and chairs were set up again in the Annexe. Shortly after 14:30 Swami Medhasananda (Maharaj) welcomed all to the Afternoon Programme, highlighting the events of the Morning Programme, before leading all with a Vedic Peace Prayer:

Om saha nāvavatu  
saha naubhunaktu  
saha vīryaṃ karavāvahai  
tejasvi nāvadhītam  
astumā vidviṣāvahai  
Om śāntiḥ śāntiḥ śāntiḥ

*Om! May He protect us both together; may He nourish us both together;  
May we work conjointly with great energy,  
May our study be vigorous and effective;  
May we not mutually dispute (or may we not hate any).  
Aum! Let there be peace in me!  
Let there be peace in my environment!  
Let there be peace in the forces that act on me!  
Om, peace, peace, peace!*

Om śaṃ no mitraḥ śaṃ varuṇaḥ  
śaṃ no bhavatvaryamā  
śaṃ na indro brihaspatiḥ  
śaṃ no viṣṇururukramaḥ  
namo brahmaṇe  
namaste vāyo  
tvameva pratyakṣaṃ bhrahmāsi  
tvāmeva pratyakṣaṃ brahma vadiṣyāmi  
ṛtaṃ vadiṣyāmi  
satyaṃ vadiṣyāmi  
tanmā mavatu  
tadvaktā ramavatu  
avatu mām  
avatu vaktāram  
Om śāntiḥ śāntiḥ śāntiḥ

*Om! May Mitra be blissful to us. May Varuna be blissful to us.  
May Aryaman be blissful to us.  
May Indra and Brihaspati be blissful to us.  
May Vishnu, of long strides, be blissful to us.  
Salutation to Brahman.  
Salutation to you, O Vayu.  
You, indeed, are the immediate Brahman. You alone I shall call the direct Brahman.  
I shall call you righteousness. I shall call you truth.  
May He protect me.*

(con't page 6)

## Ramakrishna Celebration (from page 5)

*May He protect the reciter.  
Om, peace, peace, peace!*

Om pūrṇamadah pūrṇamidam pūrṇāt pūrṇamudacyate  
pūrṇasya pūrṇamādāya pūrṇamevāvaśiṣyate  
om śāntiḥ śāntiḥ śāntiḥ

*Om! That is infinite (Brahman),  
and this (universe) is infinite.  
The infinite proceeds from the infinite.  
(Then) taking the infinitude of the infinite (universe),  
It remains as the infinite (Brahman) alone.  
Om! Peace! Peace! Peace!*

There followed a reading from Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna in Japanese. Maharaj then commented that given the capacity of the gathering, it was global in nature with an audience of persons from North America, South America, Europe and, of course, Asia. He noted that from the islands of Japan, too, there were some in attendance from as far as Sapporo, on Hokkaido and Kumamoto, on Kyushu, as well as those from Osaka, also on Honshu. He noted that in this way Sri Ramakrishna's message of peace and harmony of religions has been well received the world over.

Maharaj then introduced Dr. Jiban Ranjan Majumder, Economic Minister, Embassy of Bangladesh, Japan, and asked him to say a few words.

"Respected Maharaji, honourable devotees, ladies and gentlemen, it is such an honour to be standing here on such an auspicious and devoted occasion. At the same time, I understand that I am but a small pebble that has been requested by Maharaj to share some words with you."

"I am not a very strongly religious man, but part of me, from what I learned from my parents and family and the people of my community, is that I do not know when my soul was born though I actually do celebrate my birthday. According to religion we are part of the soul of God, the Paramatman. Today we are celebrating the birth anniversary of Sri Ramakrishna and his belief in the link between humankind and all other creatures with God. If this is so, then I would like to consider the birthday of Sri Ramakrishna as my birthday as well, giving me a link to someone so connected to God. I think it is certainly applicable to everyone here."

"Based on this, I always find courage in my personal life, social life and professional life and everywhere as I move forward, that I am not alone. I am strongly connected to some positive force that will always help me, always direct me, to reach my goal of desire of purpose. So on this holy day let us pray to God to bless us with all his kindness that we may achieve whatever we deem in our mind with all honesty and sincerity."

"Thank you so much for your precious time."

Maharaj thanked the Minister and continued with a talk on the question "Is Ramakrishna Dead?" (In this issue)

Maharaj brought his talk to a close and called for the start of Culture programme. First was a rendition of "Medetaki Kono Hi Ni" from Ms. Shanti's 'Kokoro Ni Saku Hana' CD with Shanti leading the entire congregation. This was followed by a group including devotees and a large contingent from the Kailas Yoga School of Yokohama performing original devotional songs. Mr. Hirsch then sang three of his compositions. This was followed by artists from Bangladesh now living in Japan performing several standard devotional songs, and at Maharaj's request some popular folk songs from Bangladesh that were very well received.

The programme was followed by tea and snacks served in the Main Ashrama. The vesper service started around 6PM, after which there was some time for meditation. This brought the daylong celebration of Sri Ramakrishna's Birthday to an end.

### • Thought of the Month •

"I think worship is a lifestyle,  
first of all."

- Michael W. Smith

**Is Ramakrishna Dead?**

Afternoon Session talk by Swami Medhasananda

"The theme of today's discourse is 'Is Ramakrishna Dead?'

"Is He just a picture as you see here decorated on the altar? People are born, live their lives and die, never to return again. As you know there are those that call on departed souls and the departed return, but not as a living being, just as a ... ghost, we may say. But is Sri Ramakrishna such a departed soul.

"Is Sri Ramakrishna dead or is He still a living phenomenon? Can He still guide us? I will continue by narrating some suggestive incidents by which you can get a conclusive answer to this question. For those of you who have read the Bible, you know about the resurrection of Jesus Christ. He was crucified and later His body is said to have risen from death. This is what is known as the resurrection and is an important part of the story of Jesus' life. He thereafter appeared before His devotees on several occasions to give them advice.

"Sri Ramakrishna left His body on August 16, 1886 at the Cossipore Garden House near Calcutta. When He passed away, His consort, Holy Mother Sri Sarada Devi, began crying piteously. Her first utterance was, 'Oh, Mother Kali, why have you left me?' It is remarkable she didn't say, 'Oh, my husband,' she said, 'Oh, Mother Kali.' It shows how She looked upon Sri Ramakrishna. After a short while, He appeared and consoled Her saying, 'Why are you crying? Where have I gone? I have just passed from one room to another room. You do not see my physical body at all times, but I still exist.'

"This was the first occasion for such an appearance, but there were many other times when Sri Ramakrishna appeared before Holy Mother. But as we have so little time, I cannot retell all those stories.

"Before going to West, Swami Vivekananda (Swamiji) was still travelling to many parts of India as a wandering monk. At one time he stayed in South India at a devotee's house. He had already heard about the first Parliament of Religions to be held in Chicago in 1893, but he was not very sure whether he should attend it or not. Some of his admirers in South India encouraged him to go, as he was a most appropriate person to represent Hinduism there. He, however, was not convinced he should attend and rather reluctant to go as he had no idea about America nor what he would do there.

"Then one night that devotee heard the sounds of an argument emanating from the room where Swamiji was staying. The devotee was very surprised because he knew that Swamiji was certainly alone in the room, yet he distinctly heard two people arguing! He wondered how this was possible. The next day the devotee asked Swamiji about the matter, saying that he heard the arguing, but he was sure Swamiji had been alone and he was very curious to know who the other party to the argument was.

"At first Swamiji wanted to avoid answering, but the devotee was insistent. Eventually Swamiji said, 'My Master appeared before me and was persuading me that I must attend the Parliament of Religions.' He said that even though he refused, the Master insisted again and again that he attend. This was the overheard argument. Swamiji said further that the Master had told him He had arranged the Parliament of Religions specifically for Swamiji's appearance to deliver His message. 'So you must attend,' the Master said.

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**Is Ramakrishna Dead?** (from page 7)



“Well, one can believe this or not, I am just narrating the story as it has been told. But we know that Swamiji became very famous, very illustrious, just giving one talk on the ‘Harmony of Religions’ at that first Parliament of Religions. This was collaborated by a survey in the UK’s ‘Economist’ magazine stating that Swamiji’s first address at the Parliament of Religions had been adjudged the best speech delivered ever in the entire world.

“As you know, Swamiji was requested and began giving talks, not only about religion, but also about India. Christian missionaries noticed this negatively impacted their fundraising efforts from their American devotees to preach Christianity in India. Such missionaries wanted to bring Indians, ‘from darkness to light!’ However, once Americans saw and heard Swamiji, they felt that if India produced such personalities as Swami Vivekananda, there was no need for donations to bring Indians ‘from darkness to light.’ Though there were some exceptions who showed profound respect and love for Swamiji, many missionaries were not pleased with his effect on their projects. Some missionaries not only publicly criticised and abused Swamiji, there were even some who wished him dead and plotted to poison his coffee. Swamiji, however, had a premonition about the coffee and Sri Ramakrishna also reappeared warning him not to drink that coffee.

“There are so many such examples showing how Sri Ramakrishna was always with Swamiji, directing him; protecting him; and giving him comfort.

“Once Swami Brahmanandaji, whom Sri Ramakrishna referred to as his spiritual son, was compiling the teachings of the Master, which were later translated and published as ‘The Words of the Master.’ Being compiled by Brahmanandaji, it was a small but important work, the value of which is that it contains the teachings of the Master. Anyway, while he was collecting these teachings, he included one message which Sri Ramakrishna had not uttered. Being the embodiment of truth, Ramakrishna appeared before Brahmanandaji and said, ‘My son, those are not my words, they are someone else’s words.’

“So far I have given you just three examples from the many testimonies of Holy Mother, Swami Vivekanandaji and Swami Brahmanandaji. What about the second generation of monks? Are there any such examples of Sri Ramakrishna’s appearance to members of the second generation of monks? Let us now refer to the reminiscences of a young disciple of Swami Brahmanandaji who was still a novice, a brahmachari, at that time. Though this brahmachari had some faith and love, he still harboured many doubts. At this time Sri Ramakrishna had passed away some years before; Swamiji had established Belur Math and had also passed away; and at that time Brahmanandaji was the president of the Ramakrishna Math and Ramakrishna Mission. There was a rule at Belur Monastery, the Headquarters of the Ramakrishna Order, that every morning the monks were to go to the upstairs temple for meditation and prayer and this brahmachari, too, would join the other monks there.



Swami Medhasananda  
Ms. Yokota (Interpreter)

(oon’t page 9)



## Is Ramakrishna Dead? (from page 8)

“He had also heard from senior monks and other direct disciples of the Master their conviction that though Sri Ramakrishna had physically passed away, he was still present among them, still alive so to speak. However, the brahmachari was not convinced of this. Instead, he rationalised that while these monks and devotees were surely good people, at the same time they were but victims of their own imaginings. When this thought arose, he said to himself that if he got some proof of Sri Ramakrishna’s continued presense, then he would believe it, but he required direct proof.

“So one morning while everyone was meditating and he was having these thoughts, the idea arose that if he would hear the jingling of Sri Krishna’s anklet bells at that moment, he would believe the Master was present. He strongly concentrated on this and, indeed, heard the sound of anklet bells. Immediately he reasoned he had merely prompted his own imagination.

“On another day he reasoned that if there were some proof perceived not just by himself but by others as well, he would then be convinced. The next morning in meditation he had the idea that if a fisherwoman were to appear at the temple so early in the morning and shout the name of a particular fish for sale, then he would believe Sri Ramakrishna was still amongst them. Though this proof was conditioned upon great improbabilities, at that very moment a fisherwoman did arrive and shout the name of a particular fish she had for sale. Naturally, he witnessed that this disturbed all the monks present, as the monk in charge of food scolded the woman for disturbing their meditations.

“At this the novice could no longer control himself and started crying loudly as he went down the stairs. He then saw Brahmanandaji at the foot of the stairs and approached to take the dust from his feet, when he received a severe scolding from his guru. ‘Enough of tests!’ shouted Brahmanandaji. ‘No more! You must promise not to test Sri Ramakrishna anymore!’ Crying, the novice said, ‘Maharaj (Brahmanandaji), I will never do it again.’

“I submit these as proofs that Sri Ramakrishna is not dead and gone, not just a photograph; He is still a living phenomenon. He is always ready to appear before us; to guide us on our way; to help us in our troubles, because afterall, He was not just an ordinary person, but an incarnation of God, as were Sri Krishna, Buddha and Jesus.” •

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### Vedanta Society of Japan

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### Sub: KUMAMOTO EARTHQUAKES

Monday, April 18, 2016

Dear All,

As you are certainly aware, a 7.3 magnitude earthquake and several severe aftershocks struck the island of Kyushu Saturday night on April 16, devastating areas in and around Kumamoto and neighbouring Oita Prefectures. To date some 42 people have perished and more remain missing, however, the number of evacuees, which had hit 196,000 at the peak Sunday, April 17, fell to about 110,000, as many people were able to return to their homes later in the day. For many others, the widespread damage to houses, roads and bridges have left them languishing in the limited available shelter space or are in

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## **Kumamoto Earthquakes** (from page 9)

sleeping their cars. Some 250,000 households were without water services on Sunday as well.

The Ramakrishna Mission has a long tradition of providing extensive relief to the victims of natural disasters, and as the Japan branch of the Mission, we, the monk and devotees of the Vedanta Society of Japan, are wondering if we can be of some service to the victims during this moment of national crisis. We have been considering various options, including mobilising some funds collected from our devotees, friends and other concerned people, not only to express their sympathies and prayers for the victims, but to directly help the afflicted.

As such, may we request that you make a donation to our relief fund, and if possible, to take the initiative to mobilize a fund drive and send whatever is collected to the Japan Branch of the Mission through a bank transfer? We, in turn, intend to turn over all collected monies to local governments and city offices to be used as they prioritize and/or purchase relief materials for distribution among victims. Of course we will keep proper records of these disbursements. We include the following banking information for your information:

### **Bank Information of Vedanta Society of Japan For Donors Living in Japan:**

Our Bank:	Mizuho Bank
Address:	Kamakura Branch Number 760
Account name:	Nihon Vedanta Kyokai
Account number:	1114571 (futsu/ordinary)

### **Bank Information To Donors Living Outside Japan:**

Our Bank:	Mizuho Bank, Ltd.
Address:	Kamakura Branch Number 760
Swift Code:	mhbkpj
Account name:	Shuukyohoujin Nihon Vedanta Kyokai
Account number:	1114571

While the Vedanta Society of Japan enjoys its largest membership base from the Tokyo and Yokohama metropolitan areas on Honshu Island, our Society enjoys the second largest number of devotees, members, friends and well-wishers on Kyushu Island and in Kumamoto and surrounding areas in particular. We believe that any funds donated by you, regardless of amount, will be greatly appreciated by the people there as a kind and sympathetic gesture from you and your friends.

Please note that if you send donation as requested please inform us the amount of donation and the name of your bank and the date of the bank transfer through e-mail; all correspondence regarding the donation should be sent to the following e-mail address only: <jprelief@gmail.com>

With loving namaskar and prayer,  
Yours in the Lord,

Swami Medhasananda

## Vedanta Society Schedule of Events

### May 2016

**1st, 8th, 15th, 22nd, 29th (Sun)**

**Yoga-Asana Class**

At the Annexe (from 14:00-15:30)

Please Contact: Hanari 080-6702-2308 (羽成淳)

**7th (Sat) Discourse on Bhagavad Gita**

At the Embassy of India in Tokyo

/ in Japanese only / from 14:00- 16:30

NOTE: Bring photo ID

**15th (Sun)**

**April Zushi Retreat**

Kyokai (from 10:30~16:30 )

(Live Streaming 11:00 JST)

Speaker: Swami Medhasananda

**27th (Fri)**

**Nara Narayan: Service to the Homeless**

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

**28th (Sat)**

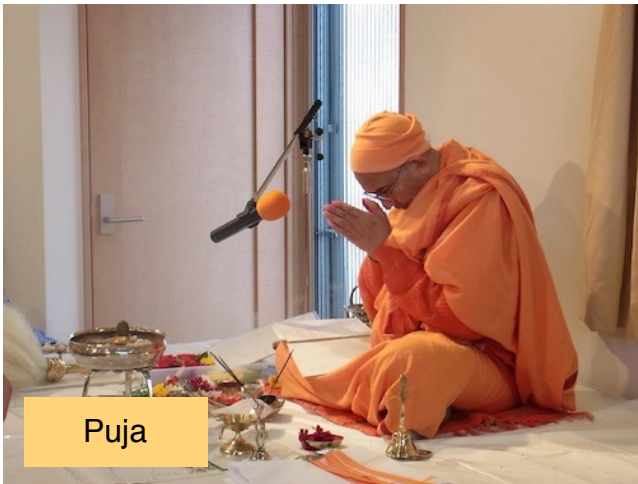
**Osaka Study Group**

Discourses on "Bhagavad Gita" and "Upanishad"  
are given in Osaka and Kyoto on a monthly basis  
Contact: <<http://www.yogatherapy.jp/omiya2016>>

### Photos from Sri Ramakrishna Birth Celebration March 2016







Puja



Arati



Pushpanjali



Homa



Homa



Vibhuti





Prasad



Minister Majumder



## • A Story to Remember •

### Crossing the Water

A farmer's daughter duty was to carry fresh milk to customers in various villages had, one of whom was a priest. To reach his house, the milkmaid had to cross a good-sized stream. People crossed it by a sort of ferry raft, for a small fee.

One day the priest, who performed worship daily with the offering to God of fresh milk, finding it arrived very late, scolded the poor woman. "What can I do?" she said, "I start out early from my house, but I have to wait a long time for the boatman to come."

Then the priest said (pretending to be serious), "What! People have even walked across the ocean by repeating the name of God, and you can't cross this little river?"

This milkmaid took him very seriously. From then on she brought the priest's milk punctually every morning. He became curious about it and asked her how it was that she was never late anymore.

"I cross the river repeating the name of the Lord," she replied, "just as you told me to do, without waiting for the ferry."

The priest didn't believe her, and asked, "Can you show me how you cross the river on foot?" So they went together to the water and the milkmaid began to walk over it. Looking back, the woman saw that the priest had started to follow her and was floundering at the river's shore.

"Sir!" she cried, "You are uttering the name of God, yet all the while you are holding up your clothes to keep them from getting wet. That is not trusting in God!"

-Sri Ramakrishna

Issued by: **The Vedanta Society of Japan** (Nippon Vedanta Kyokai)  
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