



DECEMBER 2016 - Volume 14 Number 12

# The Vedanta Kyokai Newsletter

*Happy New Year!*

NEWS, UPDATES AND MISCELLANY FROM THE VEDANTA SOCIETY OF JAPAN

## JANUARY Calendar 2017

### Birthdays

**Swami Saradananda**  
Wednesday, January 4

**Swami Turiyananda**  
Wednesday, January 11

**Sri Sri Swamiji**  
Thursday, January 19

**Swami Brahmananda**  
Sunday, January 29

**Swami  
Trigunatitananda**  
Tuesday, January 31

### Kyokai Events

1st (Sun)  
**Annual  
New Year Kalpataru**  
From 11:30AM  
Zushi Centre

15th (Sun)  
**Sri Sri Sarada Devi  
Birth Celebration**  
06:30~7:30  
Mangala Arati  
Zushi Annexe  
10:30-Puja, Pushpanjali  
12:30-Prasad  
14:45-Reading, Talk,  
Music programme  
16:30-Tea

See page 7 for more  
event information

## ✧ Thus Spake ✧

“After so much austerity, I have understood this as the real truth; God is present in every Jiva, there is no other God besides that. Who serves Jiva serves God indeed.”

- Swami Vivekananda

“I shall explain through half a Sloka (couplet) what has been described by innumerable scriptures and that is: ‘Brahman alone is true and the world is false; the Jiva is Brahman only and not different from it.’ ”

- Sri Sankara

## November Zushi Retreat 2016

### “The Practice of Vedanta”

A talk by Swami Medhasananda

There are various publications on Vedanta from many scholars and philosophers of Vedantic available in the market. In recent times, Vedanta books on Jnana have sold pretty well from authors like Ramana Maharshi, Krishnamurti, Nisargadatta Maharaj and, of course, Swami Vivekananda. Even with all these and more theoretical studies, what is really difficult is practice of this philosophy, without which we cannot make any real progress along the path to truth.

(con't page 2)

## In this Issue:

- |                               |            |                         |             |
|-------------------------------|------------|-------------------------|-------------|
| • Thus Spake                  | ... page 1 | • Thought of the Month  | ... page 4  |
| • Monthly Calendar            | ... page 1 | • Full January Schedule | ... page 7  |
| • November Zushi Retreat 2016 |            | • Tokyo Yoga Center     | ... page 8  |
| A talk by Swami Medhasananda  |            | • Yamagata Satsanga     | ... page 9  |
| “The Practice of Vedanta”     | ... page 1 | • Sendai Satsanga       | ... page 10 |
|                               |            | • A Story to Remember   | ... page 12 |

## **Practice of Vedanta** (from page 1)

### **What is Vedanta?**

First of all we should consider: What is Vedanta? The word Vedanta has many meanings, the most important being the essence of the Vedas, which essentially deals with Truth, which has two aspects; relative truth and absolute truth. Relative truth is related to the phenomenal world, while the absolute truth deals with the eternal and the infinite. Vedanta discusses the absolute truth in three areas, which are but different aspects of the one and the same entity. These are Brahman, Jagat and Jiva.

### **Brahman, Jagat & Jiva**

Brahman is the absolute, infinite and eternal existence. Brahman is not only absolute, eternal, infinite truth, Brahman is also absolute consciousness, absolute knowledge and absolute bliss, or Sat Chit Ananda.

Jagat in Sanskrit means the universe and everything therein. Brahman creates this universe made of five elements which are earth, water, fire, wind or air and aether or space. These elements form a structure like a spiderweb, and as the spider weaves a web from material inside itself, Brahman projects the universe from Itself. Therefore there is nothing in this universe that is not Brahman. Another example is the ocean and waves. Waves emerge from the ocean and then return to the sea. The waves and the sea are essentially made of the same substance.

Within this universe, or Jagat, there are living entities, the highest of which we know of are humans. Jiva is the Atman which is enshrined in a body.

### **Two Aspects of Jiva**

Next is the Jiva, an embodied soul. Jiva has two aspects. One aspect is the body ; the other aspect is the soul. Further , there are three kinds of body–physical, subtle and causal. The physical or gross body consists of blood, bones, sinew, muscle, etc. and

different organs. Next is the subtle body consisting of life energy and the five senses of perception and five senses of action, mind, intelligence and memory. Mind thinks, imagines, and feels. Intelligence decides, analyses, learns and creates. Memory consists of all past impressions. Causal body is 'ego' which is 'I-ness' and 'My-ness.'

The physical body dies or ends its being at the moment of death. The subtle body and causal body also cease to exist when the Atman completely disidentifies itself from the former and realises its true nature; infinite and eternal. What do the gross body, the subtle body and the causal body have in common? All these are material, relative, non-eternal and finite.

How is the soul different from them? The soul is pure consciousness, absolute, eternal and infinite. Through the consciousness of the soul, the causal body, subtle body and physical body exist and function. The soul is the substratum of our individual existence and personality.

### **The Purpose of Vedanta**

So what is the purpose of Vedanta? Pure Consciousness at the personal or micro level is called Atman; and that same consciousness at the highest, or macro level, is called Brahman. At the personal level, the purpose of Vedanta is to understand the nature of our Atman. At the highest level, the purpose of Vedanta is to understand the nature of Brahman. But are Atman and Brahman different entities? No. The student of Vedanta must understand both Atman and Brahman are the same, in the sense that their real nature is the same; that is Existence, Knowledge and Bliss Absolute. He can look upon the Highest either as Atman or as Brahman, but in both we can, and must, realise its real nature is Sat-Chit-Ananda, absolute existence, absolute knowledge and absolute bliss. The student must feel; I am infinite; I am absolute; I am absolute knowledge; I am absolute bliss.

The result of this understanding of Vedanta is that all our sufferings and sorrows

(con't page 3)

## **Practice of Vedanta** (from page 1)

disappear; we attain a state of eternal happiness, eternal peace and absolute knowledge. Thus, the only basic purpose of life is fulfilled.

### **Why Am I Alive?**

Why am I living? Vedanta says clearly that the purpose of life is to understand our true nature—not to just earn money or have a family. Vedanta advises ‘Atmanam vidhi,’ or ‘Know thyself.’ Today with radio, TV and the Internet we can learn a lot about so many peoples and places and so many things which fill our head. However, according to Vedanta, without knowledge of my Self, the knowledge of all else in life becomes zero. Without a number first at the left of many zeros, it all only equals zero. If there is a number one to the left, then everything to the right is meaningful. That number one, that first number, is the knowledge of the Self.

Moreover, if one understands one's true nature, he can understand the true nature of everyone else, as the same entity pervades everyone. According to the Upanishads, ‘If you know thoroughly a lump of gold, you can understand everything made of gold.’ The same applies to ourselves. If we truly understand our own nature, we become truly aware of the nature of everything, of everyone and of everything else. Since Brahman is ubiquitous, understanding my true nature makes me understand the true nature of everything, because there is no other existence besides one Existence, that is Brahman.

So the Upanishads tell us that our inquiry must begin with ourselves, or as the old English saying goes, ‘Charity begins at home.’ So our inquiry, our study, should start with the study of ourselves. But we do just the opposite. We study other people; we study many other things; but it is a pity we do not study ourselves. What can be a greater paradox than this?

### **Maya or Mystic Illusion**

The question comes then, ‘Why do we have to inquire about our real nature?’ If pure

consciousness, bliss and knowledge are our true nature, why can't we understand it? Why can't we look upon ourselves as Atman or Brahman? What prevents us from doing so, or rather, why do we do the contrary? We look upon ourselves as merely the body, or at best, the body/mind complex and we get attached to it and suffer.

The spell of Maya, or the mystic illusion, is responsible for this plight. Under the spell of Maya, we cannot perceive that we are not the body, but the soul. How does Maya operate? First of all it hides truth from us. There is a well-known and easy to understand example of the snake and the rope. In this example there is something coiled on the ground in the darkness. It appears to be a snake, because under the influence of darkness the true identity of the rope is hidden. Because of the influence of Maya, or illusion, the true nature of the rope is hidden from us. Thus, on one hand, Maya hides truth, and on the other, Maya also makes us believe something that does not exist. Thereby Maya hides or covers our true nature; that we are Atman—Pure Consciousness, and again makes us believe we are the body. The illusion with which Maya covers our true nature consists of name and form. The whole phenomenal world can be reduced to name and form which covers the reality behind it, for example the name and form of a cup, dish, table, man, woman, animal, tree, stone, etc. The apparent differences between all these things are just name and form, though there is an underlying unity of all these on the plane of consciousness.

If by some magic, name and form of a human were to be removed, then the name ‘human’ would be replaced with ‘flesh.’ If we analyse further, ‘flesh,’ too, is but a name of a substance and it also has a particular form. Remove the name of particles of flesh, then molecules come. Remove these and atoms arise. Remove the names of atoms and we have electrons, protons and neutrons. Through the process of elimination remove these names and forms to ever finer names and forms until we are left with one thing, the substratum of it, which is Brahman, or Pure Consciousness.

(con't page 4)

## Practice of Vedanta (from page 3)

### Brahman is All

If everyone of us is Brahman, why do we have lots of negative emotions with our likes and dislikes, our hatreds, angers towards others. Why do we have worries, sufferings and sorrows? Because we see only names and forms of persons and things, which are external and not its substratum, which is Sat-Chit-Ananda. We can realise this substratum of our being through the process of elimination; neti, neti, (not this, not this). We are not body, nor senses, nor mind, nor intelligence, nor ego. We are Atman—Pure Consciousness.

We gave the example of ornaments made from gold—earrings, bracelets, nose-rings, necklaces. In the same way, everyone of us has a different name or shape, but we are all made of gold, that is consciousness. Melt it down and it returns to the same substance, gold. At the beginning of a cycle the universe and jiva appear from Brahman, and they return to Brahman at the end of a cycle. From One the many manifest, exist for some time, and then, finally, merge with that One.

To realise our Brahman or Pure Atman nature we have to undertake some practices, preceded by some basic preparations. Such preparations should start with listening to Vedantic Truth. For example, hearing 'I am Atman Brahman,' from a qualified teacher so that I can focus on it. But even after hearing such higher spiritual truths, why can't we focus on it? A similar example can be drawn from the practice of meditation discussed in the Raja Yoga.

### Real Meditation

Real meditation is when I am absorbed in meditation. I do not think of anything else for a moment! I do not hear the various vendors or campaigning politicians passing by. I do not notice whether the room is too hot or too cold, nor do I feel a mosquito bite. I do not notice all these if I have deep meditation. But why don't we have such deep meditation? Because there is no

preparation for meditation. According to Patanjali's Yoga Sutras, for the practice of meditation one should practice Yama as a preparatory discipline. Yama is right living with others, which is Ahimsa - nonviolence; Satya - truthfulness; Asteya - non-stealing; Brahmacharya - continence; Aparigraha - non-possessiveness; Niyama - right inner thoughts; Saucha - purity; Santosha - contentment; Tapas - self-discipline; Swadhyay - self-study; and Isvara pranidhana - surrender to God. After practicing these disciplines followed by the practices of Asana and Pranayama, etc., finally one should practice Dhyana, or meditation. These preliminary preparations will lead to a deep meditation.

Without the practice of Yamas and Niyamas we cannot just leap into meditation. Similarly without some preparation in advance, we cannot successfully do Manana, or focus on 'I am Atman.' Some think it is an easy path to realisation, as just by thinking on 'I am Atman' I can experience samadhi, which is, however, just a daydream. In most cases of such practitioners, their practice of Vedanta is extremely superficial and they often suffer from inner contradictions. That is to say, though they talk of Atman-consciousness, they are actually steeped in body-consciousness which prevents them from progressing in spiritual life. We are carrying very deep samskara (psychological imprints) inside us and that say, 'I am the body.'

As long as the idea of body consciousness remains strong in us, it is impossible to do the Vedantic practice of 'I am consciousness.' Hence by undergoing a variety of practices one needs to at the beginning, we reduce the intensity of one's body consciousness to some extent. Such  
(con't page 5)

### • Thought of the Month •

"Our true reality is in our identity and unity with all life."

- Joseph Campbell



## Practice of Vedanta (from page 4)

practice consists of control of the mind - Sharma, control of the body and control of the senses - Dama, or in other words, purity of body, senses and mind. Also discriminate between the real and the unreal, temporary and eternal.

## Why So Many Practices?

The Samskara of body-consciousness is deeply ingrained in us, which is the greatest obstacle to the Vedantic realisation of Atman-consciousness. It is evident that our body-consciousness is very strong. We think we are body from birth to death and from the time we wake in the morning until we sleep at night. How much we attend to the body and take care of it! How much do we spoil ourselves in pampering the body which which must fall sooner or later.

There is a difference between taking proper care of the body and pampering the body. It is no doubt important to look after the body. Keeping the body clean and healthy is important. But it does not mean we should focus all our attention on the body and spend lots of our time, energy and money on taking care of the body, as there are so many other important things in the world which need our greater attention. Moreover, excessive attention to the body enormously increases our body-consciousness, which is already strong, thus making the practice of Vedanta impossible.

So our greatest challenge to the practice of Vedanta is how to reduce the level of body-consciousness. This we can do, first by stopping to pamper the body, remembering the temporariness of the body. This should be followed by other practices. According to the Vedanta treatise these are as follows:

Sama (control of mind); Dama (control of senses); Titiksha (austerity forbearance); Uparati (withdrawal of the senses which even after control, want to run after the senses); Sraddha (faith in and respect for scripture and spiritual teacher); Samadhana (single-pointedness of mind). In addition, continuous thinking of higher thoughts;



study of the scriptures; discriminating between the real and the unreal, eternal and temporary; renunciation of sensual enjoyments, either of this world or the other world; and finally, a strong desire for liberation from the bondage of 'Maya.' This will qualify an aspirant to practice Vedanta.

## Sravana

The serious and intense practice of Vedanta starts with Sravana, or hearing about the Truth. Although the Truth is written in scripture, sravana means to hear it from the Guru, a qualified spiritual teacher. Examples of such Truth are 'Tat Twam Asi' and 'Aham Brahman asmi.' Tat Twam Asi means 'Thou Art That.' What is 'That'? It is Brahman—Existence, Knowledge and Bliss. 'Aham Brahma asmi' means I am Brahman. If we are prepared intellectually, morally and spiritually beforehand, the moment we hear these words of the highest Truth, it will leave a tremendous impression on the mind, otherwise they will appear as mere words. If the camera lens is clean and transparent, the pictures of the object will be wonderfully clean. If the lens of the camera itself is dirty, how can we get a clear picture. So cleaning the lens of mind is important, because we are to undertake the actual practice of Vedanta.

## Manana

Next is manana. After hearing of the Truth, constantly think about it and continuously focus on it; 'I am Brahman, I am Brahman, I am Brahman.' Cover every action with the thought of Brahman; we must fill the brain with the thought of Brahman. We may practice it while dining. As you may know, in

con't page 6)

## **Practice of Vedanta** (from page 4)

our Societies we chant the following verse from the Bhagavad Gita:

Om Brahmarpanam Brahman havir  
Brahmagnau Brahmana hutam  
Brahmaiva tena gantavyam  
Brahma karma samadhina

Borrowing from the image of the rite of the fire sacrifice, let us think while we dine: Everything is Brahman; the plates, the chopsticks, the food. The fire in my stomach is also Brahman, the digestion is also Brahman. The diner is Brahman and the effect of the whole process of dining goes to Brahman. Such practice makes us connected to Brahman during every detail of what we do every day. We can do the same practice regarding our computer work. The computer, the mouse, the hard copy, is Brahman, the desk is Brahman, the computer work itself is Brahman. The operator of the computer is also Brahman. The result of such work goes to Brahman. This is the practice of the 'Manana' of Vedanta. This is how we can reflect day and night on the Vedantic Truth, that is Brahman.

## **Nididhyasana**

Nididhyasana is the final step of practice after hearing and reflecting on the Truth. In Nididhyasana there is no identification of Brahman with each object separately, but focus on the Brahman aspect of everything which one encounters. This practice leads to Samadhi, or total absorption of the mind in the inherent Truth of seemingly different objects. This absorption is so deep and intense that the separateness of the person who focuses, the object of focus and the act of focusing is completely obliterated. Then consciousness of Brahman is felt intensely both inside and outside; on the top and on the bottom; on the left and on the right: at the front and at the back.

When we return from that state of samadhi what do we experience? We become eternally conscious of the consciousness. For such a person all suffering, all doubt, fear, anxieties and bondage cease forever and he enjoys a state of eternal bliss,

eternal peace, eternal knowledge. This also helps to foster universal love, as to one who has realised that Brahman which pervades the whole universe, all sorts of differences that create schisms fall.

## **Vedanta is Life Support**

Why practice Vedanta even if we are wary the idea of enlightenment? Because such practice can become the support of our life in a real and tangible way. First of all, Vedanta will help us to become free from attachments. The greatest source of sadness and depression is our rank attachment; attachments to people; attachments to things. Attachments bring suffering, fears and worries. How can we decrease our attachments and obsessions? Vedanta says everything in this phenomenal world is only temporary; that every relationship is limited to this life. In realising this teaching of the Vedanta we can become free from attachment.

Next, Vedanta helps us to remove our fear. Fear occurs when we fall ill, when we get older and get nearer to death. However, if we truly believe, we are not the body, we lose the fear of death. Why? Because we know that though the body dies, we are Atman—the Pure Consciousness which has no death, as it is eternal.

Additionally we will have better relationships with others. The biggest problem in human relationships is that we like some people and dislike others without much thought. We argue and fight with each other and lose relationships. This happens due to a lack of same-sightedness, because we mostly look upon people as physical bodies which are obviously different. But Vedanta teaches us, as Brahman is all pervading, the one and same Brahman is in us all. Hence it emphasises the unity of the whole universe at the level of spirit, rather than the differences at the level of body. If we can really believe this, all our human relationships will definitely improve and we can achieve greater harmony at all levels of our relationships.

*(Conclusion on Page 8)*

• Vedanta Society of Japan •

## JANUARY SCHEDULE of EVENTS 2017

1st January 2017 (Sunday)

**Annual Kalpataru  
and New Year's Day Observance**

From 11:30 at Zushi Centre

Prayer / Readings / Meditation / Lunch /

Pilgrimage to Kamakura's Buddha Statue, Kukinoshita Catholic Church  
and Hachimangu Shrine. Please contact if you plan to attend (046-873-0428)

3rd (Tue)

**Nara Narayan: Service to homeless Narayan**

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

7th (Sat)

**Discourse on Bhagavad Gita**

At the Embassy of India in Tokyo

(in Japanese only) (from 14:15-16:00)

Please Contact: Kyokai (045-873-0428)

8th, 15th, 22th, 29th (Sun)

**Yoga-asana Class -**

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

Please Contact: Hanari 080-6702-2308

\*Link : <http://zushi-hatayoga.jimdo.com/>

10th (Tue)

**Gospel class**

Zushi Centre (14:00~15:30 )

15th (Sun)

**Sri Sri Sarada Devi Birthday Celebration**

Zushi Annexe (from 10:30-16:30)

06:30~7:30 Mangala Arati

10:30-Puja, Pushpanjali (offering of flowers)

12:30-Prasad

14:45-Reading, Discourse, Music program

16:30-Tea

28th (Sat)

**Discourses in Osaka** (In Japanese only)

Discourses on "Bhagavad Gita" and "Upanishad"  
are given in Osaka on a monthly basis.

For details please see <<http://vedanta.main.jp/>>

## **Practice of Vedanta** (from page 4)

And finally, we become optimistic by practicing Vedanta. Vedanta teaches us that we are essentially pure. Impurity is actually a passing phase. Sins are actually mistakes committed because of our ignorance of the Truth. If I know the Truth, I cannot commit mistakes or so-called sins. The thick layers of darkness, which are so long-standing, will vanish at the moment the light of Truth shines. Thus, Vedanta helps us to look upon sin from a new angle, which is essentially

optimistic, thus bringing hope in the lives of habitual sinners, or of those who perchance have committed sins and are tormented by their sense of guilt and sin.

Thus, the practice of Vedanta, undertaken in all seriousness, supports us and sustains us both psychologically and spiritually, also harmonistically.

Thank you very much.

---

## **Tokyo Yoga Center Satsanga**

November 2016

By Chiaki Hanari

On November 6, 2016, Swami Medhasananda (Maharaj) gave a discourse on "Learning from Indian Philosophy: Work in Life – How to Live Well from the Perspective of Karma Yoga" at the Tokyo Yoga Center near the Shinjuku Gyoen National Garden.

Most of the audience were in their thirties to forties. Generally, people in those generations take a leading role at the workplace, and the attendees seemed to seek a better balance between work and life.



In Hinduism, what attitude should one have towards life? How should one live a day-to-day life? What should one seek instead of money and things each day?

Maharaj discussed topics in relation to karma yoga including:

- Difference between confidence and excessive pride
- Necessity of introspection with a calm mind
- Continuing to meditate 15 minutes per day and its impact
- What concentration brings to our life
- Misunderstanding of our relationship to work - work exists for our sake, we do not exist for the sake of work
- Difference between selfishness and unselfishness

His approach to these was easy to understand and we could connect to his talk.

(con't page 9)



## Tokyo Yoga (from page 8)

We learned six important points:

1. Aim high, as life is not about just earning money.
2. Try to connect yourself to the law of nature while working. Be aware that we are made to live. Serve others.
3. Do not imagine "what if" but work each moment.
4. Take an attitude of the witness.
5. Serve others to stop being selfish and become unselfish.
6. Practise concentration by spending 15 minutes on meditation each day in order to control the mind.



Maharaj mentioned how these points relate to stress in modern life, too, with which many of us found the discourse even easier to understand.

By living in the moment, we can get away from suffering, sorrow and worries. Whatever period of history we are born in, what we want is the same. We want to be free from these. Practising concentration in an everyday life leads to self-control. Focusing on this moment while working and every action, rather than working for a living, helps improve one's health, relationships with people and our own life.

Maharaj also said, "90% of worries do not occur actually," a fact which most of us were greatly impressed with.

I will try to pay attention to this moment and practise concentration, hoping to share these tips with all the members of our yoga center!

---

## Yamagata Satsanga

November 2016  
Summarized Report

(con't page 10)





Chitose Childcare Group

## Yamagata (from page 9)

On Friday, November 11, Swami Medhasananda (Maharaj) was invited to visit the Chitose School Childcare Club of Yamagata City, where he enjoyed giving an introductory introduction into Indian culture to a group of children who are provided activities and supervision at



the school until their parents arrive from work to pick them up. Maharaj later gave a talk to school staff on 'How to Be Stress-free at Work and Get Mental Peace.'

The following day Maharaj met with the core Yamagata group and others, where he discussed 'Rebirth and the Law of Karma.' Fifty-eight people attended the talk that started about 13:30 and continued until 16:30 with a Q&A session and a guided meditation.



Yamagata Core Group

The organiser was Mr. Takahashi

## Sendai Satsanga November 2016 Report by Ms Miyako Sato

On 13 November 2016, we invited Swami Medhasananda (Maharaj) to give a discourse at our satsanga in Sendai. It was the fourth time this annual programme had been held there. Last year he talked about "The Law of Karma and Rebirth" and this year's topic was "Yama and Niyama" from Patanjali's Yoga Sutras.

As I understand it, Yoga originally means the union of one's soul to God and aims to control the mind so one can attain enlightenment with a pure heart. Even if we do not seek enlightenment, yoga is nevertheless helpful and allows us to learn specific ways to purify our heart and control bad feelings.

(con't page 11)





**Sendai Satsanga** (from page 10)

Our conscious mind is like a tip of the iceberg—it is the small visible part of the whole mind and the rest of it, or the subconscious mind, is hidden underneath. It is important to purify one's mind all the way down to that subconscious level. Meditation is like washing the mind and helps purify it. While sitting quietly we start being aware of many things. However, we are likely to get distracted unless we practise yama and niyama, and end up being unable to concentrate and stop practicing meditation.

What is taught as yama and niyama seems easy to follow when heard or read, but when one tries to practise it, one will find it actually difficult to do verbally and mentally as well as physically. To execute it, we need to see and check ourselves again and again. Maharaj gave us specific, easy to understand examples about what we as humans should do and should not do, one by one, so we can discipline and develop ourselves.

The programme included meditation during which time I was able to sit with a quiet mind and felt as if I was washing my heart.

This year we had the chance to hear about and buy books and CDs published by the Vedanta Society of Japan. Many of us took a look and bought some.

The next satsanga is planned to be held on the second Sunday of November next year. Everyone already seems to be looking forward to hearing another discourse from Maharaj again in Sendai.



## • A Story to Remember •

### Shukadev Meets King Janaka

Shukadev, son of sage Vyasa was keen on learning higher spiritual knowledge, one day his father, Vyasa, said "My son, you should go meet King Janaka, he is an ocean of wisdom, it will help you."

Shuka was keen on learning, but he was doubtful of the knowledge a Palace dwelling king can possess. So he went to the palace and sought an audience with the king, who welcomed him warmly.

"O Shukadeva, Son of Vyasa, my child, what can I do for you?" said the king.

"My father sent me to you to learn higher spiritual knowledge. Please take me as your student. I must ask you, I don't understand, how can a palace dwelling king, indulged in the wealth and duties of a palace, in the company of his queen and children, be such a highly recommended Yogi?" the straightforward Shuka asked.

"We will talk about that later. If you want to be my student, you will have to pass a test. Take this cup of oil, keep it on your head, and go around the palace keenly observing every room. I will need every detail from you, and you shouldn't spill even a drop of this oil either, if you want to be my student."

Shuka walked into each room of the palace, observed every room in great detail and came back in the evening. "O King, I have fulfilled your task," said the young Shuka.

King Janaka asked many questions to confirm whether he had indeed completed his task without fail. Then King asked Shuka "How could you observe every room in such detail when you had a full cup of oil on your head?"

"I observed every room, but my focus was always on the cup of oil," said Shuka.

"In the same way, though I live in this world performing my duties as a king, husband and father, I always keep my focus on the higher reality." said King Janaka answering Shuka's earlier question. Satisfied with each other's abilities, they continued their studies.

from AumAmendotcom

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)