



June 2017 - Volume 15 Number 06

# The Vedanta Kyokai Newsletter

NEWS, UPDATES AND MISCELLANY FROM THE VEDANTA SOCIETY OF JAPAN

**JULY 2017**  
Calendar

**Birthdays**

**Guru Purnima**  
Sunday, July 9

**Swami**  
**Ramakrishnananda**  
Friday, July 21



**Kyokai Events**

**June 19~July 6**

Swami Medhasananda  
visits America

**July 6~July 9**

Swami Medhasananda  
visits Fukuoka, Shikoku

The following activities for  
July are cancelled:

- Tokyo • Indian Embassy  
Scripture Meeting
- Tuesday Study Group
- July Zushi Retreat

See page 5 for details



## ✧ Thus Spake ✧

*"Be thankful that you are allowed to exercise your power of benevolence and mercy in the world, and thus become pure and perfect. Be grateful to the man you help, think of him as God. Is it not a great privilege to be allowed to worship God by helping our fellow men?"*

- Swami Vivekananda

*"For you have the poor with you always, and whenever you will, you may do them good; but me ye have not always."*

- Jesus, The Christ

Public Celebration: Sunday, May 28, 2017

### Swami Vivekananda 154th Birth Anniversary

At the Vivekananda Cultural Centre of the Indian Embassy Tokyo

The Vedanta Society of Japan (Nippon Vedanta Kyokai) held its annual public birth anniversary celebration of Swami Vivekananda (Swamiji) at the Indian Embassy of Japan's Vivekananda Cultural Centre (VCC) in Tokyo on May 28th from 1:30 p.m. to 5 p.m. in cooperation with the Society's Celebration Committee and the Indian Embassy of Tokyo. The theme of this year's Public Celebration was "Integrated Yoga Awareness."

Swami Vivekananda (1863-1902) was a prophet of Modern India. He was a lover of humanity, a preacher of Universal Religion and a protagonist of internationalism. Learned people of both Eastern and

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## **Vivekananda 154th** (from page 1)

Western heritages hold Vivekananda in high esteem for his universal outlook, holistic approach and soul-stirring messages. He founded the Ramakrishna Mission, an international spiritual organisation, in 1897 with the objective of realising the Self and serving humanity in a spirit of worship.

The purpose of the Vedanta Society of Japan's annual programme is to pay tribute to the great swami; to highlight the various facets of his personality and deliberate on his message, which not only helps us to solve the problems we face at different levels, but also elevates us to a higher state of consciousness.

### **Welcome Addresses and Releases**

The programme began with a general welcome and self-introductions of the two MCs, Ms. Kathy Matsui, English, and Ms. Satsuki Yokota, Japanese. A Sanskrit 'Invocation' was then led by Swami Medhasanandaji, President of the Vedanta Society of Japan, Ms. Shanti Izumida, Ms. Miwako Tanabe and Mr. Leonardo Alvarez. Swami Medhasananda then delivered the following welcome address:

"His Excellency Mr. Sujan R. Chinoy, Ambassador of India, honourable speakers, guest and dear audience,

"On behalf of the Celebration Committee and the Vedanta Society of Japan, a branch of the Ramakrishna Mission of India, I heartily welcome you to the Public Celebration of the 154th Birth Anniversary of Swami Vivekananda. I also especially welcome Mr. Keishin Kimura, President, Japan Yoga Niketan and Japan Yoga Therapy, a distinguished Yoga leader in Japan, with whom we have had a long and close relationship, and Mr. Shizuo Suzuki, Representative Director, Maharishi Institute of Total Education in Japan, our two distinguished speakers for today.

"It is also highly satisfying that His Excellency Mr. Sujan R. Chinoy, Ambassador of India has also graced today's occasion. In fact, the Ambassador's presence at

this celebration was somewhat uncertain, but finally, he could be with us in spite of his very busy schedule, for which we are extremely glad and grateful.

"We have been organising this event in Tokyo for the last 23 years. This celebration assumes a special significance when it is held at the Cultural Centre of the Embassy named after Swami Vivekananda. This has been made part of the Japan-Indo Friendship Year Programme, thanks to the Indian Embassy.

"Every year we give this programme a special theme. Last year it was 'Selfless Service' and this year it is 'Integrated Yoga Awareness.' The purpose for deciding this year's topic is to bring awareness, especially among practitioners of 'Yoga,' but also to interested parties in general, that yoga practice was not intended for its physical aspect alone, but to prepare one for practice of its mental, moral and spiritual aspects as well. Taking care of one's body is definitely necessary, but to take care of the mind and spirit through the practice of total or holistic Yoga is no less necessary.

"Therefore it has become a matter of some concern that nowadays the sole emphasis of Yoga practice is becoming focused on the benefits to physical health alone. Swami Vivekananda, through his many lectures and writings gave much more emphasis on the moral and spiritual aspects of Yoga to help us to attain to supreme peace, joy, strength and knowledge, making our life fulfilled.

"We hope our honourable speakers today will also focus on the integrated aspects of Yoga and share with us their valuable thoughts on this important topic.

"Finally, may I make a special appeal to the leaders of Yoga groups and all individual yoga teachers present here to include 6~10 minutes of meditation at the end of their yoga lessons. That will go a long way in giving a practical shape to integrated and holistic Yoga. Such meditation will be tremendously beneficial to all students of Yoga.

(con't page 3)

## **Vivekananda 154th** (from page 2)

"I again heartily welcome all of you to today's Swami Vivekananda Celebration. Thank you. Arigatogozaimashita.

The Ambassador of India, His Excellency Mr. Sujan R. Chinoy, was then called upon to offer a flower bouquet at the feet of a framed, lifesize image of Swami Vivekananda. Ambassador Chinoy then released this year's Japanese language publications of the Society's 'Universal Gospel' and Volume 3 of 'Meditation and Spiritual Life' by Swami Yatiswarananda. Ambassador Chinoy then offered the following words of welcome:

"Mr. Keshin Kimura, President Japan Yoga Association, Swami Medhasananda, President Nippon Vedanta Society, Mr. Shizuo Suzuki, President of Maharishi Institute of Total Education, minasama (everyone) konichiwa (good afternoon).

"I would like to begin by offering my congratulations to the Nippon Vedanta Society for holding a commemorative event today for the 154th birth anniversary of Swami Vivekananda on 28 May 2017 at the appropriately named Vivekananda Cultural Centre of the Embassy of India in Tokyo.

"Swami Vivekananda, as you all know, was one of the great, I should say greatest of visionaries, of Modern India. He left an indelible influence on Indian society despite having passed away at an early age. His thoughts and philosophy enthused our people and infused them with a sense of confidence at a time when India was under colonial rule. His enduring appeal is a testimony to the timelessness and universality of his message.

"Swami Vivekananda's teachings continue to be a source of great inspiration, and are relevant today more than ever. He was a towering figure who introduced Indian philosophy and yoga to a global audience.

"As you may be aware, Swami Vivekananda had visited Japan on his way to the Chicago congress of world religions (Parliament of Religions) in 1893. He was deeply impressed by the many virtues of the

Japanese people, such as patriotism, hard work, power of assimilation, cleanliness and keen sense of aesthetics. This prompted him to urge Indian youth to visit Japan at least once in their lifetimes. He also left a deep impression on the many Japanese friends and admirers who had interacted with him.

"The theme of "Integrated Yoga Awareness" for this year's commemoration is not only significant in the context of the '3rd International Day of Yoga' scheduled to take place in June, but it will also contribute to the wider celebration of cultural ties between India and Japan in 2017, which has been declared as the year of 'India-Japan Friendly Exchanges.'

"In April of 2017 the first ever 'Parliamentary League for the Promotion of Yoga' anywhere in the world was inaugurated in the Japanese Parliament during the visit of Sri Sri Ravi Shankarji. This augurs well for the promotion of authentic yoga from India, the land of its origin.

"On this occasion I convey my best wishes to the Organising Committee of Nippon Vedanta Society. Arigatogozaimas (Thank you very much).

Following his remarks the Ambassador bid all farewell as he had to take his leave of the celebration due to busy schedule and an impending trip to India. Swami Medhasananda accompanied the Ambassador from the stage as the audience applauded and the swami continued out the auditorium offering his thanks once again for graciously attending.

The EMs continued with the release of CDs offered for the occasion. First was the release of '108 Repetitions of Gayatri Mantra' by Mr. Keshin Kimura, followed by the release of '108 Repetitions of the Mahamrityunjaya - Mantra of Lord Shiva' by Mr. Shizuo Suzuki.

## **Guest Speakers**

The first speaker, Mr. Kimura, was introduced as President of Japan Yoga Niketan, Board Chair of Japan Yoga Therapy Association, and a board member of the Aurveda

(con't page 4)

## **Vivekananda 154th** (from page 3)

Society in Japan and of Integrated Medicine Japan. Noting that he has practiced for 43 years the classical yoga, Raja Yoga, under the direct guidance of Swami Yogeshwaranandaji, Mr. Kimura was then called upon to deliver his address on 'Integrated Yoga Awareness'. [A summary of Mr. Kimura's talk will be published once transcribed and translated.]

The MCs then introduced Mr. Shizuo Suzuki, Representative Director, Maharishi Institute of Total Education, and Teacher of Transcendental Meditation to give his address on 'Integrated Yoga Awareness.' [This talk is included in this issue of The Vedanta Kyokai.]

Upon the conclusion of Mr. Shizuo Suzuki's remarks and the end of the first programme, the MCs called upon Mr. Atsushi Suzuki, Secretary, Vedanta Society of Japan, to give a brief 'Vote of Thanks' after encouraging everyone to visit the auditorium's large foyer where the Vedanta Society's Japanese and English publications were on display for order via an orderform enclosed in the programme folder they received at reception. The audience was also requested to answer the questionnaire also enclosed, and informed that refreshments would be served at the end of the Cultural Programme to be enjoyed off the Embassy premises.

### **Cultural Programme**

After a welcome back and introduction by the MCs, the Cultural Programme began with a silent, 18-minute Hatha Yoga demonstration with a group led by Dr. Hemant Kumar Sharma, a yoga teacher at Embassy of India's Vivekananda Cultural Centre. At the conclusion Dr. Sharma introduced himself and his students.

Next Shanti Izumida on a keyboard led a group of 5 other devotees of the Vedanta Society in an original Japanese composition dedicated to Swami Vivekananda. They were followed by a large contingent of the Yoga School Kailas of Yokohama <<http://www.yoga-kailas.com>> who sang another composition again accompanied by the keyboard and an electric violin. Then both

groups joined in on the last number 'Vivekananda Jai Ho' with Ms. Shanti back on keyboard and a Kailas member on electric guitar.

Next Mr. Shotaro Matsuo, an Odissi dancer, was introduced. He began his study of Odissi dance in Tokyo under Ms. Kazuko Yasunobu in 2014. Has has been performing at Tokyo's annual 'Namaste India' event held in Yoyogi Park and 'Dewali' held in Yokohama, sometimes solo and sometimes with a group. In 2016, he received Odissi training at Srjan, an Odissi school established by Guru Kelucharan Mohapatra. He has been studying Odissi under Guru Ratikant Mohapatra.

Mr. Matsuo then came onstage offering a cluster of flower petals to the feet of Swami Vivekananda and performed a Shiva Dance or Mahadeva prayer to Lord Shiva. This physically exhaustive performance continued for some 14 minutes and was well recieved by the audience.

The MCs then called upon Mr. J. S. Chandrani, Secretary of the Celebration Committee, to offer the "Vote of Thanks." He is also the owner of Tokyo's 'Spice Magic Calcutta' who sponsors the refreshments. Before Mr. Chandrani's comments in both English and Japanese the audience was again reminded to please take their refreshment package with them and to not eat on the Embassy premises.

With conclusion of Mr. Chandrani's comments the MCs announced the end of Swami Vivekananda's 154th Birth Anniversary Programmes and invited the audience of about 200 to attend next year's celebration, perhaps also in May of 2018. •

#### Thought of the Month

"People take different roads seeking fulfillment and happiness. Just because they're not on your road doesn't mean they've gotten lost."

--Dalai Lama

## • Vedanta Society of Japan •

### July 2017 SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

June 19~July 6 Swami Medhasananda visits America  
July 6~July 9 Swami Medhasananda visits Fukuoka, Shikoku

#### **The following regular monthly activities for July are cancelled:**

- Tokyo · Indian Embassy Scripture Meeting
- Tuesday Study Group ('The Gospel of Ramakrishna')
  - July Zushi Retreat

#### **Scheduled activities are as follows:**

7~8 July (Fri-Sat)

#### **Yoga Therapy Society Fukuoka**

15~17 July (Sat~Mon)

#### **Annual Summer Retreat**

Location: Makino Grand Hotel Oku, Lake Biwa

22 July (Sat)

#### **Kansai Area Retreat**

Place: Osaka Training Center - 13:30~17:00

Bhagavad Gita and Upanishad Study

28 July (Fri)

#### **Nara Narayan:**

Service to homeless Narayan

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

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### **Swami Vivekananda 154rd Birth Anniversary**

Guest Speaker Address

Mr. Shizuo Suzuki, Representative Director,  
Maharishi Institute of Total Education and Teacher of Transcendental Meditation

#### **'Integrated Yoga Awareness'**

*[Mr. Suzuki gave his talk in Japanese assisted with supporting slides in English. This text is a composite representation of slide texts and his comments.]*

"His Excellency Mr. Sujan R. Chinoy, Ambassador of India, Mr. Keshin Kimura, President Japan Yoga Association, and respected and Honorable Swami Medhasanandaji, Japan Vedanta Association, thank you very much for inviting and giving

me the opportunity to speak today on 'Integrated Yoga Awareness'. I also wish to express my appreciation for Mr. Kimura's very informative and interesting talk today as well. My greetings to all the Embassy staff and Vedanta Society members, too. I am thankful to have been invited here to address this august audience.

(con't page 6)

**Mr. Suzuki** (from page 5)

“The great saint, His Holiness Swami Vivekanandaji, who realized Unity–Brahma Consciousness or Brahmi Chetana. From the depths of my heart, I offer my respects to Swami Vivekanandaji.

“Last year and two years ago more than 30,000 people participated in the International Day of Yoga in New Delhi, with practice and demonstrations. The Indian Government declared the 21st of June ‘International Day of Yoga’ producing a logo with the slogan ‘Yoga for Harmony & Peace’ to mark the occasion. Folding of both hands in the logo Symbolise Yoga, the union, which reflects the union of individual Consciousness with that of universal Consciousness, a perfect harmony between mind & body, man & nature; a holistic approach to health & well being. The brown leaves symbolise the Earth element, the green leaves symbolise Nature, blue symbolises the Water element, brightness symbolises the Fire element and the Sun symbolise the source of energy and inspiration. The logo reflects harmony and peace for humanity, which is the essence of Yoga.

“Yoga means Unity. The goal of Yoga is the unity of the individual and the universe. Yoga is an Integrated system for the development of the mind and body, which consists of a variety of modalities to realize this goal. Through Yoga, human beings can attain Unity Consciousness or Brahmi Cetana. The seven states of Consciousness are; the sleeping state, dreaming state, waking state, pure consciousness state, cosmic consciousness, God consciousness and, finally, Unity consciousness. Enlightenment is the state higher than Cosmic Consciousness. Swami Vivekanandaji taught that all men are wending their way to this same goal.

Mr. Suzuki went on to say there are various yogas. Karma Yoga is the Yoga of action; this yoga is practiced in serving others, taking care of ones elderly parents is a must. He then talked of a young nurse he observed caring for his father who was devoted to caring for others. He thought that she was probably not consciously a Yoga practitioner, but yet her work ethic was an excel-

lent example of a Karma Yogi. Bhakti Yoga is the Yoga of devotion and here too, he thought of that same nurse. Her devotion was not only reserved for her parents and family members, but she was actually serving God in others. Hatha Yoga consists of mainly exercises to strengthen and improve ones body condition. Raja Yoga, he continued, is the grandfather of Yogas, of meditation and communion with creation, and the one he has practice over 40-years.

He then discussed the various modalities for Yoga, including Surya Namaskara or warm-up; Sankalpa or setting a purpose ; Yoga Asanas or exercises; Pranayama or breathing exercises; Dhyana or meditation as in Raja Yoga; TM (transcendental meditation) 4 levels of advanced techniques; and finally, the TM Siddhi program, a form of meditation introduced by Maharishi Mahesh Yogi in 1975. It is based on, and described as a natural extension of the Transcendental Meditation technique.

He showed slides of Surya Namaskar and Yoga Asanas, illustrations of powerful yoga postures. He explained that the very popular Hatha Yoga consists of these yogas. Next was Pranayama or the exercise of controlled breathing where inhale, retention, and exhale intervals are maintained. Next was meditation with eyes closed. Here he emphasized that one can practice this while riding on a train or even sitting in an airport waiting area, “and as Mr. Kimura stated, one can practice almost anywhere.”

“All types of meditation are precious and respected. In our case, we are teaching Transcendental Meditation, which Maharishi Mahesh Yogi taught. In Japan there are some 70,000 TM practitioners and worldwide about six million. He then showed a photographic slide titled ‘His Holiness Maharishi Mahesh Yogi together with the Beatles ‘ and said that this celebrity was key to Maharishi’s sudden popularity. He noted that of the catalog of over 200 songs from this group, at least 30 songs, including ‘Let It Be’, ‘Dear Prudence’, ‘Across the Universe’ and others, helped popularise TM.

“To practice TM; sit comfortably; close

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**Mr. Suzuki** (from page 6)

your eyes; use a sound, a word or a mantra within you: one session is for 20 minutes; do it twice a day, morning and evening. As I stated before we can do this easily if we are commuting or whatever.

“The effectiveness of Transcendental Meditation has been verified by more than 600 scientific research studies conducted by over 200 research institutes and universities around the world. Significant impact factors of TM have been documented. For example, when a subject is relaxed, alpha waves are produced from the back part of the brain. During TM, stronger alpha waves are also produced in the frontal part of the brain. After 20 minutes of TM, strong alpha waves continued.

Mr. Suzuki then showed slides detailing the ‘Coherence of Alpha waves between right and left hemispher for two week, 4 month and 2-year TM practioners’ with increasingly greater coherence indicated. He followed these with slides indicating improvement of memory and academic performance, and relief from insomnia and reduced blood pressure. Slides followed indicating the rates of death, heart attacks, and strokes are lower. During the slide for a reduction of various diseases, Mr. Suzuki named a few common ailments and stated that TM would greatly reduce national heath insurance expenditures too. Finally measureable growth and balance in one’s personality.

“Through meditation, the mind experiences the unified field of the laws of nature, Transcendental meditation, Transcendental Consciousness, the unified field of laws of nature, Atma. The mind is like an ocean. At the surface it is active and has thoughts, but as you go deeper the mind is more settled and experiences pure consciousness.

“The 4th state of consciousness is Transcendental Consciousness or Pure Consciousness. Through meditation, the mind goes to deeper levels within, experiencing the expansion of consciousness. Eventually a completely quiet and unbounded state of awareness is experienced. While rested, the mind is clearly awake, alertness is maintained (restful alertness). Pure Con-

sciousness is the source of bliss, creativity, and energy, and when you experience PC, then the mind is filled with bliss, creativity, and energy.

“Many different expressions are used to express this state: Pure Consciousness, Transcendental Consciousness, Being, Pure Being, Existence, Reality, Bliss Consciousness, Unified Field, Absolute, Tao, Idea, Nothingness, No-Self, Emptiness, Something Great, Altered State of Consciousness, Collective Unconsciousness, Samadhi, Zanmai, Samhita, Yoga, Unboundedness, Taichi, real phase of life, un-manifest field, etc.

“In the unified field chart of Physics we find molecules, atoms, elementary particles and quarks. Eventually, we attain the unifold field, the source of our universe. According to quantum physics, the unified field is creating and maintaining the universe.

“Modern physics has located more unified levels of nature’s functioning at smaller time and distance scales, culminating in the discovery of the unified field (“superstring field”) at the foundation of the universe. The Transcendental Meditation and more advanced TM-Sidhi programme provides direct experience of quieter, deeper levels of thought – culminating in the experience of the unified field at the basis of mind and matter. Group practice powerfully stimulates this universal, unified field of collective consciousness, creating a demonstrable, coherent influence throughout society.

“Cosmic Consciousness is the co-existence of waking, dreaming, sleeping states and Transcendental Consciousness.” Suzuki then showed a slide of a summary report by the American Sleep Disorders Association and Sleep Research Society entitled ‘Electophysiological Correlates of Higher States of Consciousness During Sleep in Long-Term Practitioners of the Transcendental Meditation Program’ coordinated by Maharishi University of Management, Duke University, University of Alberta, Edmonton Canada and the University of Iowa. This study compared groups of long- and short-

(con’t page 8)



**Mr. Suzuki** (from page 7)

term TM practitioners and non-practitioners using MRI and other advanced measuring techniques.

“What are the experiences of the Supreme State of Consciousness (Unity Consciousness). The Vedanta teaches, ‘See the True-Self in yourself and others.’ That consciousness in everyone is of the same source, as Swami Medhasananda has said, ‘See God in yourself and others.’ Increased harmony, enhanced morality, elevation of spirituality, increased bliss, peace of mind, and the experience that the entire universe is of the Self. The Holy Tradition of the Vedas are of all the gurus and master who attained Unity or Yoga, Unity Consciousness, Brahmi Chetana.

“The great sage Patanjali experienced and wrote of the Yoga Sutras. In Chapter 1 he discusses Samadhi Pada (51 Sutras), in Chapter 2 the Sadana Pada (55 Sutras), in Chapter 3 the Bibuti Pada (55 Sutras) and in Chapter 4 the Kivariya Pada (34 Sutras). In Yoga Sutra 1.14 it reads, ‘With regular practice for a long time, Yoga will be firmly established.’ These truths were taught by the great sage Veda Viasaji about 5,000 years ago. The Bhagavad Gita 5.5 reads, ‘A divine practitioner who sincerely practices Yoga will attain Brahman without delay.’

“From great teachers like Vivekananda we learn that all power is within us. They show us how to attain peace, happiness, wisdom, bliss, creativity and intelligence. For a yogi, everything is supreme pleasure (bliss). All faces bring happy feelings. This is a symptom of a person of high virtue. I witnessed this in the Maharishi. Yoga Sutra 2.35 declares, ‘In the vicinity of Ahimsa, hostility disappears.’ Ahimsa means respect for all living things and avoidance of violence towards others.

“At Maharishi University of Management there are two golden domes, one for men and one for ladies and each can accommodate 800 people. In these domes groups of all the students and teachers practice of Transcendental Meditation and TM Siddhi program every morning and evening. The Maharishi said, ‘In order to

gain greater success, practice should be longer.’

“Studies have shown a reduction in the Crime Rate as a 1% effect of Transcendental Meditation. When 1% of the city population practiced TM, the crime rate dropped by about 8.8%, while it went up by about 7.7% for non-practicing control groups. The TM Siddhi program was introduced as the square root of the 1% wherein it was predicted that a group with size equal to the square root of 1% of a population would have a measurable influence on the quality of life of that population. In the Global Peace Initiative in cooperation with local police more than 4,000 advanced meditation experts gathered in Washington, D.C. during the summer of 1993, to scientifically demonstrate the effect of the Brain-Based Approach to Peace on reducing violent crime in the US capital city. In this carefully controlled experiment, over a two-month period violent crime began decreasing soon after the assembly began and continued to drop to 23%. After the assembly ended crime began to rise again.

“During the war in Lebanon some 30 years ago a similar study was conducted of 8 variables indicating a quality of life, including crime, war intensity in neighboring Lebanon, stock market performance, number of fires etc. When TM group sizes grew or decreased in number there was an influence both the way stockbrokers were behaving on the stock market, and criminals were behaving on the street. We could see that the group size closely correlated. In this 2-year study was documented in the ‘Journal of Social Behavior and Personality 17 (1): 285-338, 2005. it was as if somebody rotated a dimmer switch and the light became more or less bright. These studies were conducted in Mozambique and Ecuador with similar results.

“Since my time has expired let me conclude by saying that Swami Vivekanandaji is a great teacher and I am honoured to have been invited by Swami Medhasananda to address you here today. Jai Guru Dev! Victory to the Guru. Jai Swami Vivekanandaji! •

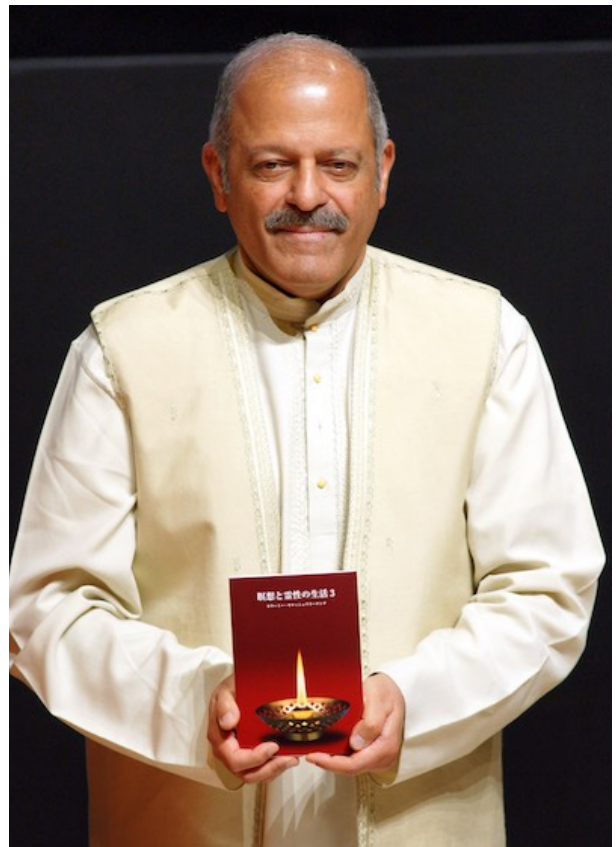




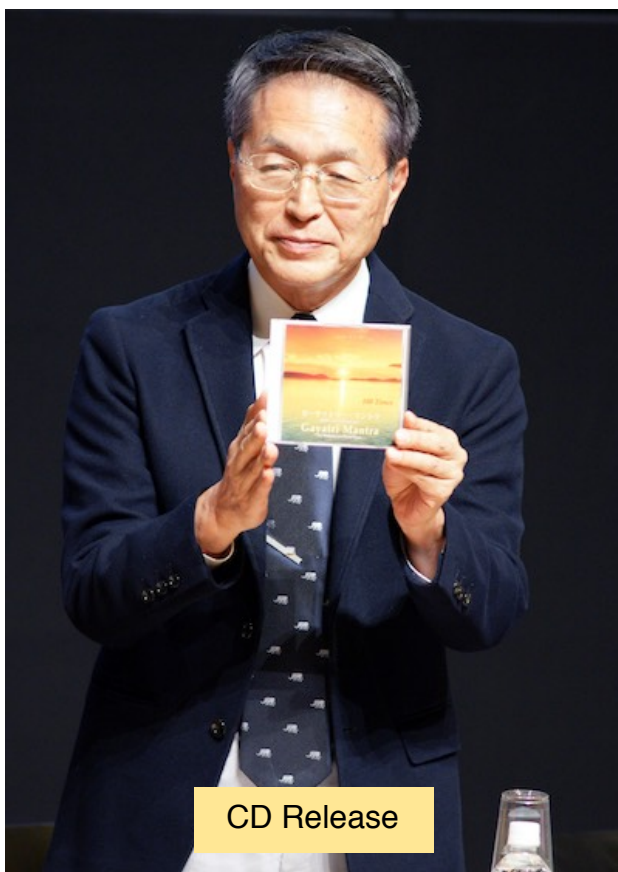




Publication Release



Publication Release



CD Release



CD Release



MCs  
Kathy Matsui and Satsuki Yokota



Swami Medhasananda delivers 'Welcome Address' in English





Vedanta Society



Kailas Yoga Group



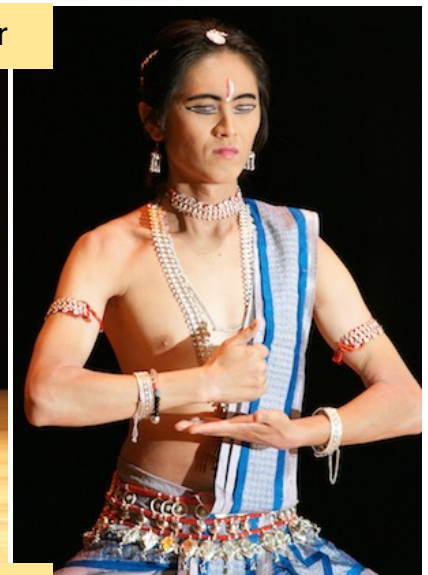
Kailas Yoga Group



Combined Group



Shotaro Matsuo - Odissi Dancer



Volunteers and Participants



## A Story to Remember

### The Ancient One

by Bearwalker

Ancient One sat in the shade of his tree in front of his cave. Red People came to him and he said to Red People, "Tell me your vision."

And Red People answered, "The elders have told us to pray in this manner and that manner, and it is important that only we pray as we have been taught for this has been handed down to us by the elders."

"Hmmmm," said the Ancient One.

Then Black People came to him and he said to Black People, "Tell me your vision."

And Black People answered, "Our mothers have said to go to this building and that building and pray in this manner and that manner. And our fathers have said to bow in this manner and that manner when we pray. And it is important that we do only this when we pray."

"Hmmmm," said the Ancient One.

Then Yellow People came to him and he said to Yellow People, "Tell me your vision."

And Yellow People answered, "Our teachers have told us to sit in this manner and that manner and to say this thing and that thing when we pray. And it is important that we do only this when we pray."

"Hmmmm," said the Ancient One.

Then White People came to him and he said to White People, "Tell me your vision."

And White People answered, "Our Book has told us to pray in this way and that way and to do this thing and that thing, and it is very important that we do this when we pray."

"Hmmmm," said the Ancient One.

Then Ancient One spoke to the Earth and said, "Have you given the people a vision?" And the Earth said, "Yes, a special gift for each one, but the people were so busy speaking and arguing about which way is right, they could not see the gift I gave each one of them." And the Ancient One asked the same question of Water and Fire and Air and got the same answer. Then Ancient One asked Animal, and Bird, and Insect, and Tree, and Flower, and Sky, and Moon, and Sun, and Stars, and all of the other Spirits and each told him the same.

Ancient One thought this was very sad. He called Red People, Black People, Yellow People, and White People to him and said to them. "The ways taught to you by your Elders, and your Mothers and Fathers, and Teachers, and Books are sacred. It is good that you respect those ways, for they are the ways of your ancestors. But the ancestors no longer walk on the Face of the Earth Mother. You have forgotten your own Vision. Your Vision is right for you but no one else. Now each of you must pray for your own Visions, and be still enough to see them, so you can follow the way of the heart. It is a hard way. It is a good way."

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