



JULY 2017 - Volume 15 Number 07

The Vedanta Kyokai Newsletter

NEWS, UPDATES AND MISCELLANY FROM THE VEDANTA SOCIETY OF JAPAN

AUGUST 2017
Calendar

Birthdays

Swami Niranjanananda
Monday, August 7

Sri Krishna Janmashtami
Monday, August 14

Swami Advaitananda
Sunday, August 20



Sri Krishna Janmashtami

Kyokai Events

6th (Sun)

Satsanga in Hamamatsu

20th (Sun)

Krishna Birth Celebration

Zushi Monthly Retreat
(10:30~16:30)
Morning Session Talk
Lunch Prasad
Afternoon Session

26~27th (Sat-Sun)

Satsanga in Imabari

See page 6 for details



✧ Thus Spake ✧

“Wherein is the strength of the devotee? He is a child of God, and his devotional tears are his mightiest weapon.”

- Sri Ramakrishna

“Extremely dear to Me are they who regard Me as the Supreme Goal, and endowed with faith and devotion, follow this nectar-like religion.”

- Sri Krishna

Swami Vivekananda 154rd Birth Anniversary

Guest Speaker Address

Mr. Keshin Kimura, President, Japan Yoga Niketan,
Japan Yoga Therapy Association

‘Integrated Yoga Awareness’

[The following is a brief summary of Mr. Kimura’s comments.]

Mr. Kimura told the audience that he had been practicing yoga for 45~46 years. He said that about 43 years ago he went to India for the first time in the latter half of his twenties. On that visit he met Swami Yogeshwarananda Maharaji, his lifetime teacher. At that time he stayed at the Swami’s Rishikesh Yoga Centre where Swami Yogeshwaranandaji had established the Yoga Niketan Ashram in 1964. The Revered Swami died about 30 years ago and Kimura said that he intends to go to Rishikesh this year to teach Raja Yoga where his master had taught.

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Kimura-san (from page 1)

Kimura said he has been pursuing the path of the great teachers of the Himalayas. As such, he has been practicing at various locations in Tibet, such as Manasarovar where there are many caves with hot springs flowing. His master and his master's master practiced in these areas and it is said the third previous master in this line of teachers lived to be 300 years old.

In 2003, he came in contact with a foundation studying the teachings of Swami Vivekananda, and since then he has been teaching yoga therapy. A doctor trained in Western or allopathic medicine would have no idea how to guide a meditation. At Niketan Yoga Therapy they have a practiced method of teaching. Therapists diagnose the condition of the client through inquiry and observation using techniques taught by the ascetics of old, they then prescribe specific regimens of yoga practices to suit individual needs.

Kimura said that three years ago the Indian Government's Ministry of Ayush established the qualifications for a Certified Yoga Professional. Last December the government further established an award for ayurveda and yoga. He also said as a foreigner he expects to sit for these examinations, too. Recently, at Harvard University in Boston, two international yoga therapies were also held and his Japan Yoga Niketan staff also participated.

He went on to say that many hospitals such as Chiba Prefecture's Kohnodai Hospital - National Center for Global Health and Medicine's Cancer Center, have begun to incorporate yoga into treatments. Professionals from various disciplines gather from all over the country and conduct research on various aspects and cases, and make presentations at academic conferences.



Kimura said there are about 1,500 licensed Yoga Therapy practitioners in Japan, many of whom visit those areas afflicted by natural disasters such as 3/11 (Great Tohoku Earthquake) and last year's Kumamoto earthquake to teach yoga for the emotional and physical relief of victims. This was supported by many photos of outreach programmes in his presentation. Kimura also said that Niketan Yoga conducts charity and staff training in Nepal, Thailand and Kiev, for example. This was also supported by many photos.

In closing Kimura noted that the significance of Swami Vivekanandaji's brief stop in Japan on his way to America to address the first World's Parliament of Religions some 130 years ago cannot be overstated, saying that the importance of that visit and those of the Japanese who ventured to India thereafter are just beginning to bear fruit.

Nagoya Satsanga



On the 10th of June, Swami Medhasananda (Maharaj) gave a discourse during a full day satsanga held by Aigi Yoga Ryohoshikai (Aigi Yoga Therapists Association) at the Tokugenji Temple in Nagoya from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. About 20 people attended the event. In the morning they chanted Vedic Peace Prayers and meditated. In the afternoon Maharaj spoke on Meditation and Bhakti Yoga. Below is a summary of the report on the satsanga from Ms Maeno.

Many people practise yoga Asana for a long time on a daily basis to be physically healthy, whereas only a few people meditate for more than 10 minutes each day to maintain good health of the mind. To live a healthy life at the psychological level one should practice meditation 10–15 minutes every day.

The key points of meditation are: (1) introspection to observe your mind; (2) meditate on God or truth, that is eternal and never changes; and (3) focus on the space between the eyebrows inside the forehead. It is ideal to meditate early in the morning when it is quiet. Try to meditate 30 to 40 minutes at least once a week. •

Tajimi Satsanga



On the 11th of June, the Tea Shop Compass held their 11th satsanga at the Hojuin Temple in the Kokeizan Eihoji Temple Complex in Tajimi City, Gifu Prefecture, where Swami Medhasananda (Maharaj) was invited to give a discourse. For the first time, Ms. Ayaka Kondo took the lead in organising the event. The following is a summarised report on the satsanga from the organiser.

The early morning meditation began with Maharaj's introduction of how Zen meditation in Japan connects to the Indian tradition and 34 people attended. Meditating from early in the morning helped settle the mind and bring about inner awareness.

Maharaj began his discourse on 'Finding Happiness Through Positive Living' after breakfast. He asked 29 attendees one by one how they can achieve a happier life, and kindly gave his thoughts to each of them in return. He said that it is difficult to preserve spirituality even when we want to live a righteous life, mainly because our purpose of work is different from others' and therefore we are likely to be affected by them. In addition, we

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Thought of the Month

To one who has faith,
no explanation is necessary.
To one without faith,
no explanation is possible.

- Thomas Aquinas



Tajimi (from page 4)

are subject to samskaras or traits from our previous lives. However, using one's willpower is important for controlling the mind and it allows us to change our life to a righteous one. He added, "If you lead a righteous life, that in turn helps strengthen our willpower".

The lecture and the theme was very keenly appreciated as evidenced by everyone's thoughtful comments. I (Ms. Kondo) thank one and all from the bottom of my heart for your help in preparing for this satsanga. •



• Vedanta Society of Japan •

AUGUST 2017
SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

5th (Sat)

Discourse on Bhagavad Gita
At the Embassy of India in Tokyo

In Japanese only (10:00~12:00)

Photo ID is required

<http://www.gita-embassy.com/>

6th (Sun)

Satsanga in Hamamatsu

For more information, please contact:

Noriko Kato 090-8475-9864

Every Sunday (6th, 13th, 20th, 27th)

Yoga-Asana Session

At the Zushi Centre Annexe (14:00~15:30)

Please Contact: Hanari (080-6702-2308)

8th (Tue)

Gospel Class

with Swami Medhasananda

At the Zushi Centre (14:00~16:30)

19th (Sat)

Discourse on Upanishads
At the Embassy of India in Tokyo

In Japanese only (10:00~12:00) Photo ID is required

<http://www.gita-embassy.com/>

20th (Sun)

Krishna Birth Celebration

Monthly Zushi Retreat

(10:30~16:30)

Morning Session (Chanting, Reading, Talk)

Lunch Prasad

Afternoon Session

All are welcome to attend!

26~27th (Sat-Sun)

Satsanga in Imabari

For more information, please contact:

Shioji (090-9542-1477)

Nara Narayan: Service to Homeless Narayan

Cancelled for August

For more information, please contact:

Yoko Sato (090-6544-9304)

Swami Medhasanandaji Visits USA, Brazil and Kyushu, Japan from June 19th to July 9th

From June 19th to July 5th Swami Medhasanandaji visited Florida, California, Sao Paulo and Rio de Janeiro. The following is his summary of how the trip unfolded from his notes.

St. Petersburg, Florida

On June 19, Medhasanandaji boarded a JAL-AA (American Airlines Alliance) plane at 11:30 AM and reached Dallas, Texas after about a 13-hour flight. Passport control-immigration-security took about 2 ½ hours. Fortunately the transit flight to Florida was itself late by 4 hours, so he managed to catch the AA plane on to his first destination in Tampa, Florida about 2 hours later. As previously planned, D. Goswami, a devotee had already arrived from Toronto, Ontario, Canada and had been waiting for my arrival for about 5 hours. We were received by Swami Ishtanandaji, Head of the Vedanta Society of St. Petersburg, and a devotee and reached the St. Petersburg Center.

On June 20th Ishtanandaji took us by car for sightseeing and we enjoyed an afternoon picnic by Tampa Bay. On the 21st there was more sightseeing. That evening about 30 people gathered at the ashrama and Medhasanandaji gave about an hour-long talk on the Vedanta Movement in Japan. This was followed by a 25 minute performance by Japanese lady who is professional Koto player and now lives in the USA. On the way to the Orlando Airport to continue his trip to Brazil, Medhasanandaji was accompanied by Ishtanandaji, a British devotee and his wife who live near the Centre, and Dr. Goswami. The party took lunch at a seafood restaurant.

Sao Paulo, Brazil

Then it was yet another long line at security before boarding a LATAM Airlines flight in the afternoon, reaching Sao Paulo in the early morning hours of the June 23rd after a 10-hour flight. Medhasanandaji was received by Swami Nirmalatmanandaji, his assistant Shankar Maharaj, a Brazilian monk, arriving at the Ramakrishna Vedanta Ashrama where they took breakfast with some devotees. There he met Taka-san, an elderly Japanese devotee who has lived at the ashrama for about 40 years; Sunaam, a Korean lady, and her Brazilian husband; a very elderly Brazilian lady who also lives at the ashrama and generally cooks for the resident swamis. In the afternoon (23 June) a devotee drove Maharaj and Shankar Maharaj to a big historical museum nearby. There Brazilian history and culture were on display, including evidence of the inhumane treatment of slaves being compelled to labour for their masters.

On the morning of June 24th Shankar Maharaj accompanied Medhasanandaji to some sightseeing spots, first by car and then by metro arriving at the Japanese quarter. There he saw a huge stock of green coconuts and learned that the local people are fond of the coconut water. Also went to a church and small museum in the area. In the evening in the ashrama prayer hall Maharaj spoke to a gathering of about 130 people on 'Positive Living.'

Rio de Janeiro, Brazil

On June 25th Maharaj and Nirmalatmanandaji took a one-hour flight to Rio de Janeiro where they were received by a Brazilian (from Portugal) with his Brazilian devotee. His wife

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Medhasananda Trip (from page 7)

took care of the cooking for lunch at the Centro Ramakrishna Vedanta Rio de Janeiro Centre. In the evening Medhasanandaji spoke to a gathering of about 100 on 'Positive Living' translated by a Professor Alvato. The talk was followed by dinner.

The following day (26th) was one of sightseeing by car and the guidance of Ms. Lushan, a Swiss professional tour guide who had emigrated to Brazil, visiting Urca Hill and Sugarloaf by Mountain Cable Car. They returned to the Centre for lunch and Medhasanandaji took a little rest. That evening he sang at vespers and it was apparent that the devotees were very fond of music under the direction of Pedro, a great lover of music who also knows many Indian songs. Pedro's younger son, Ganesha, is a bright young man, his elder brother and mother all joined in. Later that evening Medhasanandaji met many devotees and spoke on the Vedanta Movement in Japan, again translated by Professor Alvato.

On the 27th Medhasanandaji visited the colossal statue of Jesus Christ with its welcoming, open arms.

In the morning of June 28th there was more sightseeing and they went to the beach and drank coconut water by the Atlantic ocean. After evening vespers Maharaj sang again, and with about 30 devotees attending, a Q&A session was held.

On June 29th Medhasanandaji went to see a beautiful Catholic church. Then at Cultural Centre of Rio there were many tourists, police and security personnel. Then to the waterfront and the Museum of Tomorrow, a science museum inaugurated on the occasion of the Rio Olympics. Later that evening there was another Q&A session.

During this stay in Brazil Medhasanandaji said he was pleased to meet intimately with so many devotees and their families. Some names include Louis Antonio, Vice President of the Society and a very interesting and, dynamic elderly devotee of about 82 years who was the main architect of the Centre and his wife.

Brazilian devotees had long been visited and inspired by Swami Bhavyanandaji (UK), Swami Ritajanandaji (France), Swami Pareshanandaji (Argentina), Swami Paratparanandaji (Argentina), and Swami Bhaskaranandaji (Seattle USA). Today in addition to Sao Paulo, there are centres in Rio and 2 other locations managed by devotees.

San Francisco - Berkeley, California

Medhasanandaji left Rio by American Airlines on 29th and arrived in Miami after about a 10-hour flight on June 30th and not having slept yet, spent two hours in passport control, immigration and security before flying on to San Francisco via another American Airlines flight. Five hours later Medhasanandaji was greeted by Swami Vedanandaji about 12noon at San Francisco International Airport. From there they drove to the Vedanta Society of Northern California ashrama in San Francisco. There Medhasanandaji was greeted by Swami Tattwamayananda, Minister in Charge, and Swami Aparanandaji. He met some devotees before taking lunch and a much needed rest.

That afternoon Swami Vedanandaji showed Medhasanandaji the recently renovated old Hindu temple founded by Swami Trigunatitanandaji, a direct disciple of Sri Ramakrishna, with land purchased in 1904. He was briefly taken by car down to the shore of San Francisco Bay and

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Medhasananda Trip (from page 8)

returned to the Centre where Swami Prasannatmanandaji, Head the of Berkeley Centre, arrived by a car driven by Shayam, an American devotee, to cross the bay to the Berkeley Vedanta Centre in the evening.

July 1st was spent leisurely at the Centre. On the 2nd there was a Ramakrishna Mission alumni meeting in the afternoon organised by Dr. Shivaprasad Bhattacharya, a Deoghar Alumnus. About 12 Narendrapur, Deoghar and Vidya Mandir alumni attended and there was a fruitful discussion on how to activate the role of alumni of the Ramakrishna Mission in the USA. Medhasanandaji shared his thoughts on the subject too. The 3rd of July was spent leisurely at the ashrama and meeting devotees.

July 4th is a special day of celebration in the USA as it is a holiday that marks America's Independence and for local Vedanta Centres it has become a traditional day to commemorate Swami Vivekanandaji's passing away at Belur Math. To participate in the celebration Swami Prapannanandaji also arrived from the Sacramento Vedanta Society and Swamis Vedanandaji and Aparanandaji came from San Francisco across the bay.

The programme started at about 10:15 opening with chanting from the Rig Veda. Medhasanandaji conducted a guided meditation for about 50 minutes in the morning session. In the afternoon he spoke on 'Positive Living' for about 15 minutes followed by Q&A with the swamis. The other swamis also spoke and there was recitations of songs, flower offerings and a prasad lunch. About 160 people attended. Medhasanandaji took a walk in the vicinity after the programme's conclusion and noted that nightfall seemed to come quite late there. (Daylight Saving Time is not practiced in Japan.)

Fukuoka, Kyushu, Japan

On the 5th of July Prasannatmanandaji and Shyam came to San Francisco Airport to see Medhasanandaji off. The scheduled flight to Los Angeles (LAX) was delayed and was booked onto another American Airlines plane due to depart in 40 minutes. Speedily through security he rushed to the gate and was able to board. Flying time to Los Angeles was about 2 hours. At LAX Medhasanandaji again passed through all the passport inspection and security and boarded his return flight to Narita Airport Japan on another JAL-AA Alliance flight. About 12 hours later he arrived in Narita on the 6th of July. From there he was booked on another JAL flight to Fukuoka on Japan's Kyushu Island arriving about 7PM. There he was received by Miwako-san and Shanti-san and they escorted him to the Okura Hotel where he rested.

On the 7th of July Medhasanandaji had breakfast and went on to the 2-day, 15th Annual Yoga Therapy Society Conference, International Joint Congress 2017 in Fukuoka. Here he led the opening Vedic Peace Chant with Mr. Keishin Kimura, President, Japan Yoga Niketan and Japan Yoga Thereapy Association, at his side at 8:30 AM. Mr. Kimura had also spoken at the Vedanta Society's Swami Vivekananda: 154th Birth Celebration on Sunday, on May 28, at the Indian Embassy Auditorium in Tokyo. As Medhasanandaji stood on the stage with Miwako-san, Mr. Kimura announced a new Japanese language book release by the Vedanta Society of Japan, 'Rebirth and Law of Karma,' to the conference.

After the conference Medhasanandaji also joined a special dinner at the hotel in the evening hosted by the Yoga Therapy Association in honour of the Indian Ambassador, Mr. Chinoy.

Zushi, Kanagawa, Japan

Swami Medhasanandaji returned to the Zushi Centre on the night of July 9, after about a three-week tour.

A Story to Remember

The Snake and the Mahâtman

A snake once dwelt In a certain place. No one dared to pass by that way. For whoever did so was instantaneously bitten to death.

Once a Mahâtman passed by that road, and the serpent ran after the sage in order to bite him. But when the snake approached the holy man he lost all his ferocity, and was overpowered by the gentleness of the Yogin.

Seeing the snake, the sage said, 'Well, friend, thinkest thou to bite me?' The snake was abashed and made no reply. At this the sage said, 'Hearken, friend, do not injure anybody in future.' The snake bowed and nodded assent. The sage went his own way and the snake entered his hole, and thenceforward began to live a life of innocence and purity without even attempting to harm anyone.

In a few days all the neighbourhood began to think that the snake had lost all his venom, and was no longer dangerous, and so every one began to tease him. Some pelted him, others dragged him mercilessly by the tail, and in this way there was no end to his troubles.

Fortunately the sage again passed by that way, and seeing the bruised and battered condition of the good snake, was very much moved, and inquired the cause of his distress. At this the snake replied, 'Holy sir, this is because I do not injure any one, after your advice. But alas! they are so merciless!'

The sage smilingly said, 'My dear friend, I simply advised you not to bite any one, but I did not tell you not to frighten others. Although you should not bite any creature, still you should keep every one at a considerable distance by hissing at him.'

Similarly, if thou livest in the world, make thyself feared and respected. Do not injure anyone, but be not, at the same time, injured by others.

Ramakrishna; His Life and Sayings (Saying 286) by F. Max Muller (1898)

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