



AUGUST 2018 - Volume 16 Number 08

# The Vedanta Kyokai Newsletter

NEWS, UPDATES AND MISCELLANY FROM THE VEDANTA SOCIETY OF JAPAN

September 2018  
Calendar

## Birthdays

**Sri Krishna  
Janmashtami**  
Sunday, 2 Sep

**Swami  
Advaitananda**  
Saturday, 8 Sep

## Zushi Events

2nd (Sun)  
NEW  
**Half Day Retreat  
at Zushi**  
14:00~16:00  
<benkyo.nvk@gmail.com>

16th (Sun) 11:00~  
**September Zushi  
Sri Krishna Birth  
Celebration**  
Chanting, Reading,  
Discourse  
Lunch Prasad  
Afternoon Session  
All are welcome!

18th (Tue)  
**Gospel Class  
At Zushi**  
(14:00~16:30)  
**Details on these &  
other events on page 2**  
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## ❀ Thus Spake ❀

*"All the powers in the universe are already ours. It is we who have put our hands before our eyes and cry that it is dark."*

- Swami Vivekananda

*"Fear not. What is not real, never was and never will be. What is real, always was and cannot be destroyed."*

- Sri Krishna

## The Annual Summer Retreat at Lake Kawaguchi

Summary Report by Yuko Nitta

The Vedanta Society of Japan's Annual Summer Retreat was held from July 14th to 16th at Lake Kawaguchi, registered as a World Heritage Site of Yamanashi Prefecture, at the base of Mount Fuji. Thirty-seven members participated in the retreat at Hotel Koryu by Lake Kawaguchi. "Positive Living and the Bhagavad Gita" was the theme of the main discourse during the retreat this year.

Arati at 6 p.m. led by Swami Medhasanandaji (Maharaj) initiated the first day's programme. Hymns of "Khandana Bhava" and

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• September 2018 •

## Schedule of Events Vedanta Society of Japan

1st (Sat) (10:00~12:00)

**Discourse on Bhagavad Gita - At the Embassy of India in Tokyo**  
(in Japanese only) (bring photo ID) <http://www.gita-embassy.com/>

2nd (Sun) 14:00~16:00

### **Zushi Half-day Retreat**

Chanting, Readings on meditation and spiritual life  
Discussion, Meditation, Tea and snacks  
Please contact: [benkyo.nvk@gmail.com](mailto:benkyo.nvk@gmail.com)

8~10th

### **Satsanga in Imabari**

Please Contact: Shioji (090-9542-1477)

15th (Sat) (10:00~12:00)

**Discourse on Upanishad - At the Embassy of India in Tokyo**  
(in Japanese only) (bring photo ID) <http://www.gita-embassy.com/>

16th (Sun)

### **Sri Krishna Birth Celebration**

Morning Session/Lunch/Afternoon Session  
At the Zushi Centre Annexe (10:30~16:30)

18th (Tue)

### **Gospel Class**

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

22nd (Sat)

### **Discourses in Osaka and Kyoto**

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

23~24th

### **Satsanga in Fukuoka**

Please Contact: Kyokai (046-873-0428)

28th (Fri)

### **Nara Narayan: Service to homeless Narayan**

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

## **NOTICE: Swami visits India from September 26th to October 23rd.**

29~30th Weekend

### **Namaste India in Tokyo Yoyogi Park**

Visit the Ganga Book/CD Stall and say, "Hello!"  
<http://www.indofestival.com/index.html>

Every Saturday (from 10:45-11:45)

### **Yoga-Asana Class - At the Annexe**

Please Contact: Hanari 080-6702-2308 <<http://zushi-hatayoga.jimdo.com/>>



Hotel Koryu Altar

**Summer Retreat** (from page 1)

“Sarva Mangale Mangalye” were chanted in front of an altar of the Holy Trinity of Sri Ramakrishna, Holy Mother Sarada Devi and Swami Vivekananda. Then Japanese devotional songs to Sri Ramakrishna were sung accompanied by Jyokei Sato, a nun of Zentsuji Temple of Kagawa Prefecture, on guitar and Shanti-san on keyboard. “Thank You Vivekananda” was sung by all participants with guitar accompaniment. After the song there was a reading from “The Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna” and Maharaj’s discussion about meditation was followed by a guided meditation for about an hour.

Dinner at 7:30 p.m. began with the chanting of the prayer at meals “Annapurne Sadapurne” and “Om Brahmarpanam”. Because Mauna (silence) was practiced during the retreat, all the participants silently concentrated even during meals. When meals were finished we read from “The Eternal Companion” (Eien no Hanryo) about Swami Brahmanandaji.

The satsanga started from 8:30 p.m. in the evening in the hall. All sat in a circle following the Maharaj’s instruction. It began with self-introduction, reading from ‘Swami Adbhutananda: Teachings and Reminiscences’ (Oshie to Kaisou) then Maharaj talked for

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Evening Arati



## Summer Retreat (from page 3)

some while. This year is the 125th anniversary of Swami Vivekananda's visit to Japan, and the memorial celebration was held at Kobe Port where it is regarded that Swami had landed at the end of June and the programme continued at a near-by hall. Coincidentally enough, the year Maharaj came to Japan was 100th anniversary of Swamiji's visit to Japan. The Annual Summer Retreat programme was launched in 1998 and this year marks the 20th retreat.



Morning Meditation

The second day started with meditation at Kawaguchi Lakeside of from 4:30 a.m. We could concentrate in our meditation in a pleasant mood thanks to the fresh breeze from the lake. Many remained so concentrated they did not notice lots of mosquitos. Some received 10 or more bites.

We returned to the hotel, chanted Vedic Mantras, and read from the Bhagavadv Gita, Buddhist scripture and the Bible. We then practiced Hatha Yoga as instructed by Arai-sensei, and had breakfast. All proceeded in silence.

After breakfast Maharaji's discourse continued from 9:45 a.m. for about 2 hours. Maharaji told us the "Story of Two Farmers" from "The Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna". After that he spoke on various anecdotes of saints and spoke about the secret of 'Positive Living'. At noon, we had lunch after an offering to Sri Ramakrishna and a meditation.



Morning Yoga

We rested for a short time after lunch and the discourse continued. From 4:30 p.m. we went for a walk to Sengen-Jinja (a Shinto shrine). We prayed at the shrine and after that walked along a forest trail that suddenly brought us to a waterfall right before our eyes! We were struck by the grandeur of this waterfall. Some sat upon the rock outcropping near the foot of the waterfall with Maharaji and

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**Summer Retreat** (from page 4)

spent a relaxed spiritual time meditating in nature. After that we enjoyed a snack with views of Mt. Fuji.

After walking we returned to the hotel and the scheduled programme continued as the night before.

The satsangas at night were very enjoyable with songs by Maharaji and the participants, and the singing of 'Pakhi Tui Thik Bose Thak' with Maharaji was especially enjoyable. The 3rd morning followed the same programme as the previous mornings.

I was especially moved by these words from this discourse:

- Introspection is a 'Mirror of the Heart'.
- Be the change you want to see in others.
- Be like the honey bee, not the fly!
- You can if you think you can!
- Live this moment well!

(concluded page 6)







### **Summer Retreat** (from page 5)

The participants this year were somewhat fewer, so everyone worked more closely together and enjoyed harmonious synergy. We greatly appreciate Swami Medhasananda Maharaji who taught us with deep love. We also thank Mr. Atsushi Suzuki and Ms. Shanti Izumida their long efforts and preparations as coordinators.

Finally, we offer our pranams to Thakur, Holy Mother and Swamiji.

[Translation: Shanti Izumida]

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### **Spring Retreat at Usuki City, Oita Prefecture**

A report by Ms Tomomi Shoda

On April 27th through 29th, a Spring Retreat with Swami Medhasanandaji (Maharaj) of the Vedanta Society of Japan was held at Jinen Yoga Studio in Usuki city, Oita prefecture.

The title of this year's discourse was 'Functions of the Senses and the Mind'. We reviewed Yama and Niyama, Pantanjali's ethical behaviours, which we had also studied last year. This year the discourse continued with explanations of the five Niyamas practices to Asana or seated postures, Pranayama or breathing, and to Pratiyahara or mastery over the senses. There were thirty-five participants.

With Maharaji's visit and programme Jinen Yoga Studio was filled with a holy atmosphere where we all spent fulfilling days. •

Translation by Atsumi Honda

## **Satsanga at 'Sarasya' in Mitaka, Tokyo**

A report by Ms. Sakae Machida

On Sunday, May 27, from 4 p.m. to 6:30 p.m., Swami Medhasanandaji (Maharaj) gave an open discourse at 'The Healing and Creation Space, Sarasya' in Mitaka City, Tokyo. For more than 10 years a discourse has been held once a year by Maharaj at 'Sarasya'. The title of this year's talk was 'Who am I'.

More than thirty people attended and we suddenly found we needed to urgently change from the usual 22m<sup>2</sup> room on 2nd floor to a wider event space in the first basement floor.

In the beginning, Maharaj said that he has lived in Japan for 25 years and visited many places, so he has relationships with many Japanese. He said he finds that all the Japanese he has met are basically very good, but that they don't think deeply about God, eternity or the Self. Maharaj added that this opinion was not meant to criticize the Japanese at all, but that he is just sorry that so many Japanese live without knowing the purpose of life, which is very important.

He offered his hope for us to think about the purpose of life and to inquire into it. Maharaj then asked all the participants to inquire; 'Who am I' which was the title of the discourse; highlighting the permanent vs. the transient; the infinite and the limited; and that what happens outside and inside us matter. He explained that when we inquire 'Who am I', it is important to analyze the five elements; the physical body, prana (life force), mind, ego and intelligence of which our personality consists. The discourse went on considering these five one by one, as well as the state of deep sleep.

Maharaj explained slowly that none of these five personality elements last forever and only thing which lasts forever is the real Self. Finally, Maharaj taught us the essence of Indian thought that the ones we call 'God' and the 'Self' are the same. He taught us the only way to understand this logic is by the practices meditation and introspection. He encouraged all the participants to start practicing meditation on 'Who am I' from today.

[Translation: Atsumi Honda]

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## **Tajimi City, Gifu Prefecture Satsanga**

Summary by Ms. Ayaka Kondo

On Sunday, June 24, a discourse hosted by Compass Inc. was held at Tokuinrin in Kokeizan, Tajimi City. This was the 12th discourse hosted by Compass and Ms. Ayaka Kondo organised the event this year once again.

Thirty-nine people attended an early morning meditation. After meditation, we chanted Chapter 11 from the Baghavad Gita. After breakfast, Swami Medhasananda (Maharaj) gave a discourse and forty-one people attended. The theme of the discourse this year was 'How to Be Happy as Learned from the Scriptures, Yama and Niyama'.

Maharaj explained that we should understand our life more deeply before thinking about happiness. He said Yama and Niyama, as the ethical precepts set forth in Pantanjali's Yoga Sutras, are necessary preparations of true happiness, because we cannot become happy easily. He explained that by calming and controlling our mind, we ultimately get

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**Tajimi Satsanga** (from page 7)

true happiness, and he advised the correct practices to do so, as well as some pitfalls.

Some impressions of the participants included:

- “I hope today’s study will make me have the chance to see myself”
- “I could think deeply. I could learn the importance to watch inside of myself and what happiness is.”
- “I could understand the real meaning of happiness. This discourse is very easy to understand and enjoyable and I could learn a lot. I understood the importance of meditation, so I will practice it.”

[Translation: Atsumi Honda]

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## 日本ヨギ療法学会仙台大会

### A Bookstall at Japan Yoga Therapy Association’s Sendai Meeting

Reported by Ms. Shanti Izumida

Members of the Vedanta Society of Japan participated in the Sendai meeting of the Japan Yoga Therapy Association, of which Swami Medhasananda (Maharaji) serves as Spiritual Advisor, staffing a Vedanta Society of Japan bookstall from July 5th to 7th. The Asian Yoga Therapy Society meeting was also held on the same day, so a lot of teachers from all over the world attended.

Of a total of seven volunteers, three were from the Vedanta Society and four were from the Japan Yoga Therapy Association. Our teamwork was wonderful, and from preparation to sales and clean-up all proceeded very harmoniously.

Sales of ‘The Laws of Karma by Swami Medhasananda’ released at last year’s Japan Yoga Therapy Association meeting were especially brisk. This was mainly because visitors who had purchased the book last year introduced friends to the event and brought them over to our bookstall. Some interested persons even bought several more copies to give as gifts. In fact, many of these people later queued up for a book signing (“sainkai” in Japanese) with Maharaji.

We were very happy to hear the many comments shared with us because it meant that in some small way we too had played a part in advancing a spiritual book. We had all made a conscious effort keep Maharaji’s advice ‘to work seeing God in all’ in our hearts. We are sure this was responsible for this year’s best sales results at this event!

We were happy to assist in handing holy books, CDs and miscellaneous goods to so many people and we had a very fulfilling three days. As always, thanks be to Sri Ramakrishna and Holy Mother. •

#### Thought of the Month

"We are not human beings having a spiritual experience.  
We are spiritual beings having a human experience."

- Pierre Teilhard de Chardin





Oita Satsanga



Tajimi Satsanga



Sendai Yoga w/ Gayatri Mantra CDs



Mitaka Satsanga

## ● A Story to Remember ●

### **The Parable of the Barber and the Seven Jars of Greed**

A barber, who was passing under a haunted tree, heard a mysterious voice offer, "Will you accept seven jars full of gold?"

The barber looked around, but could see no one. The offer of seven jars of gold, however, roused his cupidity and he cried aloud, "Yes, I shall accept the seven jars."

At once came the reply. "Go home; I have carried the jars to your house."

The barber ran home in hot haste to verify the truth of this strange announcement. And when he entered the house, he saw the jars before him. He opened them and found them all full of gold, except the last one, which was only half-full. A strong desire now arose in the mind of the barber to fill the seventh jar also, for without it, his happiness was incomplete. The barber converted all his ornaments into gold coins and put them into the jar; but the mysterious vessel was as before.

One day he requested the king to increase his pay, saying his income was not sufficient to maintain himself on. Now the barber was a favorite of the king, and as soon as the request was made the king doubled his pay. All this pay he saved and put into the jar, but the greed jar showed no signs of filling.

At last, he began to live by begging from door to door, and his professional income and the income from begging all went into the insatiable cavity of the mysterious jar. Months passed, and the condition of the miserable and miserly barber grew worse every day. Seeing his sad plight, the king asked him one day, "When your pay was half of what you now get, you were happy, cheerful, and contented. But with double the pay, I see your morose, careworn and dejected. What is the matter with you? Have you got 'the seven jars'?"

The barber was taken aback by this question and replied, "Your Majesty, who has informed you of this?"

The king replied, "Don't you know that these are the signs of the person to whom the Yaksha consigns the seven jars. He offered me also the same jars, but I asked him whether his money might be spent or was merely to be hoarded. No sooner had I asked this question than the Yaksha ran away without any reply. Don't you know that no one can spend that money? It only brings with it the desire of hoarding. Go at once and return the money."

The wise king's words brought the barber to his senses. He returned to the haunted tree and said, "Take back your gold, O Yaksha."

The Yaksha replied, "All right." When the barber returned home, he found that the seven jars had vanished as mysteriously as they had appeared, and his life-long savings had vanished with them.

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Sri Ramakrishna once said, "'Lust and greed' are the cause of bondage. 'Lust and greed' mean worldliness. In fact it is 'lust and greed' that keeps one from seeing God."

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