



AUGUST 2021 -VOLUME 19 NUMBER 08

The Vedanta Kyokai Newsletter

NEWS, UPDATES AND MISCELLANY FROM THE VEDANTA SOCIETY OF JAPAN

SEPTEMBER 2021 Calendar



Birthdays

Swami

Advaitananda

Monday, 6 September

Swami

Abhedananda

Thursday, 30
September

Zushi Events

COVID restrictions have been partially lifted by the Japanese government as of 21 June 2021. However, most precautions remain in place. Our monthly programmes and classes will continue with advised precautions observed.

Details on page 02!



✧ Thus Spake ✧

"Be thankful 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 fellowmen?"

- Swami Vivekananda

"There are three things which are rare indeed and are attained by the grace of God, namely, a human birth, desire for liberation, and the protecting care of a perfected sage."

- Sri Sankara

August Zushi Retreat 2021
Sri Krishna Birth Celebration
Afternoon Session

Swami Medhasanandaji and Swami Divyanathanandaji

(Article begins on page 3)

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Vedanta Society of Japan Events for August 2021

The Japanese government has eased some restrictions on travel and dining out for residents of the Tokyo and Osaka areas. The government continues to urge residents to take all possible precautions against the spread of COVID-19, including social distancing, mask wearing, and avoiding crowded areas.

As such, the Vedanta Society of Japan will continue to provide live-stream, video, and Zoom participation as noted in the schedule below. Attendance to programmes remains restricted, so contact us if you wish to attend any of the programmes.

Swami Medhasananda, President
Vedanta Society of Japan

AUGUST 2021 Calendar of Programmes

4th (Wed) August- Zoom
Weekly Upanishad Study Class
8:30 ~9:15 (in Japanese only)

7th (Sat) August
Bhagavad Gita Study Class at the Indian Embassy
* Video uploaded later
10:30 ~12:00 (In Japanese only)

11th (Wed) August- Zoom
Weekly Upanishad Study Class
8:30 ~9:15 (in Japanese only)

15th (Sun) August - Live-streaming (Bi-lingua)
Monthly Zushi Retreat
Sri Krishna Birthday Celebration
AM Session - 10:30 - Live-streaming
PM Session Talk - 14:00 - Live-streaming (Bi-lingual)

18th (Wed) August - Zoom
Weekly Upanishad Study Class
8:30 ~9:15 (in Japanese only)

29th (Sun) August - Live-streaming & Zoom
Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna Study Class
14:00 ~16:00 (in Japanese only)
* For Zoom contact: zoom.nvk@gmail.com

< **Live Streaming** >

[Click here](#) to go to YouTube.

< **Online Study Class on Zoom** >

[Click here](#) to go to the Japanese page 'Zoom'.

August Retreat - Afternoon Session (from page 1)

“Sri Krishna’s birth anniversary will be held later this month on the 30th according to the Vishuddha Siddhanta Almanac, but we are celebrating it today for our monthly Zushi Retreat on the 3rd Sunday of each month,” announced Swami Medhasanandaji (Maharaj). He then called on Swami Divyanathanandaji to chant Chapter Twelve of the Bhagavad Gita, and the congregation was encouraged to take part:

Bhagavad-Gita Chapter 12 ‘Bhakti Yoga’

Arjuna Uvaacha:

1. Yevam Sathatha Yukthaa Ye' Bhakthaah-stvaam Paryupaasate
Ye' Chaapya-ksharam Avyaktham Tessaam Ke' Yoga Vittamaaha

Arjuna said: Dear Lord, Who is better versed in Yoga - the ones who worship You in constant devotion with your form or the ones who worship You as the formless?

Sri Bhagavaan Uvaacha:

2. Mayyaa Veshya Mano Ye' Maam Nithya Yukthaa Upaasathe
Shraddha-yaa Parayopethaaha The' Me' Yuktha Thamaa-mathaaha

Sri Bhagavan said: Those who fix their minds on me and worship me (with form) ever with supreme faith, I consider them as perfect in Yoga. (Yoga meaning-- Union with God)

3. Ye' Tvakshram Anirdeshyam Avyaktham Paryu-paasathe Sarvathra-gam Achintyam Cha
Kootastham Achalam Dhruvam

But those who worship me as the formless, as the unchanging, the imperishable and the Omnipresent ONE...

4. Samniyam-yendriya-graamam Sarvathra Sama Buddhayaha Tey' Prapnu-vanthi Maame'va
Sarva Bhootha-hite' Rathaha

Those who have restrained their senses, who are even minded everywhere, who are engaged in the welfare of all the beings, verily, they also come to Me.

5. Kleshodhi-katharah-stheshaam Avyakthaa-saktha Chethasaam Avyakthaa Hi Gathir Duhkham
Deha Vadbhira-vaapyate

But for human beings, it is more difficult to realize the formless God than the One with form.

6. Yethu Sarvaani Karmaani Mayi Sanyasya Math-paraa-ha Ananye-naiva Yogena Maam Dhyaa-
yantha Upaasathe'

But those who worship me, renouncing all actions in Me, regarding Me as the Supreme Goal, meditating on Me with single minded devotion ...

7. Theshaa-maham Samud-dharthaa Mruthyu Samsaara Saagaraath Bhavaami Na Chiraath
Paartha Mayya-veshitha Chetasaam

For them whose thought is so set on Me, O Partha (another name for Arjuna), I will become very soon, the One to deliver them from this cycle of birth and death.

8. Mayyeva Mana Aadhat-sva Mayi Buddhim Niveshaya Nivasi-shyasi Mayyeva Atha Urdhvam Na
Samsha-yaha

Fix your mind on Me alone, Let your thoughts dwell in Me. (By doing so) You will live in Me here after. Of this, there is no doubt.

(con't page 4)

August Retreat - Afternoon Session (from page 3)

9. Atha Chittam Samaa-dhaatum Na Shaknoshi Mayi Sthiram Abhyaasa Yogena Tato Maam-Icchaaptum Dhananjaya

But if you are not able to fix your mind steadily on Me, O Dhananjaya (another name for Arjuna), then seek to reach Me by Abhyaasa Yoga (through constant practice).

10. Abhyaasepya-samarthosi Math-karma Paramo Bhava Madartha-mapi Karmaani Kurvan Siddhim Avaap-syasi

If you are unable to do constant practice, be intent on doing all actions for my sake; even by performing actions for my sake, you will attain perfection.

11. Athaita-dapya Shaktosi Karthum Madyoga-maashritaha Sarva-karma Phala Thyaagam Thathah Kuru Yathaathma-vaan

If you are unable to do even this, surrender thyself to me in love, not worrying about the fruits of actions with the self subdued.

12. Shreyo Hi Gnaanam Abhyaa-saath Gnaanaad Dhyaanam Vishishyathe Dhyaanaath Karma-phala-thyaagaha Thyaagaat Shaanti-ranantaram

Better indeed is knowledge than formal practice; better than knowledge is meditation; better than meditation is the renunciation of the fruit of the action (surrender in love); peace immediately follows this.

13. Adveshtaa Sarva Bhoothaa-naam Maitrah Karuna Yeva Cha Nirmamo Nirahan-kaaraha Sama Duhkha Sukhah Kshami

He who hates no being, who is friendly and compassionate to all, who is free from the feeling of I and mine, even-minded in pain and pleasure and forbearing ...

14. Santushtah Sathatham Yogi Yathaa-thmaa Dhrida Nischayaha Mayyar-pitah Mano Buddhir Yo Madbhaktah Sa Me Priyaha

Ever content, steady in meditation, self controlled and possessed of firm conviction, with mind and intellect fixed on me, such a devotee is dear to me.

15. Yasmaanno Dvijate Loko Lokaanno Dvijate Cha Yaha Harshaa-marshah Bhayo-dvegair Muktho Yah Sa Cha Me Priyaha

He by whom the world is not afflicted and whom the world cannot afflict, he who is free from joy, anger, fear and anxiety—he is dear to me.

16. Anapekshah Shuchir Daksha Udaaseeno Gata Vyathaha Sarvaa-rambha Pari Thyaagi Yo Madbhaktah Sa Me Priyaha

He who has no wants, who is pure and prompt, unconcerned, untroubled, and who is selfless in all his undertakings, he who is thus devoted to Me, is dear to Me.

17. Yo Na Hrishyati Na Dveshti Na Shochati Na Kaankshati Shubha-ashubha Pari-thyaagi Bhaktimaan Yah Sa Me' Priyaha

He who neither rejoices nor hates nor grieves nor desires, renouncing good and evil (treating both as the same), full of devotion, he is dear to Me.

18. Samah Shatrau Cha Mitre Cha Thathaa Maanaapa-maana-yoho Sheetho-shna Sukhaduhksheshu Samah Sanga Vivarjitaha

He who is the same to foe and friend and also in honor and dishonor, who is the same in cold and heat, in pleasure and pain, who is free from attachment...

(con't page 5)

August Retreat - Afternoon Session (from page 4)

19. Thulya Nindaa Sthuthir Mounee Santhushto Yena Kena Chith Aniketah Sthirah Mathir Bhakthimaan Me Priyo Naraha

To whom blame and praise are equal, who is silent, content with anything, free of selfish attachment, steady-minded and full of devotion-such a one is dear to Me.

20. Ye Tu Dharmyaam Amritam-idam Yathoktam Paryupaasathey Shraddha Daana Mat Parama Bhaktaastetiva Mey Priyaaha

Those, who follow this immortal dharma described above with devotion and faith, looking upon Me as the Supreme Goal, they are exceedingly dear to Me.

Iti Srimad Bhagavad Geetaasu Upanishadsu
Brahma Vidyaayaam Yoga Shastrey
Sri Krishaarjuna Samvaadey
Bhakti Yogo Naama Dvaadshodhyaayaha
Hari Om Tat Sat!

Swami Medhasananda then called on Swami Divyanathananda to sing Sri Krishna Vandana, a bhajan on Sri Krishna with lyrics in Sanskrit. Maharaj then requested devotees to read Chapter XII, 'Lord Krishna Manifests His Divinity to Brahma' from the Bhagavatam, a scripture on the life and play (lila) of Sri Krishna, in English and Japanese.

"When in time Krishna had become a well-known youth, He used to go out with shepherd-boys of His own age to play and also to tend the cattle in the neighbouring pasture ground of Vrindavan. When the cattle grazed in the pasture, the boys would play together. Once, after their usual play, they sat down to partake of the lunch which they brought with them. To their surprise, they suddenly saw that the whole herd of cattle was missing. All the boys, except Krishna, were much troubled. But Krishna told them they were not to worry, but finish their lunch and that in the meantime He would find the cattle.

Now Brahma, the Creator, who had stolen the herd of cattle to test the divine power of Sri Krishna, took this opportunity to steal the shepherd boys also, as soon as Sri Krishna had left them in search of the cattle. Brahma imprisoned the boys together with the cattle in a mountain cave, where by His divine power He kept them sleeping unconscious. Krishna searched everywhere for the cattle, but could not find them. Then, disappointed, He came back only to discover that the boys were also missing. Realising that all this must be someone's mischievous trick, and being curious to know the truth of the matter, He soon found through meditation and divine insight that all was a great prank of Brahma to test His divinity. At this Krishna smiled to Himself and thought is was a good occasion to teach Brahma a lesson.

He therefore left the boys and the cattle in the care of Brahma, and out of Himself created as many more boys and cattle with the forms and characteristics of the originals. Then He returned home with His mind-born boys and cattle. The parents saw no change. The mothers, as usual, kissed their boys. The cattle were house in their respective places.

Now, as before, every day Krishna went out to the pasture with the mind-born boys and cattle and played in the field. No change was noticed by anyone, except that the mothers felt a great love for their sons. Formerly they had loved Krishna more than their own boys, but now they loved them all equally, and the very sight of their children gave them the highest bliss which comes only to him who realises the presence of the blissful Self or the God of love. Truly it has been said 'None loves the children for the sake of children, but for the divine Self that is in the children.' The mothers were not conscious that Krishna had become their sons, but in their heart of hearts they felt this divinity within each child. Indeed, Krishna in the soul of all souls, the Self of all Selves with whom all souls are eternally united. In reality Krishna had become all beings. He has become, indeed, the whole universe.

(con't page 6)

August Retreat - Afternoon Session (from page 5)

This play of Krishna in many forms continued for about a year. Then one day Brahma came to visit Krishna—He was surprised to see all the shepherd boys and also the cattle, for He was sure that the boys, by his own divine maya, had remained asleep and unconscious the cave of the mountain. Brahma pondered within Himself, then suddenly a new vision opened before Him. Looking at the boys and the cattle, He saw that they were all Krishna. He looked about Him and saw Krishna in each form in the universe—Krishna in all beings and things. He saw Krishna as the light of all lights, the revealer of the whole universe, and knew that everything was He. He then lost His outer consciousness and absorbed in the deepest contemplation, He found Himself one with Krishna. Brahma now realised that Krishna, the Lord of the universe who is one without a second, who is the divine Self in all beings, was playing a divine play in human form as Krishna, the man. He realised Krishna as God, Lord of the universe.”

Maharaj then moved to the harmonium and said, “We will now sing a kirtan on Sri Krishna wherein He is referred to in many names in the lyric of this kirtan, one name meaning of black complexion, and another meaning one who attracts the heart of the devotees. This He does by the wondrous play of His flute. It symbolises the eternal call of God the eternal to the eternal devotees. Then are the names Govinda and Gopāla. Govinda, Lord of the universe, and Gopāla, which has two meanings. One meaning is the caretaker of cows, a cowherd boy, ‘go’ meaning cow. The other meaning of Gopāla is one who nourishes the universe. Another name is Hari, one who takes away or removes sins and karmas of the jivas. Madhusudanah is the one who killed the demon Madhu. Other names are Mukunda, Murari, Keshava, Yadava, Narayana and many more. The lyric also includes the word ‘jai’ before the many names for Krishna which literally means ‘victory’. Hence, the real meaning is ‘Victory to the Lord.’

I will begin with a simple reading of the lyrics:

*Govinda Jaya Jaya Gopāla Jaya Jaya
Rādhā Ramaṇa Hari Govinda Jaya Jaya
Mukunda Jaya Jaya Murari Jaya Jaya
Madhusudhana Murali Muhana Jaya Jaya
Keshava Jaya Jaya Yadava Jaya Jaya
Narayana Hari Sri Krishna Jaya Jaya*

Each of these verses were to be sung three times by Maharaj and repeated three times, and these verses sung at increasing tempos, with a final verses sung slowly. by the congregation. with enthusiasm by those in attendance with Maharaj leading the verses accompanying himself on harmonium and Ms. Shanti on keyboard. Maharaj then led the congregation in singing verses to *Hare Krishna*:

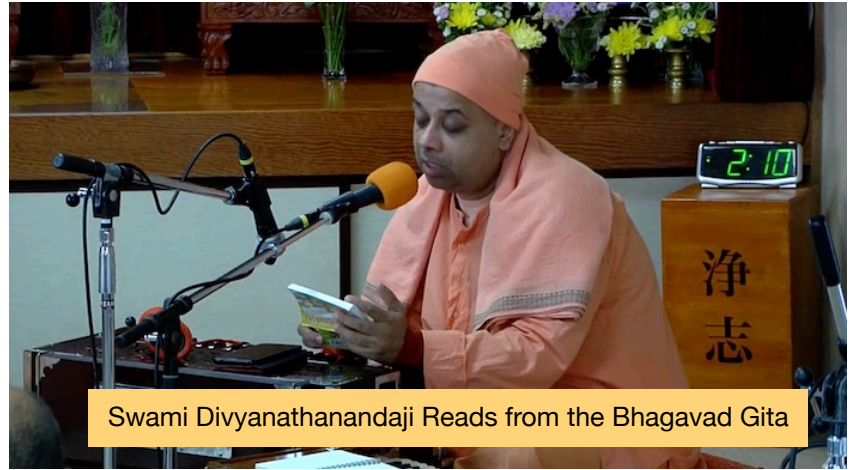
*Hare Krishna Hare Krishna
Krishna Krishna Hare Hare
Hare Rāma Hare Rāma
Rāma Rāma Hare Hare*

Microphones were then reset and Maharaj asked everyone to notice the peacock feathers featured in the picture of young Sri Krishna (Gopāla) on the altar. This is representative of the peacocks seen in Vrindavan at that time, so Sri Krishna wears a Vrindavan peacock feather in His crown. Maharaj then offered a clear sample packet of Vrindavan feather-tips for the congregation to pass around and observe. “This is a souvenir from a devotee who had visited Vrindavan with me,” said Maharaj. “I am pleased to share with you something special.

Maharaj then launched into his PM Session talk. [In this issue of The Vedanta Kyokai.] At the conclusion of his talk Swami Divyanathananda closed the session with the hymn ‘Bhaja Govindam’. ●



Swami Medhasanandaji Begins PM Session



Swami Divyanathanandaji Reads from the Bhagavad Gita



Swami Divyanathanandaji Sings 'Krishna Vandana'



Swami Medhasanandaji Leads 'Govinda Jaya Jaya' with Ms Shanti.

August Zushi Retreat 2021
Sri Krishna Birth Celebration
Afternoon Session Talk
Swami Medhasananda

Religiously speaking India is quite unique in that a galaxy of spiritual leaders and a few incarnations of God have been born or have appeared there. The most famous of these are three: Sri Rama, Sri Krishna and Buddha Deva. The Sanskrit equivalent of 'incarnation of God' is 'Avatara' which means 'descent of God on earth', or in other words, 'the special manifestation of divinity in a human being.' Divinity in this sense meaning 'divine qualities,' and these qualities are renunciation, truth, purity, compassion, universal love, love for God, etc. A person in whom we see the greatest manifestation of these divine qualities we call an Avatara or incarnation of God. Not only do we recognise those Avataras of Indian birth, but we also recognise such personalities born elsewhere, for example, Jesus Christ of Nazareth.

Religious Belief Continues to Grow

If we objectively compare the lives of all Avataras, however, we must conclude that the most eventful life of all these incarnations of God was that of Sri Krishna. Sri Krishna's life is profound, dramatic, and multi-dimensional at the same time. With regard to India, Sri Krishna touched every aspect of not only religious life, but of the social and cultural life of India as well.

There are lots of people who are believers in a materialistic philosophy without faith or belief in God, there are also many agnostics who declare that there may be some supernatural power, but that we are unable to know of it. In spite of all such people and the allure of hedonism, the interesting thing is religions, on the other hand, are not dwindling, they still spreading. Religions are spreading all over the world. Sri Krishna was born at least three thousand five hundred years ago, and yet we see how He has become global. He was from a remote corner of India and all these years later we cannot say that Sri Krishna has disappeared into obscurity, but has grown ever more universal and global in the midst of materialism, atheism and agnosticism. It is a fact which is astonishing.

Compare such incarnations or prophets with those great heroes who received the applause and adoration of multitudes by their power? Where is Alexander? Where is Solomon? Charlemagne? Napoleon? Hitler? They are now hiding their faces in the pages of history. The incarnations of God, on the other hand, live on, inspiring ever more millions and millions of humanity.

A Perilous Birth

Sri Krishna is said to have lived for one hundred and twenty-five years. He was born in a prison (dungeon) to Devaki and Vasudeva of aristocratic heritage. The story goes that baby Krishna had to be switched with a baby girl born to Yashoda and Nanda, the king of the cowherds living on the other side of the Yamuna River in Gokula. Nanda was a friend of Vasudeva. Devaki and Vasudeva were imprisoned because Devaki's brother, Kamsa, was a cruel and evil-minded tyrant who had deposed Ugrasena, his father, the King of Mathura. He heard a divine voice say that the eighth male child born to his sister and Vasudeva would kill him. This is the reason Kamsa imprisoned the couple, and later when Kamsa learned their eighth child, Sri Krishna, was being brought up in Gōkula, he sent in many demons to kill the child. The demons all failed and were killed by the divine infant with the help of His supernatural powers.

Episodes in Vrindavan

The child Sri Krishna (Gopala) was very naughty and mischievous and would enjoy playing

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many pranks on Yashoda and the neighbouring women. The profession of Nanda and their many neighbours was the production of milk and other milk-made products. Gopala loved to steal butter and milk confections, and even break the earthen pots. Gopala would not only eat the spoils Himself, but would share with His many friends and even the monkeys. When the neighbourhood ladies would complain to Yashoda about Krishna's behaviour, she would ask them why they did not scold Him themselves. They would answer that when they scolded Him, He would smile with such a sweet smile that they would simply forget about what He had done being so enamoured by His charm. In fact, though outwardly they showed anger and annoyance, they actually loved the divine child Krishna more than their own children, and welcomed the pranks Krishna played on them.

One day for some reason young Krishna was spotted eating soil. His friends rushed to Yashoda to tell her about what Krishna was doing. She reprimanded Krishna saying that they had so many good things to eat, why was He eating dirt? Krishna denied eating soil when reproached by Yashoda, so she demanded He open His mouth and show her. When Krishna opened His mouth Yashoda saw the whole universe including herself engulfed inside His mouth.

Sri Krishna Enjoys Pure Love

The Vrindavan episodes are full of stories that depict the dual aspects of Krishna's life; the divine aspect and the human aspect. The important thing to remember is this: Should we witness the supernatural powers of a person, what would our attitude be towards that person? Some sort of awe and inspiring respect? One wonders with all the many examples of the supernatural powers of Krishna witnessed by Yashoda, Nanda, and all the friends and neighbourhood villagers, why they failed to bear in mind the supernatural and divine aspect of Sri Krishna. The answer to this question is that if by seeing the supernatural powers of Krishna, Yashoda or Nanda or even friends and neighbours thought of Krishna as God, they could not love Him as their child or friend or neighbour, and Krishna would have been deprived of enjoying the pure love the people of Vrindavan had for Him.

Krishna Himself wanted to test that love, that pure love of the gopas, the male population of the cowherd tribe, and the gopis, the female population of Gökula. This is why one moment they would witness the divine power of Krishna, and the next He would make them forget His true form by His inscrutable power. This is a very interesting aspect of Krishna's life which is depicted in the Bhagavatam.

We can better understand this by comparing our love of God, and the love that the people associated with Krishna's childhood had for Krishna. With our love of God there is a sense of respect, a sense of awe, a sense of distance, and some expectation is attendant. In their love of Krishna, however, there is no such respect, or awe, or expectation, or distance. There is just unadulterated love, in Sanskrit 'abyabhicharini bhakti' or prema bhakti. In pure love there is no such sense of respect, awe, distance, nor any expectation, just love for the sake of love. We see many 'loves' here and there around us, parents for their children, husbands and wives for each other, but can you see a single example of love for the sake of love?

This, in fact, is the characteristic of the gopas' and gopis' love for Sri Krishna—a rare example of love for the sake of love, unadulterated love or prema bhakti. There is a song that goes, 'Ami mukti dite kator nai, bhakti dite kator hoi': meaning the Lord says, "I grant liberation if one prays for it, but if one longs for pure devotion I hesitate to grant it." The meaning is that pure love is very rare, even among the most devout of devotees, this type of love is rare. In Indian scripture we find the description of a prevalence of such pure love only in Vrindavan, where the
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Sri Krishna Talk (from page 9)

gopis and gopas had pure love for Sri Krishna. That is why Brahma, the Lord of Creation, has said, "I want to be born as a blade of grass in Vrindavan to touch the dust of the gopis who had pure love for Krishna."

There is also the Rāsālīla, or the Dance with Krishna with the gopis. This event has mostly been misunderstood and misinterpreted. The gopis were so pure and so utterly devoid of body-consciousness that they were privileged to enjoy divine joy by dancing with the Lord of the universe. Krishna, the Supreme Lord, created the gopis out of Himself to get a taste of that ananda (joy) absolute bliss, and danced and sported with them. This is the deeper meaning of the Rāsālīla,

Krishna Slays Kamsa

As a young man, Krishna and his elder brother, Balarama, ventured to Mathura where Krishna killed Kamsa, the evil king who terrorised his subjects, as had been foretold. Krishna then freed His parents, Devaki and Vasudeva, from their imprisonment, and also enthroned Ugrasena, who had been deposed by his wicked son, Kamsa. Krishna was then sent to a teacher of scriptures named, Sandipani, to receive the necessary training and education. When Jarasandha, brother to Kamsa's two widowed wives, came to know that Krishna had slain Kamsa, he attacked Mathura with a powerful army. Seventeen to eighteen times Jarasandha launched such attacks on Mathura, each time being defeated by Krishna and Balarama.

Krishna Creates Kingdom of Dwarka

Krishna wanted to create a new kingdom in the west of India, and by his divine power established a kingdom in Dwarka, an island distant and immune from the repeated attacks of Jarasandha. There He moved with all His people and ruled for many years. Most of that territory is now submerged and only the palace of the place still remains. Jarasandha was later killed by Bhima, one of the five Pandava brothers, in a powerful wrestling match.

(con't page 11)

The Kurukshetra War

The famous Kurukshetra War was fought between two family groups of cousins, the Pandavas and Kauravas. Duryodhana, the eldest son of blind King Dhritarashtra of Hastinapur, the Kuru Kingdom of the Kauravas, was a ruling tyrant much like Kamsa. Though the Pandavas had equal rights to the kingdom of Hastinapur, and despite many negotiations, Duryodhana refused the legitimate claims of the Pandavas. Finally, Duryodhana declared that ownership of the kingdom would be decided by a war between the two families.

Both parties sought Sri Krishna's help since Krishna himself, who was the greatest warrior of the time, had His own powerful army called Narayani Sena. Incidentally, Krishna was a son of an aunt of the Pandavas. However, Krishna offered two options: One, they could choose to use His army, or two, they could choose to have Him. If they chose Him, He would not fight and only be an advisor, while His army would fight on His behalf if so chosen. Duryodhana chose Krishna's sizeable and powerful army, while Arjuna, on behalf of the Pandavas, chose Sri Krishna to act as his charioteer in battle. The war fought on for several days with many deaths, and ended with the victory of the Pandavas.

It was on the eve of this war that Arjuna looked across the battlefield and decided he could not fight and kill his teachers at arms or his relatives and friends. Sri Krishna then gives Arjuna life advice which constitutes the Bhagavad Gita. This Bhagavad Gita is set on the eve of the Kurukshetra War and is full of the eternal teachings of Sri Krishna in verse form.

Which Krishna Ideal?

So we must now include Kurukshetra to our list of places concerned with the life of Sri Krishna. To recapitulate, His birth was in Mathura, His escape to Gokula, the move to Vrindavan, His return to Mathura to slay Kamsa and free his parents, His creation and rule of the kingdom of Dwarka, and then to Hastinapur and the great Kurukshetra War. Of all these places, two have become most prominent in the life of Sri Krishna, and they are Vrindavan's Krishna and Kurukshetra's Krishna.

Let me ask the question: Which Krishna should we follow as an ideal? The Krishna of Vrindavan as a model or the Krishna of Kurukshetra as a model? Please bear in mind that in the Bhagavatam one gets a much more detailed view of Vrindavan, while in the Bhagavad Gita one gets more detail of Krishna's philosophy and His instructions. So the Gita depicts one ideal and the Bhagavatam presents another ideal or aspect of Sri Krishna. In Vrindavan's Krishna we get the depiction of the ideal of pure love between God and his devotees, the gopas and gopis, and in Kurukshetra we get a message emphasising the performance of one's duty in a detached way, that is, the practice of Karma Yoga. In Vrindavan we see the enjoyment of mutual love between God and his devotees in various ways in the Bhagavatam, but the Gita presents a call to duty. Arjuna was reluctant to do His duty, so Sri Krishna instructs him 'Don't be a eunuch! Do your duty!', without being attached to its result, and at the same time to constantly remember the Lord.

[Maharaj then proceeded to ask individuals in the congregation which Krishna they would choose and pressed some for the reasoning of their choices.]

Vrindavan Ideal is Most Unattainable

The point I am trying to make is that Vrindavan's ideal of pure love for God is the rarest of rare things, and many may desire it, but only a very few are blessed with it. We must remember the lyric of the song when the Lord says: 'I don't mind to give liberation, but I am loath to give

(con't page 12)



Sri Krishna Talk (from page 11)

pure love.’ This is because one with pure love of God has a hold over the Lord, and God is bound by that love and the Lord does not want to be bound. The Lord was bound by the simple hearted gopas and gopis, and by their unbounded and unadulterated love of God. not by Arjuna. This is why God does not want to grant pure love.

In fact, unless we are completely free from our ego-consciousness, be pure in body and mind, God becomes our only object of love, and we surrender our whole being to Him, only then can we comprehend the love of the devotees for Krishna and Krishna’s love for them, but there remains a possibility of completely misunderstanding Him, especially His divine sport with the young milkmaids. In the present state of our body and mind, it is impossible for us to emulate the Krishna of Vrindavan.

In short, Vrindavan’s ideal of love is unreachable for us, because we are not qualified. We are all, however, qualified to practice the teachings of the Bhagavad Gita and set the Sri Krishna of Kurukshetra as our ideal and enrich our spiritual life. This is reachable! This is doable! This is why Swami Vivekananda (Swamiji) said that presently we had better not dilate on the Vrindavan Krishna, but rather focus on Kurukshetra’s Sri Krishna as our ideal. ●

• Thought of the Month •

“In order to see, you have to stop being in the middle of the picture.”

- Sri Aurobindo

**Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose and the Japanese Patriots
Who Upheld the Indian Independence Movement**

A Talk by

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Part III - Conclusion

On June 14th Netaji and Prime Minister Tojo had a second meeting. The two of them exchanged political views, and discussed Japan's ideology of the Greater East Asia Construction, and opinions concerning the restoration of India. In response to this, Prime Minister Tojo, on the 16th of the same month, at the plenary session of the House of Representatives at the 82nd extraordinary parliament, which had been open from time to time, declared while looking up at Netaji, who was observing the proceedings:

"India is still under the heavy oppression of Britain. In order to attain complete independence, it has revealed a firm determination to use every means in its power, convinced that the day when its freedom and prosperity will arrive, is not far away. (India intends going about it even) without the completion of the Greater East Asia War, without the liberation of Greater East Asia, without the construction of Greater East Asia, without the welfare of the Greater East Asian people."

On June 19th of that year, Netaji held a press conference and issued a statement saying:

"Japan was the first powerful nation in Asia to stop the tide of invasion that struck Asia in the 19th century. Japan's victory over Russia in 1905 was the point of departure for Asia. It was a point, which was heartily welcomed by the Indian people. The reconstruction of Asia still needs a strong Japan, as it did in the past."

He further declared,

"India and Japan were strongly linked by ancient cultural laws that date back 2,000 years, but the cultural negotiations were terminated as an outcome of British rule in India in the modern era. However, when India becomes independent, there is no doubt that this Japan-India relationship will be revitalized and strengthened."

Nevertheless, prior to his press conference with Prime Minister Tojo Hideki, Netaji had a meeting with Bose of Nakamura on June 1, 1943, in Room 217 of the Imperial Hotel, along with Colonel Yamamoto Toshi. The moment they entered the room, the two Boses looked at each other, and firmly shook hands. Gradually the handshake turned into a hug, and for a while time passed without any words being said. Eventually however, the two began speaking in Bengali. Bose of Nakamura valued Netaji as a great figure in the freedom movement, while Netaji treated Bose of Nakamura with the reverence due to an elder or senior. They displayed mutual respect for one another. Bose of Nakamura informed Netaji of his intention to delegate him as the representative of the Indian Independence League. In response, Netaji highly praised the past achievements of Bose of Nakamura, and readily expressed the view that he would make efforts to equal his status.

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The two Boses then visited Toyama Mitsuru at his residence. The meeting with the representative Japanese patriot whom Bose of Nakamura most admired and looked up to, was what impressed Netaji the most during his visit to Japan. Netaji had long known of the prestige enjoyed by Toyama Mitsuru in Japan. The British governmental authorities in India were concerned enough about him to ban a newspaper, merely because it had published a picture of this protagonist of 'Greater Asia.'

Netaji was aware that by ignoring the orders of the Japanese government, Toyama Mitsuru had shown an unusual resolve to assist these unnamed anti-British Indian youths and freedom fighters, namely Rash Behari Bose and Mahendra Gupta. Netaji visited Toyama Mitsuru, to express his gratitude to him for the favor he had shown to traditional Indian patriots, like Rash Behari Bose. He prayed for Toyama Mitsuru's health and said, *"When India has become a country of the Indians, please pay us a visit."* He then thanked him for the amity Toyama had so far extended, and requested his future assistance as well. Toyama Mitsuru who had welcomed them was greatly pleased. Felicitating the future independence of India, he said, *"Both of you have the same surname of Bose. From today, I wish to relate to both of you as though you two were a single person."*

Netaji was deeply moved by these words. Netaji had heard that Toyama Mitsuru and the assemblage of Ronin affiliated with him, were all fervent supporters of Bose of Nakamura. It is said that Toyama Mitsuru, who had come to love and care for Netaji and Bose of Nakamura as though they were a single individual, was associated with them for over 20 years. His facial expression was always full of sincerity and warmth, and Netaji became confident that the conflicts between factions and sects, which he had found to be most taxing, could be resolved by a single word from Toyama Mitsuru. In this way, the position of Subhas Chandra Bose as the Netaji (leader) of the Indian Revolution, became established.

Netaji was devoted to Bose of Nakamura, viewing him as a trailblazer from his hometown in Bengal, and he always displayed a deep respect for his self-effacing, unassuming, and gentlemanly character. Upon the conclusion of what he had been scheduled to do in Tokyo, Netaji appeared in Singapore on 27th June and made an impassioned speech before soldiers of the Indian National Army, and the Indian masses. The words "to Delhi," became at that time the catchphrase of the Indian battle for freedom when he said:

"All I can give you now is hunger and scarcity, and orders to march and march. Only an honourable death. The problem is not as to who among us will live and see the freedom of our motherland, or who among us will die and later gain the freedom of our motherland. We will only march on to Delhi. To Delhi (Chalo Delhi)!"

On October 21, 1943, the Azad Hind government was formed in Singapore. On November 5th of the same year, the Greater East Asia Conference was held in Tokyo, with representatives from the Manchu Empire, the Nanjing Government of the Republic of China, Burma, Thailand, and the Philippines. Since India was not included in the Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere, Netaji joined the conference as an observer.

In the course of the meeting, the Prime Minister of Burma, Ba Maw, made a very hard-hitting speech, wherein he said, *"there can be no liberation of Asia without the liberation of India,"* and a resolution was adopted stating, *"we offer sympathy and maximum support to the Indian struggle for freedom."*

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Amidst this unstinting approbation, Netaji, who was deeply touched, affirmed as follows:

“When all is said and done, the creation of an Asia for Asians, the so to say, All Asia Co-prosperity Sphere, is not an alliance of bandits as seen in the world alliance. There is no doubt at all that it will pave the way for a true national society. At the same time, it must not be forgotten that these dreams of the new world, the new Asia, and the free and prosperous Greater East Asia, depend on how soon we can win the World War. As far as India is concerned, our fate is inseparable from that of Japan and its allies in World War II.”

At the Greater East Asia Conference, Prime Minister Tojo Hideki received an assertion saying, *“We are ready in the near future to revert the Andaman and Nicobar Islands that are currently seized by the Japanese army, to the free Indian government.”* On December 29th of that year, Netaji visited the Andaman Islands. At that time, Netaji consulted Commander Ishikawa Shigeru of the Navy’s 12th Special Ground Corps, and offered to send a delegation of the Azad Hind government to the Andaman Islands, and make the deputy chief of the delegation the general affairs section chief of the Ministry of Civil Affairs.

The Japanese military agreed with the former but opposed the latter, because it dealt with military secrets. Finally, it was agreed that a new “education section” would be set up in the Ministry of Civil Affairs, with a person from the Azad Hind government assigned as chief of the education section, and other sections.

On the following day, February 12, 1944, on the basis of an agreement, Ensign A.D. Loganadan, Army Surgeon of the Azad Hind Government, visited the Andaman Islands, and opened a Residential Police Box. On September 8th of that year, representative Loganadan and other expatriates were ordered to return, by the end of June 1945. On August 2nd of the same year, everyone returned to Singapore, by evading the British attack.

The reason Netaji called for the reversion of the Andaman and Nicobar Islands to the Azad Hind Government was to make the Azad Hind Government legal as a state, by obtaining a governing body, objects and territories to be governed.

The involvement of the Azad Hind in the governance of the Andaman and Nicobar islands, was realized as involvement in the affairs of the Japanese military, but the issue was resolved in a little over a year. Until the defeat of Japan, it was not possible to abolish military affairs and formally transfer governance.

Nevertheless, on January 7, 1944, the Indian National Army led by Netaji moved its headquarters to Rangoon in Burma, the aim being the military liberation of India. There, Netaji met the commander of the Army that was involved in the Burmese quarter, namely Lieutenant General Kawabe Masakazu.

Lieutenant General Kawabe, on observing Netaji’s fortitude with reference to India’s freedom during the welcome banquet and also later, was totally charmed. He praised him highly saying, *“He is a wonderful man. There are not many men like him even among the Japanese.”*

It was decided that Lieutenant General Kawabe would take command of “Operation Imphal,” for the Japanese invasion of India. Later, Lieutenant General Kawabe recalled, *“The inability to overlook Chandra Bose’s grand scheme was agonising. It clouded pure strategic decisions.”*

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At this time, in various parts of the Asian and Pacific fronts, the Japanese army was inferior to the armies of Britain, the USA, and their allies including Australia. For the Japanese military, “Operation Imphal” was no more than an unnecessary and non-urgent operation.

It is said that the backdrop to the execution of this operation was the “feeling” the Japanese military had towards Netaji. Netaji often urged the Japanese to join the Indian National Army in Operation Imphal, which was confusing to the Japanese. He often insisted that the Indian National Army be permitted to participate in the Imphal Operation, and made repeated requests for this. This was also an issue that confused the Japanese army.

In June of that year, it was clear that the operation had failed because of the shortage of Japanese troops available to fight the troops of the British and USA, but Lieutenant General Kawabe stated, *“On this operation depends the fate of both Japan and India. Even with one horse and one soldier let us push Mutaguchi (Mutaguchi Renya, Commander of the 5th Army). And I am going to die with Chandra Bose.”*

Due to the failure of the invasion of Imphal, the Indian National Army then fought the Allied forces mainly in Burma. The soldiers of the Indian National Army were originally defeated Prisoners of War (POWs) of the British Indian Army. However, reinforced daily by the fierce training of Netaji, they became a confident and elite army on the Burmese front. The Japanese army was proud of its own mental strength. Yet on seeing the spiritual battling power of the Indian National Army, they became an army that could be ranked as ‘indescribable.’

It was the gift of the revolutionary impact of Netaji, that taught them the noble cause of liberation, and inflamed the psychology of tens of thousands. Netaji was not just a passionate revolutionary, but a rarely seen and talented politician. With reference to the Japanese government and military, he clearly made them accept him as a comrade striving for independence with equal rights.

In particular, Netaji never admitted interference by the Japanese military in speeches that appeared in broadcasts and documents. This was something that was thoroughly seen to by his subordinates. He made efforts to strengthen the armed forces of the Indian National Army, by submitting requests one after another to his comrades in the Japanese army. Moreover, beginning with equal courtesy between Japanese and Indian troops, he secured equal rights between Japan and India regarding the provision of military supplies, equipment, military command, administrative power in occupied territories, and jurisdiction.

There was not a single soldier in the Indian National Army who considered himself subservient or subordinate to the Japanese. They were proud of being honourable warriors and freedom fighters of India. For them, apart from offering them pride in what they were as a people, Netaji instilled within them a sense of duty to fight to the death. At the Burma front the Indian National Army marched with the Japanese to Assam on the Indian border, but they were forced to withdraw due to lack of supplies.

Despite the fact that the situation was extremely unfavourable, it is recorded in history within many testimonies that the Indian National Army soldiers, who wanted a duel to the death, showed a fierce fighting spirit and fought a heroic battle. Even though it was an issue of extreme grief for them, the Empire of Japan accepted the Potsdam Declaration, and this led to the end of the war.

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Netaji (from page 16)

After Netaji, who is viewed as the greatest combative revolutionary in the history of India's independence, numerous charismatic legends have arisen which continue to this day. Meanwhile, the Indian National Army soldiers were tried by the British Indian Army for "treason." They however openly responded in court saying, *"We may be rebels to Britain, which controls India, but we are liberators for Indians who aspire for independence."* And they also said, *"to fight beside Netaji, is a lifetime honor."*



The Indian people outside the prisons opposed the trial. They began a general strike, which developed into urban warfare. The fierce anti-British flames ignited by the trial burned in a particularly violent manner in the Bengal region, wherein lay the hometowns of the two Boses.

Even Nehru, the Chairman of the Indian National Congress, who denounced Netaji as a fascist collaborator during the war, came to recognize the independent battle of the "one party of Chandra Bose," and had no choice but to stand in favor of the defence. So in response to the violent riots that spread all over the country, Britain had no choice but to recognize the independence of India. Consequently, on August 15, 1947 (Showa 22), India finally broke the fetters of British colonial rule and became independent.

Speaking of August 15th, it was the day when Japan immolated itself for the cause of the liberation of Asia. Owing to its defeat in the war, in the Far East International Military Tribunal (Tokyo Tribunal), a revenge drama was enacted in the form of lynching Japan. The two Boses and the Bengali Justice Radha Binod Pal were the only ones to insist on cold international doctrine, and acquit everyone. Justice Pal explained the imposing legal theory as follows:

"Not only does this trial violate international law, it is just a trial of revenge violating non-retrospective law, which is the ironclad rule of a law-abiding society, and tramples on the criminal statutory principle. So everyone is not guilty."

Prime Minister Nehru, who visited Japan in 1957, expressed his gratitude and respect to Okawa Shumei and Kuzuu Yoshihisa of the Black Dragon Society. They were imprisoned in Sugamo prison as Class A war criminals during the International Military Tribunal for the Far East, since the United States and United Kingdom were hostile towards them. Yet Prime Minister Nehru paid them tribute, as representatives of the friends of India among the Japanese. Suzuki Ichiro of the Black Dragon Society who had served Uchida Ryohei and Toyama Mitsuru, often said, *"When I die, I want to die surrounded by my Indian friends."*

Joyce C. Lebra, the American author of "Chandra Bose and Japan," wrote the following in her book:

"Very recently (in the early 1970s), American scholars have begun to re-examine the purpose of Japan's war and have begun to revise earlier dogma. In the opinion of scholars, the Pacific War (Greater East Asia War) was not just a Japanese version of Western capitalist imperialism. It was even more threatened by the advance of Western nations into Asia. It was a

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Netaji (from page 17)

battle to defend its survival interests. Moreover, the idea of the Great East Asia Co-prosperity Sphere, which was typically regarded as the ambition of the Empire of Japan to include Asia, should also be re-examined.”

Okawa Shumei, was alleged to have gone mad, since he hit Prime Minister Tojo Hideki on the head at the International Military Tribunal for the Far East. He was dismissed for shouting “Come, Indian!” in German.

Okawa Shumei stated as follows in his ‘*Shin Ajia Shoron*’:

“We are pleased to welcome to Japan Subhas Chandra Bose, who may be called the ‘Sword of India.’ Bose will understand Japan as the sword of Asia, more than any other leader of the Indian National Movement. Bose will accurately convey Japan’s sincerity and passion for India, inform them how they must fight at the time of this one-off event, and encourage the struggle. Prime Minister Gandhi is making India a ‘non-fighting Arjuna.’ Bose will make it a ‘fighting Arjuna.’

And Netaji would shout, ‘When advancing with the Indian National Army, I vowed to fight side-by-side with the Japanese army under the slogan, ‘sink or swim together.’ In reality however, we are not sinking now. Justice will always triumph, and according to heavenly providence, we will swim together, fight together, and win together.”

Thank you for your kind attention. ●



(L~R) Mr. Taniguchi, Swami Medhasanandaji, Mr. Tanaka

• Story to Remember •

Three Days in the River

Each day before sunrise, Guru Nanak would go to the river to bathe in the cool water and sing God's praises. But one day he disappeared and could not be found. His clothes were still lying next to the riverbank, but there was no sign of Nanak. The people walked up and down calling, "Nanak, Nanak," hoping against hope that they would find him. They grew afraid that he had drowned.

But Nanak was far from the reach of any of them. He was in a divine trance in which he was sitting in God's own presence. God gave him a cup of nectar and said, "I am with you. Go and repeat My Name, and teach others to do the same."

Nanak was so filled with love for God that he sang the first part of the Japji:

"Ek Ong Kaar, Sat Naam, Kartaa Purakh, Nirbhao, Nirvair,
Akaal Moorat, Ajoonee, Saibhang, Gurprasaad, Japa.
Aad Sach, Jugaad Sach, Haibee Sach, Naanak Hosee Bhee Sach!"

God looked upon him with infinite kindness and said, "My Name is God, and you are the divine Guru."

After three days, Nanak came out of the river. The villagers gasped in disbelief. They had given up any hope of ever seeing him again. For a long time, he said nothing. Finally, when he did speak, he said, "There is no Hindu, there is no Muslim."

From that day on, he spread the message to everyone that all are equal, and equally loved by God, no matter how they worship him. He also taught that the best way to show their love for God is by praising His Name.

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