



June 2011 - Volume 09 Number 06

## 日本ヴェーダーンタ協会ニュースレター The Vedanta Kyokai Newsletter

NEWS, UPDATES AND MISCELLANY FROM THE VEDANTA SOCIETY OF JAPAN

### Monthly Calendar

#### SATSANGA SCHEDULE

##### Satsanga in Iizuka

Date: 12 June 2011

Theme: Purpose of life

Please Contact: Hisako Kobayashi  
(090-8624-4415)

##### Satsanga in Fukuoka

Date: 11 June 2011

Theme: Mental peace

Contact: Sari Araoka  
(092-734-3310)

##### Sapporo Yoga Conference

Invocation

Date: 25 June 2011

<http://www.yogatherapy.jp/>

##### Discourse in Mitaka

Date: 18 June 2011

Theme: Brahman-Maya

Please Contact: Sarasa Kataoka  
(0422-41-8618)

##### Shivananda Yoga Japan Tokyo

Center Inauguration Ceremony

Date: 26 June 2011

Theme: Positive Approach to

Living: the Spiritual Way

<http://www.sivananda.jp>

### Birthdays

There are no birthdays of note  
according to the Vishuddha Siddhanta  
Almanac for the month of June 2011

### Kyokai Events

#### • June Zushi Retreat •

"The Practice of  
Buddhism Today"

Guest Speaker:

**Makino Gyogi Shonin**

(Buddhist Monk)

Sunday 19 June 11 a.m.

All are Welcome!



### ✧ Thus Spake ✧

"God is one's very own. It is the eternal relationship. He is everyone's own. One realizes him in proportion to the intensity of one's feelings for him."

... Sri Sarada Devi

"As fragrance abides in the flower; as reflection is within the mirror, so does your Lord abide within you. Why search for him without?"

... Guru Nanak

### Vedanta Society of Japan Celebrates Swami Vivekananda's 149th Birth Anniversary in Tokyo

For the second year since its inauguration the beautiful new Indian Embassy Auditorium in Chiyoda Ward Tokyo was the site for the Vedanta Society of Japan's annual public celebration of Swami Vivekananda's birth on Sunday, May 22, 2011. Still reeling from the devastating effects of the natural twin disasters in March the Celebration Committee decided on a briefer, more solemn event than those of past years.

At 2 p.m. celebration MC, Professor Kathy Matsui, introduced Swami Medhasananda who gave the invocation with Vedic prayers. The swami then offered a prayer for the victims of the Tohoku disasters with all in attendance standing and paying homage to the deceased. Afterward, Sri Sanjay Panda, Deputy Chief of Mission, Embassy of India, offered a flower bouquet to Swami Vivekananda.

Swami then read the following message from Revered Swami Atmasthanandaji, the President of the Ramakrishna Math and Mission:

*"I am extremely happy to know that the Vedanta Society of Japan will be*

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**Swami Vivekananda** (from page 1)

*celebrating the 149th birth anniversary of Swami Vivekananda on Sunday, May 22nd.*

*"In this current age of scepticism, uncertainty and fear, the message of divinity of the soul as expounded by Swami Vivekananda is the only way to bring lasting peace and joy in the hearts of man.*

*"May the strength-giving message of Vedanta bring hope and succor to all the people of Japan.*

*"On this auspicious occasion, I extend my love and affectionate blessings to all the members of the Society.*

Mr. and Mrs. Panda were then called upon to officially release the Society's new Sri Ramakrishna Arati CD and a Special May Issue of the Universal Gospel magazine. Deputy Chief Panda then gave a welcome speech (presented in full in subsequent issues of this newsletter).

The auditorium lights were brought down and Swami then led a guided meditation, a favorite segment of the annual Vivekananda celebration, and a very popular audio download for the Society at CDBaby.com.

In keeping with the decision to abbreviate the event only two speakers were scheduled and the much appreciated cultural event was cancelled.

The theme of the this year's celebration was The Role of Spirituality in Positive Living and talks were given by Dr. Tsuyoshi Nara, Professor Emeritus of Tokyo University of Foreign Studies, and Ms. Rie Ueno, president of Compass Japan. A question and answer session followed.

Ms. Shanti Izumida led a choral group composed of members of the Vedanta Society and Kailas Yoga School assembled on stage in a closing song, Vivekananda Namoh Namah, an original composition byfrom her Kokoro ni Saku Hana CD of devotional songs in Japanese.

With a vote of thanks by Mr. J. M. Chandrani and closing remarks from MC Matsui, refreshments were served in the foyer where the Society had set-up a very busy, if temporary, bookstore.

*Note: We will present the speeches and snapshots of events noted in this report in subsequent issues of the Vedanta Kyokai newsletter.*

• **Thought of the Month** •

**Ability will never catch up with the demand for it.**

**... Confucius**



**Volunteers gather onstage before the start of Swami Vivekananda Birth Anniversary event.**

## UNIVERSAL PRAYER MEETING



### Ueno Open-Air Theatre, Ueno Park, Tokyo

Art of Living Japan organized a Universal Prayer Meeting on Saturday, 30 April 2011 to offer prayers for peace and love to the people, the country, the environment and in particular, those of our brothers and sisters in north-eastern Japan who were adversely impacted by the tsunami and earthquake of March 11, 2011 at 2:46 p.m.

Over 50 people from different walks of life, from children to the elderly, from planned attendees to casual strollers in the park, attended the event. It was a pleasantly warm and bright spring afternoon. The event was graced by eminent examples and representatives of multiple spiritual paths. A beautiful serenity quickly descended on the gathering and the spirit of calm and love that pervaded was unmistakable.

The eminent guest speakers were Reverend Kurokawa Kobun, Head Priest of Chouryuji Temple in Asakusa, Tokyo, Catholic Father Cyril Veliath of Sophia University, Swami Medhasananda of the Sri Ramakrishna Mission and Head of the Nippon Vedanta Kyokai and Swami Sadyojathah of the Art of Living who had come from Bangalore for the occasion.

A brief welcome was given by Professor Takuya

Kaneda, Director, Art of Living Japan.

The main event then began with Swami Medhasananda reciting passages from the holy Bhagavad Gita and explaining the transience of life and the importance of service and of being centered.

Reverend Kurokawa Kobun began by offering a prayer to the Buddha. He then shared his experiences where he and some other priests in Tokyo performed the last rites for many people impacted by the disaster,

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Fr. Cyril Veliath



Reverend Kourakawa Kobun

### **Art of Living** [from page 3]

but had nobody available to perform them on site.

Father Cyril Veliath cited a few verses from the holy Bible. The Father was ably supported by a student Choir from Sophia University.

Swami Sadyojathah spoke about the impermanence of life and how such events lead us to dive within our selves. The Swami led the audience into a deep meditation. He urged everybody to work together for the quick revival of the impacted Tohoku region.

The common thread sown by the eminent guest speakers was on the impermanence of the material and of the importance of service and the universality of love.

Donation boxes were kept at the event venue. A sum of Yen 110,000 had got collected. The entire amount will be utilized for Tsunami Relief.

The event concluded with the singing of Bhajans and spiritual songs and with Prayers for the peace of all and a quick return to normal life in the Tohoku area. •

## **Swami Gives Talk in Sendai**

On 5 May 2011, Swami Medhasananda went to Sendai, one city damaged by the recent Tohoku earthquake and tsunami disaster. Swami gave a talk organized by Yoga School Kailas in Sendai City on "Inner Peace" as a special guest speaker for the yoga session. Approximately 30 people, including the yoga instructor(s), attended.

As part of his efforts to assess the damage in the area, Swami met with resident Buddhist monks, Daisen Kurosu and Renjo Miura, in Sendai on referral from Hoken Suzuki, a monk at Ryukoji, Enoshima, and friend of the Vedanta Society of Japan. He discussed with the local monks the emergency needs of those most adversely affected by the earthquake and tsunami and support the Society could provide. •



Swami addresses students of Kailas Yoga School in Sendai.



## DISASTER RELIEF REPORT JUNE 20, 2011

The following goods were sent to the Iwate Industrial Cultural Center, a relief resource depot in Iwate Prefecture, directly from the store they were purchased on June 20th.

laundry detergent 80 x 1kg boxes  
dish liquid 150 x 400ml containers  
food preparation gloves 2000 pair

**Total ¥61,980. Thank you!**

*Please visit our website for more information on how you can help our efforts.*

### Swami Attends 3rd Oita Yoga Retreat

On April 9 and 10, the third Oita Yoga Retreat was held at St. Maria Cloister in Yufoin, Oita Prefecture. Swami Medhasananda was the guest speaker of yoga instructors, Yasu and Yuko Jinen, and Masanobu and Michiko Shinriki from Usuki, Oita. Fifty people joined in the overnight programme including many young participants.

Swami gave lectures on Bhagavad Gita again this year focusing on Triguna (three primary qualities of universal nature associated with creation, preservation and destruction) and addressing issues such as why people have such different characters and natures, how God created the universe, and how can we achieve targets in life. We learned a lot about the qualities of rajas, sattva and tamas.

The Retreat programme included meditation and reading from scripture very early in the morning, lectures in the morning and afternoon, vespers and guided meditation, and yoga asana lead by Jinen. We also walked with Swami along the streets with cherry blossoms in bloom. The sisters at the cloister cooked for us with all their heart. For the night of satsang (holy company), Chizuko, Ravi and Oto of the Masaki family gave a concert where we enjoyed their gentle and purifying songs.

With the lectures and Q&A sessions, Swami provided us with a lot of helpful advice.

Contributed by Mr. and Mrs. Shinriki



Masaki Family Offer Songs

Swami Lectures and Attendees Take Notes at St. Maria Cloister





## Outdoor Summer Retreat 2011 Mitake-san - Shukubo Nobori

### Date / Venue

- 29 July (Friday 5pm) to 31 July (Sunday 5pm)
- [Shukubo Nobori] (宿坊 能保利)

Address: 95 Mitakesan, Ome-shi, Tokyo  
TEL: 0428-78-8443,  
WEB: <http://www.mitake-nobori.com/>

### By Reservation Only

- Adults ¥13,000 per night. ¥25,000 two nights, ¥6,000 day visit.  
Student discount: College students 30% off, younger students 50% off. Payment upon arrival.  
*Donations to defray other outdoor retreat expenses are welcome.*

- Contact: Kaori Izumida (Shanti) 090-5575-0971  
Email: [shanti.k@r3.dion.ne.jp](mailto:shanti.k@r3.dion.ne.jp)  
Fax: 045-893-2832

## • A Story to Remember •

### Love in Action

One night a man came to our house and told me, "There is a family with eight children. They have not eaten for days," I took some food and I went. When I finally came to the family, I saw the faces of those little children disfigured by hunger. There was no sorrow or sadness in their faces, just the deep pain of hunger. I gave the rice to the mother. She divided it in two, and went out, carrying half the rice with her. When she came back, I asked her, "Where did you go?" She gave me this simple answer, "To my neighbors-they are hungry also."

I was not surprised that she gave—because poor people are generous. But I was surprised that she knew her neighbors were hungry. As a rule, when we are suffering, we are so focused on ourselves we have no time for others.

... Mother Teresa

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