



OCTOBER 2016 - Volume 14 Number 10

The Vedanta Kyokai Newsletter

NEWS, UPDATES AND MISCELLANY FROM THE VEDANTA SOCIETY OF JAPAN

NOVEMBER Calendar

Birthdays

Swami Subodhananda

Friday, November 11

Swami Vijnanananda

Sunday, November 13

Kyokai Events

5th & 19th (Sat)

Discourse Bhagavad Gita & Upanishads

India Embassy Tokyo
(in Japanese only)
(from 14:15 - 15:30)
www.gita-embassy.com/

20th (Sun)

Monthly Zushi Retreat

From 11AM Discourse
Lunch Prasad
Afternoon Session
All are welcome!

See Page 3 for:

- Yoga Asana Lessons
- Tokyo Yoga Center Satsanga
- Sendai Satsanga
- Akhanda Japam Zushi
 - Nara Narayan: Service to Homeless
- Discourses in Osaka



✧ Thus Spake ✧

“Remain always strong and steadfast in thy own faith, but eschew all bigotry and intolerance.”

- Sri Ramakrishna

“No man is a true believer unless he desires for his brother what he desires for himself.”

- Prophet Muhammad

Hamamatsu Satsanga August 2016

Report by Chiyo Nakagawa

On Sunday 7 August, Maharaj gave a discourse on ‘Live A Better Life- Reflect on Purposes & Meanings of Life’ at the study session held by Yoga Ryohoshikai Shizuoka (Yoga Therapist Group, Shizuoka). The following is a summary of the report of the event provided by Ms Chiyo Nakagawa.

The Universal Prayer mantra beginning with asato maa sadgamaaya includes words meaning from negativity to positivity, such as ‘from non-real to real’ and ‘darkness of ignorance to light of wisdom.’ Negativity refers to anxiety, worry, jealousy, etc. and positivity sustainable happiness, peace in mind, purity, harmony, liberty, power of intellect and ethics.

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Hamamatsu (from page 1)

Our mind is sometimes positive and sometimes negative. A negative mind is narrow-minded, judgemental and pessimistic. Those with such a mind only want what others have but never think about giving what they have. They are always trying to find fault with others, just like flies looking for something dirty. People with a positive mind keep giving without expecting anything in return, do not mind mistakes and try to look at what is good about others just like honeybees looking for sweet honey. We should try to become honeybees, not flies.

Being positive needs patience. To be patient, forgetting and forgiving are important. The key to having a positive mind is trying to live this moment. If you keep worrying about the future and regretting the past, that is not only meaningless but



you are actually wasting the present. Although we cannot change our future or past we can control this moment ourselves, so let us try our best for now. This moment is the base of the future and if we can make each moment better now, we can make our future better.

What gives you pleasure instantly and is addictive, such as alcohol, is likely to be eventually poisonous. On the other hand, what is hard to continue every day, like yoga and meditation, gives good results after all. Learning and good habits, if done each day, make it easier for us to stay positive.



Also, when we have a hard time, it is important to not run away but face it. As the roots of trees get stronger with gusty winds, we can develop ourselves by dealing with difficulties. All the power is already inside us, we just need to manifest it. We should believe in the power within, rather than in God. We do not have to look for 'power spots' out there as we have one inside. There are no friends or enemies outside. You are the friend and enemy to yourself.

Still, we can sometimes become negative. At such times, please remember that 80% of your worries actually do not occur. Also, you can stop having negative thoughts by:

- 1) Repeating holy words or mantra in the mind;
- 2) Focusing on living this moment; and
- 3) Sleeping moderately, working moderately and having fun moderately.

• END •



• Vedanta Society of Japan •

NOVEMBER SCHEDULE of EVENTS 2016

5th (Sat)

Discourse on Bhagavad Gita- At the Embassy of India in Tokyo

(in Japanese only) (from 14:15 - 15:30)

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

13th, 20th, 27th (Sundays)

Yoga-asana session - At the Annexe (from 14:00-15:30)

Please Contact: Hanari (080-6702-2308)

6th (Sun)

Satsanga in Tokyo Yoga Center

Please Contact: Hanari (080-6702-2308)

11th~12th (Fri~Sat)

Satsanga in Yamagata

Please Contact : Takahashi (023-645-3282)

13th (Sun)

Satsanga in Sendai

Please Contact : Miyako Sato miyadevi@m6.gyao.ne.jp

19th (Sat)

Discourse on Upanishad - At the Embassy of India in Tokyo

(in Japanese only) (from 14:15 - 15:30)

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

20th (Sun)

Monthly Retreat at Zushi

At the Kyokai (from 11AM)

Chanting • Reading • Discourse / Lunch Prasad / Afternoon Session

23rd (Wed) National Holiday

Akhanda Japam

At the Kyokai (from 5:00am-20:00pm)

Please Contact: Mitamura (vedanta.karmayoga@gmail.com)

25th (Fri)

Nara Narayan: Service to Homeless Narayan

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

26th (Sat)

Discourses in Osaka (Japanese language only)

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

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

Namaste India 2016

A report by Ms. Shanti Izumida

The Namaste India was held this year on September 24 and 25, 2016 in Tokyo's Yoyogi Park. This is the largest Indian Festival held in Japan and the Vedanta Society of Japan also participates each year with its Ganga CD & Book Shop.

This year some 21 volunteers participated in all aspects of the project. Preparations began at our Society headquarters in Zushi one week beforehand, collecting items from our storage unit at nearby Holy Mother House and then with pricing and packaging the many items to be put on display in our temporary bookshop to be set up at Yoyogi Park.

From 7AM on the 24th seven volunteers chanted Om Sahana Vavatu (a Vedic peace mantra) and prepared the Ganga CD & Book Shop to open at 9AM. The weather turned for the worse later in the afternoon with rain and winds becoming strong in the evening, requiring attention to the structure and goods to be wrapped and protected from rainwater being blown into the booth. Due to the inclement weather there were few visitors this day, but we could leisurely meet with those who did stop by with questions on India, Vedanta and the practices of Yoga.

On the 25th the morning was sunny and by noon was becoming a hot summer day. This brought great crowds of Tokyoites to the event and the day soon pulsated with all the hustle and bustle of an event in India. Soon our booth was buzzing with activity, and with Swami Medhasananda arriving around 3PM, the atmosphere enlivened both the staff and the many visitors. Swami tirelessly took up explaining prayer beads; helping with selections of incense; discussing the content of CDs

and even signed those he recorded for customers. We were also pleased that Mr. Dwiptanil Bhattacharjee, a sarod player, and Kazuto Sashihara, a tabla player, visited our booth after their performance on the event stage.

This very large event once a year is a wonderful opportunity for the Vedanta Society of Japan to be exposed to the local population. Many guests return to visit us here each year and they are always warmly welcomed. This, in turn, results in a good reputation for us and new faces to be greeted with "Irrashaimase," the traditional Japanese "welcome" for such a venue.

Of course, none of this can be possible without the help of so many enthusiastic volunteer staff that handle all the operations necessary to accomplish this task, from packing to driving, from set-up to tear-down, from passing out flyers to running the cash register. With their help the Society was able to sell all the cloth and accessory items this year.

The day ended with the chanting of Purnamadah (Vedic peace mantra) in giving thanks to Sri Ramakrishna for the blessings and safe conclusion to this year's Namaste India event. •

• Thought of the Month •

"Music in the soul
can be heard by the universe."

- Laozi (Lao Tzu)

Namaste India Photos



Imabari Satsanga (Shikoku) August 2016

Report by Ms. Noriko Shioji



On 27 and 28 August, we held a spiritual retreat in Imabari City, Ehime Prefecture for which we invited Swami Medhasanan-daji (Maharaj) to give discourses.

On the first day, Maharaj discussed "Calmness of the Mind" in a temple in the city from 5pm. Following the discourse he gave a guided meditation as ten out of the 25 people present joined this annual retreat for the first time. We enjoyed a calm state of mind for about 20 minutes.

We spend the whole next day at municipal facilities in a quiet, beautiful and green suburb. The programme began at 5am with meditation and reading from the scriptures followed by yoga asana, breakfast and walk.

Afterward Maharaj talked on "Yama and Niyama". Although yama is just about morality and therefore seems easy to observe, it actually has a deeper meaning. Looking back on my day-to-day life, I reflected on my behaviour very much.

After lunch, he continued with his discourse saying niyama is about practice and that it is im-

portant to try to do good every day, even if just a bit of it. I decided to bear that in mind and to follow it as much as possible going forward, hoping to control my mind, so as to make it my friend, not my enemy.

At 4pm, the retreat ended and we parted from one another. I am grateful to Maharaj that we had the opportunity to spend a holy, tranquil time together. I hope to invite him to provide us support for spiritual learning again next year and to show him how much progress we will have made in our spiritual development.

(Translated by Ms. Satsuki Yokota)



• A Story to Remember •

The Tree God and the Bad Promise

Since bygone eras people have held curious local and cultural beliefs. One such is that a large or old tree is inhabited by a tree god or spirit, and if a promise is made to this tree spirit, it would help them in some way. If they concluded the spirit had indeed helped, they were then obliged to keep the promise made.

Once upon a time in the holy city of Kasi in northern India, a man came upon an ancient banyan tree. He immediately thought to seek the help of this tree god with a problem, and promised that he would perform an animal sacrifice in return for his wish being granted.

Now it just so happened that later his wish was fulfilled, but whether by this tree god or a demon or kismet - no one can know. The man, however, was sure the tree spirit had answered his prayer, and determined he must keep his promise. Since it was a big wish, it called for a big sacrifice, so he gathered many goats, mules, chickens and sheep and collected the firewood to offer the helpless creatures as a sacrifice.

The spirit of the banyan tree suddenly appeared and said, "Oh friend, you made a promise to me and now believe you are bound by that promise. However, if you commit such an unwholesome act, even though promised, the unpleasant results will put you in much greater bondage. You may be forced to suffer the results of this act in this life and perhaps even in rebirths in hellish worlds! The only way to release yourself from further bondage is to give up all unwholesome acts, completely!"

"And furthermore," he continued, "since you consider me a god, what makes you think I eat meat or have any interest in the flesh of animals at all? Haven't you heard that we tree gods relish better things? My being is sustained by good earth, rains, sunlight and the like. And while I appreciate the spirit in which the occasional sweetmeat is offered by a pilgrim, I have no need of flesh offerings at all!"

The stunned and thankful man understood his mistaken notions and greatly appreciated the compassion of this tree god. From that day on, instead of making promises that would only bring about an unhappy future to himself, he dedicated his life to performing only those wholesome deeds that would serve and benefit all.

The moral is: Keeping a bad promise is worse than making one.

- From Buddhist Tales

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