



The Vedanta Kyokai

News, Updates and Miscellany from the Vedanta Society of Japan

September - October 2004

Volume 2 Number 8

Thus Spake...

"What good is it, if we acknowledge in our prayers that God is the Father of us all, and in our daily lives do not treat every man as our brother?" ... Swami Vivekananda

"As a mother, even at the risk of her own life protects her son, her only son; so let him who has recognized the truth, cultivate goodwill without measure among all beings."
... The Buddha

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Monthly Calendar

• Birthdays •

Swami Advaitananda
Monday, September 13

Swami Abhedananda
Tuesday, October 7

Swami Akhandananda
Tuesday, October 14

• Kyokai Events •

September

September Retreat

*See story on page

October

October Retreat &

Shimbashi Talk Cancelled

See USA Visit story on page 9

Mount Mitake Retreat 2004

Contributed by Ashish Gupta

The annual Spiritual Retreat was held at Mitake-san from August 6 Friday evening to August 9 Monday noon and 31 people attended, of whom 16 participated in the annual retreat for the first time.

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Mount Mitake Retreat (from page 1)

The retreat schedule was nearly the same as the previous year. Wake up at 5 am, followed by meditation, chanting, bhajans and reading. Then there was an optional Yoga (exercise) session followed by breakfast. The swami gave a discourse which started at 9 am. Then there was optional meditation followed by lunch. In the afternoon, there was a question and answer session with guided meditation followed by tea and sightseeing. The evening program started at 6 pm with Arati, reading and meditation followed by supper and a general gathering. All then would retire to bed around 10 pm. During most of the day, participants were expected to observe silence.

During the introductory gathering after dinner on Friday, the Swami talked about the advantages of such a retreat. He said that some of us practise spiritual discipline at home but still we cannot shake off the worldly air. Thakur had said that it was possible for householders to realize God, but they needed to retire into solitude now and then for as many days as possible. And at least for one day. By coming to such a retreat, our mind and body are spiritually recharged. We regain our enthusiasm and with renewed energy can go back to our homes to continue the fight.

On Saturday, Swami gave a lecture on "Learn to make the whole world your own". The title is part of Holy Mother's last advice given to a lady devotee five days before she discarded the body. This lecture was continued on Sunday and Swami joked that once Swami Vivekananda had explained one piece of advice from Sri Ramakrishna for 7 days, and now with his very limited capacity could explain one given by the Holy Mother for only two days. He said that if we have to carry anything from this retreat, let it be this advice. The full text of Mother's advice is as follows:

"Why do you fear? You have seen the Master. But I tell you, if you want peace, don't find fault with others. Find fault with yourself. Just learn to make the whole world your own. No one is alien. This whole world is your own."

The swami said that this advice is like a mantra. It is so important; so significant for our life. In the London Center, for example, this advice is chanted daily before meals, after 'Brahmarpanam'. The participants of the present retreat were handed pieces of paper with this advice and all chanted it before lunch. "Let us try to see the deeper significance of this statement," said the Swami. "There is a vast difference between reading and studying. Generally we read scriptures. We do not study. If we study, we ourselves can get much light from the statements. My advice is that instead of reading much, study a little."

The basic points covered during the entire two-day

lecture are given below for continuity.

In elaborating on "Why do you fear?", Maharaj said the following:

"There are various causes of fear. The main amongst them are the fear of death and the fear of suffering, all embodied beings have to suffer. You cannot avoid problems, disease, old age and death. Whether you worry or you do not worry, whatever will happen will happen. But one should face these with courage, without fear. The difference between a foolish and a wise person and between a secular and a spiritual person is in how they face suffering. Everyone has to suffer as long as they take up the body. The wise person, the spiritual person will suffer, but will keep his peace of mind. The fool will double his suffering by worrying about and not accepting his suffering. So, the Holy Mother says that since we have spiritual knowledge and strength, we should not be afraid.

"The greatest fear is the fear of death. All know that we have to die. Everyone thinks that I too shall die, but not soon! There are different ways of facing death. Materialists and atheists feel tremendous pain, fear and worries. Because they are attached to life, the face of the dead shows how fear took hold of the person. Stoics accept death in a calm way. But they have not made any deep enquiries into the nature of death, they did not solve the mystery of death, and so their death is in one sense an ignorant death. Theists who believe in God, but in namesake only, too are afraid of death. Spiritual aspirants face death depending on the intensity of their struggle. If they have faith, by God's grace they can face death without any fear. Devotees who have unshakable faith in God, face death in good humor. Jnanis who have realized the Atman too are not afraid of death, because they know that the Atman does not die, it is only the body which has death.

Explaining the sentence, "You have seen the Master", Swami said the following:

"What is the meaning of seeing? The evening arati bhajan - khandan bhava bandhana - has a line which says, 'vikshane moha jay'. This means that by seeing you, delusion is destroyed. Here, the sanskrit word 'vikshane' means to see very deeply. Not only seeing while alive or a photo. But seeing with great devotion and concentration. Once Swami Shivananda was asked - Will all those who have seen Thakur be liberated? Swami Shivananda asked in return - what is seeing? Not glancing with physical eyes. But loving, accepting, following. Same with "coming to Sri Ramakrishna". It does not signify physical closeness. But loving, accepting, following. So, no fear if we have seen Sri Ramakrishna in that sense.

Again, elaborating on "If you want peace", the swami continued:

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Mount Mitake Retreat (from page 2)

"Fear is negative and peace is positive. So, now we are talking of the positive aspect. "If" is used because all people do not want peace. Most want excitement for the senses. Restaurants, movies, sightseeing - everyday something sensational.

In providing a thorough examination of the advice, "Don't find fault with others. Find fault with yourself", Swami said:

"Don't find fault with others. Find fault with yourself. Learn to make the whole world your own. No one is an alien." These are a bunch of advises put together for getting peace. The central, core, quintessential statement is : Learn to make the whole world your own. These statements have both negative and positive aspects, but this is the core statement.

"Why do we find faults? There are many reasons. First, we take it for granted that we are free from the defect which we are finding in others. When we criticize others for greed, anger etc., we think we do not have them, or even if we do have them, we have them in a lesser degree. The Bible says that you are worried about a grain of sand in another's eye but are not aware that a log of wood has entered your own eye. The basis for this fault finding is our egotism and false idea of our character and qualities.

"The second reason why we find faults is that sometimes we do not understand correctly the situation in which a person is behaving, and we criticize. A monk saw a young maiden being carried away by a stream. He jumped in, caught hold of her and carried her back to the shore. After seven or eight days, a brother monk asked him why he had carried a maiden. He was a monk and so should have kept away from the maiden. The first monk asked the second one, when did you hear about it? The second monk replies, about seven days ago. The first one said, yes I carried the maiden. But I left her then and there. You are carrying her for the last seven days. So, the second monk was finding faults because he was not aware of the situation. The basis for this fault finding is our narrow outlook.

"The third reason for finding faults is our lack of patience and love. The less we have patience and love for others, the more we find faults in them. We find more faults with people we do not like. The more dissatisfied we are, the more we find faults. These incidents happen very often in our daily lives. The basis of this fault finding is a lack of patience, compassion and satisfaction.

"The fourth reason, in some cases, is a kind of mental disease." In elucidating this point the Swami shared the following anecdote: "During a sermon to his congregation, a Christian preacher declared that Jesus Christ was the only perfect man the world had ever known. One parishioner then stood up and

disagreed with the preacher on this point. He told the congregation that, in fact, his wife had pointed out on numerous occasions that her previous husband was perfect too; that this ex-husband didn't make mistakes and was more generous, thoughtful and kind than he. He went on to say that his wife pointed out his short comings on every possible occasion in comparing him to her ex-husband." The swami said that such chronic fault-finding is a mental disease.

"The fifth reason is imperfection. Swami Vivekananda said that since we are imperfect, we see imperfection in this world. There is the example of a child who did not recognize the act of stealing when a thief stole money from the room. The saints do not see sin as we do. They see God in both a sinner and a saint.

"There are two ways of finding fault - verbal and mental. Verbal includes to the person directly and to another person. Mental fault finding we almost continually do! Somehow we can stop finding faults verbally but it is very difficult to stop mental fault finding.

The Swami then delved into the effects of "fault finding" saying:

"Now we will consider the effects of finding faults. First, we share the sin. In fact when we read stories of crimes day after day in the newspaper or see it on TV, we are effected by it in a subtle way. You cannot forget it. It will reappear in your mind. Even in meditation it may reappear. Though you do not want it, it will reappear. Holy Mother said that washer men, while cleaning other people's clothes, themselves get dirty.

"The second effect is that it disturbs our mind leading to peacelessness. The third effect is that it makes our mind narrow. It enhances our egotism and hatred. First we find faults. This leads to disliking which degenerates to aversion and finally hatred.

Offering practical remedies to "fault finding", the Swami said further:

"Now let us consider how to stop finding faults. First is self analysis. Do I have the same fault which I am seeing in the other person? Impress upon yourself that fault finding is not good. Find your own faults. The more we do this, the less will we find faults with others. Finding faults with others is negative and destructive. Finding faults with ourselves is positive and constructive.

"The second way to stop finding faults with others is to see good qualities in other people. Try always to see the positive side. The more we train ourselves for this, the less we will see faults in others. One of the vows which is ceremonially taken in the Ramakrishna Order to become a brahmachari is a sanskrit verse which says - the flies like filth, the bees like honey; let me be like a bee and be always attracted to the good qualities of others. Everyone has negative and positive sides.

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• Thought of the Month •

Judgement

God won't ask the square footage of your house,
but He'll ask how many people you welcomed into your home.

God won't ask about the clothes you had in your closet,
but He'll ask how many you helped clothe.

God won't ask what your highest salary was,
but He'll ask if you compromised your character to obtain it.

God won't ask what your job title was,
but He'll ask if you performed your job to the best of your ability.

God won't ask how many friends you had,
but He'll ask how many people you were a friend to.

God won't ask in what neighborhood you lived,
but He'll ask how you treated your neighbors.

God won't ask about the color of your skin,
but He'll ask about the content of your character...

...Cyberspace

Mount Mitake Retreat (from page 3)

Become elevated by seeing the positive side, instead of becoming degraded by seeing the negative side.

"The third way is prayer. Hazra Mahashaya, who lived with Sri Ramakrishna at the Dakshineswar Temple, often criticized others. Sri Ramakrishna advised him - as you pray to God for devotion, pray to him to get rid of this fault finding. So, God's grace is required for getting rid of the habit of fault finding. Sri Ramakrishna and the Holy Mother too prayed to get rid of this problem! Thakur once slapped Rani Rasmani as she was absent minded while he was singing a bhajan. He slapped another person too. So, he was worried and prayed to the Mother to get rid of this. Holy Mother said that at first she also used to find faults in others. Then she prayed and prayed and got rid of this.

"Now let us discuss finding faults versus disciplining others with love, care and concern. Finding faults without any love and concern is negative and destructive. Parents, teachers and administrators

should find faults in a positive way, which is in pointing out and correcting the mistakes of children. Finding faults without love and concern ends in dissension and quarrel. It does not benefit either. You are only free to find faults if you love the other person. If you do not love the other person, better not to find fault.

Explaining "Just learn to make the whole world your own. No one is alien. This whole world is your own."

"You should not be exclusive. Be inclusive. Embrace everyone. Accept everyone. Swami Vivekananda says, do not tolerate, accept. Toleration is a negative concept, acceptance is a positive concept. 'Tolerate' may mean - I want to throw you out, but as I cannot, I will tolerate. 'Accept' means - come let us stay together.

"All these concepts are nice to hear about and agree with, but how to put them into practice? Well, I agree to love the world, but how to do this practically? There are two approaches, of the humanist and of the

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Mount Mitake Retreat (from page 4)

religionist. The philosophy of love, that I will love whether I get anything in return or not is lacking in the humanist. So, sometimes, humanists who have done a lot of work remain dissatisfied because they do not get the recognition which they crave for their work. With humanists, the philosophy of Karma Yoga is lacking. So their position is not such a strong and deep position. One example is Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar. He was a great humanist and a great scholar. In his last days he was very disappointed and frustrated. He said that the very people whom he had helped later on criticized him. He left this critical society of Calcutta and went to stay among the tribal people.

"The path of religion is the better way to love the world. There are two sub paths, the way of the Bhakta who sees God in all and the way of the Jnani who sees the Atman in all. Now how to practice this? Love should not only be in the mind, we should practice it. The way to practice it is by spending time, by spending money and by our actions. We should pray for others everyday. Not only for humans, but for animals too. We should do seva. As far as possible, according to our capacity, specially for other people who are not related to us.

"This is how we can make the whole world our own. If we can, then naturally, fault finding will stop. Not only will we get peace, we will progress spiritually and finally will realize God - thereby transforming the world and making it better.

During the gathering after dinner on Saturday,

Maharaj read out excerpts from a speech which was emailed to him by a former student of his. The speech was titled - Defining Success - and was delivered by Mr. Subroto Bagchi at the Indian Institute of Management on 2nd July 2004. The speech dwelt on the lessons Mr. Bagchi had learnt from various people in his life. And it finished with the advice given to him from his mother to "Go kiss the world". Here is what the author concludes about success:

"Success to me is about Vision. It is the ability to rise above the immediacy of pain. It is about imagination. It is about sensitivity to small people. It is about building inclusion. It is about connectedness to a larger world existence. It is about personal tenacity. It is about giving back more to life than you take out of it. It is about creating extra-ordinary success with ordinary lives."

The speech can be read at various places on the internet. One link is: http://1stholistic.com/Reading/prose/A2004/liv_go-kiss-the-world.htm.

By Sunday afternoon, a few participants had developed pains in their knees and lower backs as most were not accustomed to sitting on the floor for 6-7 hours daily. But the joy of living in a spiritually supercharged environment far outweighed these minor aches.

According to the feedback from the participants, most of them were satisfied and had the impression that it is beneficial to have this kind of event removed from the distractions of daily life.

(Next Issue: Fault-Finding Q&A Session)

• A Story to Remember •

Following Right Examples

A man walking through the forest saw a fox that had lost its legs and wondered how it lived. Then he saw a tiger come in with game in its mouth. The tiger had its fill and left the rest of the meat for the fox.

The next day God fed the fox by means of the same tiger. The man began to wonder at God's greatness and said to himself, "I too shall just rest in a corner with full trust in the Lord and he will provide me with all I need."

He did this for many days but nothing happened, and he was almost at death's door when he heard a voice say, "O you who are in the path of error, open your eyes to the truth! Follow the example of the tiger and stop imitating the disabled fox."

Sufi - from Soul Food

Swami Panelist at Japan Yoga Conference in Hiroshima

Contributed by Kuniko Hirano

On Saturday, August 21, 2004, Swami Medhasananda gave a presentation as a panelist at the second conference of Japan Yoga Therapy Society at Hiroshima Kenmin Bunka Center in Hiroshima. About 450 people attended the conference.

The theme of the symposium was "The Spiritual Culture of Yoga in the Context of Japan", Swami gave a presentation for about 30 minutes in Japanese, and sometimes in English which was interpreted in Japanese. His humorous talk was well received. The visit showed that the Swami values the necessity of cultivating our spirituality.

The Swami said that the goal of human life is to realize God and that there are various ways to achieve this goal depending on how people believe in God. He said we should be aware of our soul to improve ourselves by meditating and analyzing ourselves. "The soul is the most important thing. It is just like the root of a plant, we should water the root, but neither the branches nor the leaves."

Moreover, Swami said that we should think about death seriously and be prepared for it and that Yoga can help us in that Yoga, in fact, supports us both in life and death. so that we could live peacefully. He said further that the method of Yoga can give the right direction to the Japanese people and society, as it includes the culture of moral and spiritual aspects. The audience was very much moved by the Maharaji's presentation.

Swami Gives First Talk in Kanagawa

On July 25, Swami gave a talk, organised by Mr. Ishihara and Ms. Kawasaki, for the first time in Kanagawa City. The theme of the talk was "Love as a path of God-Realisation".

About 30 guests attended the event interpreted by Mr. Ito. A question and answer session followed and the swami led a guided meditation.

After the session the swami visited Tateyama for sight-seeing.

September Zushi Retreat

The topic of discussion for the September Zushi Retreat was 'The Message of Sri Krishna'. Swami Medhasananda pointed out that birth celebrations for Sri Krishna were held on 6 September throughout India, but in keeping with Society tradition, the monthly retreat would be the occasion to discuss the teachings of Sri Krishna, one of the ten incarnations of the Lord.

Swami recalled that some years ago after giving a talk wherein he had referred to Sri Ramakrishna and others as incarnations of God, a Japanese devotee had asked why there was so much emphasis on incarnations. The swami realized that, in fact, there was no such concept in Japan. None in Shintoism. None in Confucianism. None in Buddhism, since the Buddha is regarded as God, not an incarnation of God.

In Hinduism, on the other hand, the concept of incarnations of God is very prevalent. In Christianity the concept of Jesus Christ as the 'only son of God' mirrors this idea, as does Mohammed as the 'the last and greatest prophet' in Islam. When Hindus speak of Sri Rama, Sri Krishna, Sri Buddha as incarnations of God, people of other religions and of other countries and cultures sometimes don't understand the meaning or significance of this idea, and, in fact, they misunderstand.

For example the worship of God in the form of an image made of clay, stone or wood. Sometimes peoples of other religious traditions don't understand the significance of this worship of God in an image and they

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Zushi Retreat (from page 6)

think of Hindus as idolators. "But when we show respect to a photo of our father or grandfather, do we pay respect the paper?" said the swami. "Or do we feel the presence of the person in that photo? In the same way, when Hindus worship images, they feel the presence of God in the image and worship God."

"Another concept is this idea of Avatar - a sanskrit word that means appears - when God appears in the form of a human being. Another way to put it is a special manifestation of God in that human being. If you say that Jesus Christ is the only son of God, are you not also the children of God? Well, among the children, some son or some daughter may be very evolved or they may be liberated - that we can understand, surely. So if used in that sense, of course, Jesus was a very special son of God. But we are also sons, we are also daughters. So it is only in that sense, it is said that these incarnations of God are the special manifestations."

"So when you say 'special manifestation' it means that in everyone and everything there is the manifestation of God, but there is a difference in divinity. In some cases very low, some cases high, and in some cases the highest. So when you speak of an incarnation of God, that manifestation of divinity is at the maximum, the greatest. That is the difference between an incarnation of God and others. This concept has to be understood when we speak of an incarnation of God."

"What is the special manifestation? That special manifestation means that God has many qualities. These qualities are infinite knowledge, infinite power, infinite wisdom, infinite compassion, infinite love - these are the divine qualities. So in all human beings these qualities may be present, but to very limited degrees. In the incarnations of God these qualities are tremendous. So when we say 'manifestation of divinity', we are referring to the manifestation of these divine qualities. In that sense we say that Sri Krishna was also an Avatar."

"There is a lot of debate about Sri Krishna's date of birth, but it was at least a few thousand years ago. So the question is whether Sri Krishna's message is now obsolete or still relevant. The answer is that if we analyze, we find that His message is still very relevant. Though Buddha and Jesus Christ were also born long ago and society and the world have changed so very much, yet still their message is relevant today. The reason is that their message is concerned with the soul, mind and senses. Whether two thousand years before or three thousand years after, as long as there are human beings, there will be the soul, the mind and the senses. As long as there are soul, mind and senses, their function will remain the same. In their day there was ego, jealousy, hatred, vanity, and three thousand years

from now the same jealousy, hatred, the same weaknesses - the same restlessness of the mind, will remain."

"So the same peace-less-ness of the mind, the same restlessness of the mind, from ages ago will persist far into the future. So as long as there is this peacelessness; as long as there is death; as long as there is unhappiness, the relevance of the message of these great religious leaders will endure. They discussed these problems and they also solved these problems. So their message was relevant, is relevant and will remain relevant for us."

"For example: If a cure for cancer were found, would it mark the end of death? No. New diseases will come. Look at AIDS. This is a recent phenomena. The diseases may differ, but we will die. If that day should ever come when we no longer die, then I believe the relevance of religion may diminish. But every living thing is composed of various elements and therefore must decompose at some point. Death is a law of nature."

"With birth and death come the concept of soul, and then comes the concept of the freedom of the soul. So the relevance of the message of freedom from these great souls, born many ages ago, remains the same."

"What is the central message of Sri Krishna? If we precipitate to the essence of his many teachings, there are four central ideas. The first is that this world is not really a place of happiness, peace and permanence. In the infinite sense, it is not a permanent place; it is not a peaceful place; it is not a happy place. There may be an ounce of happiness, but there will also be a pound of unhappiness. Therefore is not a place where you can get infinite happiness or peace."

"So how can we get that real happiness; that real peace and joy? How can our existence be permanent? There are two ways; either through realization of the soul, or self-realization, or by realization of God. These two finally are the same, since the same God lives in us as our soul, and the same soul that pervades the universe is God."

"The second message is in how to achieve that - how to realize that. That message is to always remember God. Whether at work or at leisure, always remember God. In the Bagahvad Gita Sri Krishna's disciple and friend, Arjuna, had to fight a great battle. He told Arjuna his duty was to fight. 'Fight and remember Me. Remember Me and fight.' So the second great message of Sri Krishna was the continuous remembrance of God - to be in a constant state of union with God. You will encounter this idea again and again when you read the Bhagavad Gita."

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Zushi Retreat (from page 7)

"Other references say that while being in a state of union with God do work. Of course there are different forms of remembering and you have to choose the form according to the situation. For example: One form is meditation; one form is repetition of the Lord's name; another form is worship. Another form of remembrance is when you sing or chant God's name; when you read books on God or scripture. You have to choose which particular form is applicable or possible in a given situation."

"When you are working, or like when Arjuna was fighting, is it possible to meditate at that time? The concept of meditation is to sit quietly, close your eyes and gain control over the mind. When you are driving, is it possible to meditate? Of course the very condition of driving is that one must open the eyes. Well, there was one magician in India who would ride a motorcycle while blindfolded, but I do not know how he performed this trick. But for ordinary people it is not possible to meditate while driving. But the practice of japam, or repetition of the name of God, is possible. In the beginning it may be a little difficult, but the more we practice, the easier and more natural it becomes."

"The third central message is to work without attachment. This idea is also repeated again and again in the Gita. Why is this idea of non-attachment found in Hinduism, Buddhism and all major spiritual teachings? It is to love, but don't get attached. Our heart should not be like a stone, it must be pliable and flexible. We should feel for others, but at any time we must be able to withdraw. We must love our wife, husband, children, relatives, friends, neighbors, fellow-countrymen, our fellowman, the creatures of the world, but at the same time we must remain unattached. Why? Because attachment is the source of all misery - bondage and misery."

"The ideal of our lives is freedom - to become free. Yet if we become attached, we become bound. Freedom and attachment contradict each other, so how can we live? Swami Brahmananda once advised, 'Small works or big works; whatever work you may have, do it as God's work.' So whatever work comes to you, think that God has given this work to me and I shall complete it to please God. The moment that we think we have this duty to my wife, to my husband, to my family, that is the source of attachment. This idea of me and mine brings attachment, but when we relate that same work to God, immediately the result is different. God has given these children to me, rather than these are my children. God has given this duty to me."

"Let me explain how the problem starts. If you think he is my son, she is my daughter, and I am doing my duty, then the time will come when you think; 'Well, I have done my duty, but they are not reciprocating. They are not doing their duty to me as a son or a daughter.' If one does some duty in relation to oneself, some expectation will come; some frustration will come, because expectations will not be fulfilled. Therefore, if you see duties as given to you from God, then just do the best you can and give it back to God. Other people may be ungrateful, but God will be pleased and you will enjoy peace and happiness."

"The fourth message is to love and serve others, seeing God in them. This message, too, appears again and again. Serve not just your loved ones, serve everyone as God as much as it is in your capacity to do so. 'He who sees Me in everyone, and who sees everyone in Me, he has the right attitude.' Only with this attitude can you see others and love others and have peace and happiness in this world."

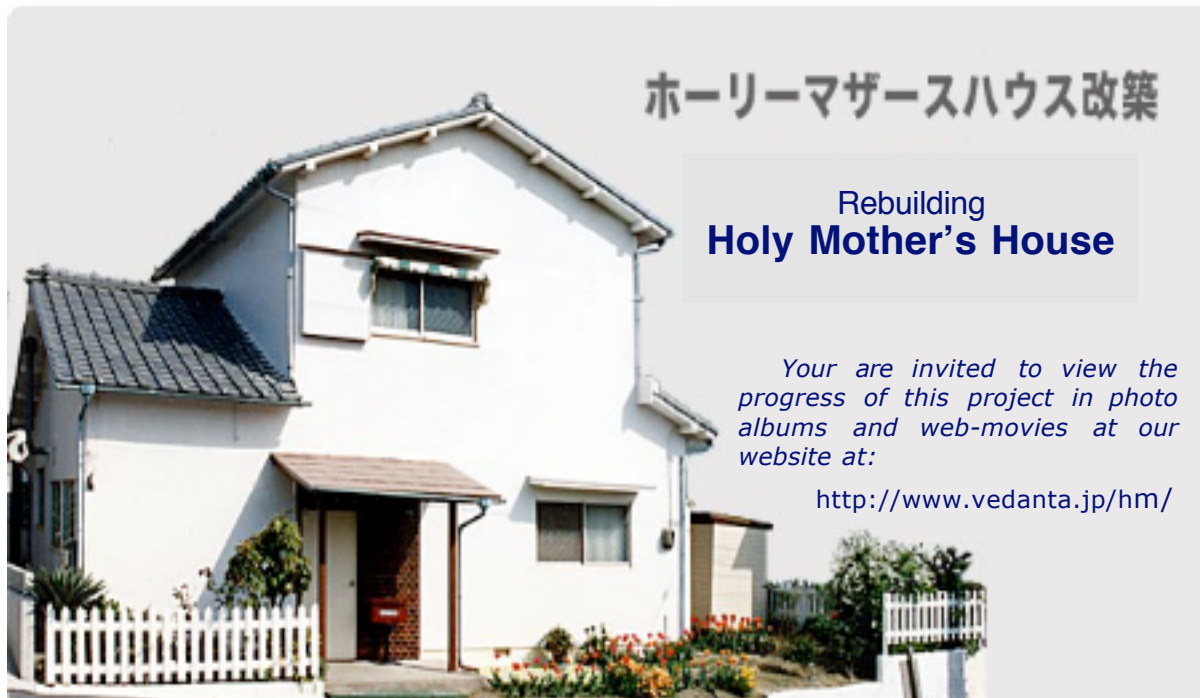
"Sri Krishna lived His messages."

Society Mourns Takashi Satoh

In his opening remarks at the September Zushi Retreat on 19 September, Swami Medhasananda announced the passing away of one of the Society's "very close and long-time devotees", Takashi Satoh. Mr. Satoh passed away on September 2nd from complications due to cancer. He was 64 years old and is survived by his wife, Yoko.

Mr. Osonoi, the Society's Secretary, was then asked to offer some remembrances, followed by the swami's own comments. Mr. Satoh was remembered for his friendship and kindness and for his advice, support and donations to Society projects on many occasions. Most recently he introduced the architect for the reconstruction of Holy Mother's House (see story). One act of kindness and support for which the Society is particularly grateful was when Mr. and Mrs. Satoh took in and cared for the Grand Dame of the Japan Society, Mrs. Nakai, during her final illness.

The swami noted that the Satohs are great devotees of Sri Ramakrishna and that he offered chants from the Bhagavad Gita and Vedas upon the passing of Mr. Satoh's father some years earlier when Mr. Satoh had requested, "... just offer chants and prayers for the peace and solace my father's soul." The swami recounted that on his visit to the Satoh home on this sad occasion, Mrs. Satoh, too, said, "To pray and chant is enough."



The first building of this Society, situated about ten minutes walk from its main building, was built about thirty years ago and was known as Holy Mother's House. For many years it has been used for accommodating lady devotees and guests.

As the condition of that building was deteriorating major repair work was undertaken ten years ago in 1994. In spite of these completed repairs the overall condition of the building did not improve much. And in recent years it was increasingly felt that it was not only unhealthy to occupy, but also unsafe, especially, in view of any major earthquake taking place.

The matter was finally referred to the Society's Managing Committee. At the suggestion of the Committee a professional carpenter company thoroughly inspected the condition of the building, including its foundation and finally, recommended reconstruction of the house. Accordingly, the Managing Committee decided to reconstruct Holy Mother's House in a modest way.

After due consultation with a professional architect, it has been designed that the first floor of the proposed building will house the growing number of books and back issues of the magazines published by the Society, which is a crying need; and the entire second floor will house four guest rooms with a small kitchen, washroom, bathroom etc. The space in front of the building can be used for parking as many as four cars, which again is another urgent need of the Society.

After comparing estimates from different construction companies and taking into consideration other necessary expenses we understand that we can construct the proposed building, including incidentals, at a cost of 25 million yen (US\$227, 000) approximately.

The construction will be hopefully completed by the end of this year and inauguration of the new building may take place on 16th January, 2005 when we are planning to hold the closing celebration of Holy Mother's 150th birth anniversary in the Society.

Announcement: Swami Visits Canada and USA

From 26 September to 26 October Swami Medhasananda will visit several Vedanta Centers in North America.

The swami's schedule includes stops in Toronto, Providence, Boston, New York, Washington, D.C., Chicago, St. Louis and Seattle before his return to Narita Airport at 3:35 p.m., Wednesday, 27 October.

As such, the regularly scheduled Shimbashi talk and Zushi Retreat will be cancelled in October.



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