



# the VEDANTA Kyokai

NEWS, UPDATES AND MISCELLANY FROM THE VEDANTA SOCIETY OF JAPAN



## Monthly Calendar:

### • Birthdays •

Swami Advaitananda  
Friday - September 2

Swami Abhedananda  
Monday - September 26

Swami Akhandananda  
Monday - October 3

### • Kyokai Events •

No September Retreat  
No October Retreat

### \* KALI PUJA \*

Will be celebrated at the  
Zushi Center

Tuesday, November 1, 7-10 PM

(See Announcements ...page 11)



## ✧ Thus Spake ✧

*"Spiritual practice means to keep the mind steady at His lotus feet and to be absorbed in His thoughts..." The Holy Mother*

*"God is a spirit; and they that worship Him must worship Him in spirit and in truth..." The Christ*

## KIYOSATO OUTDOOR RETREAT PART I - VENUE AND SCHEDULE

The venue for this year's Summer Outdoor Retreat was on the campus of KEEP, the Kiyosato Experimental Educational Project. It was founded in 1946. It is located in the Yatsugatake Highlands of Yamanashi Prefecture, about 2 hours from Tokyo.



Attending for the full four-day schedule was not required, as so many attendees could not take the time away. This was

appreciated by many who came and participated as they could. The main party arrived on the KEEP campus at about 4 p.m. on Friday, September 2. From 5 o'clock the shrine was set up and other arrangements and room allocations were made. At 6 o'clock evening vespers began with prayers, readings and meditation. This was followed by supper at 7 p.m. and a gathering for introductions and general announcements with everyone retiring at 10 p.m.

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# Kiyosato Outdoor Retreat - Part 1

The full-day's schedule was observed on both Saturday and Sunday and started with a wake-up call at 5 a.m. Meditation was observed from 5:20 to 6:20 when morning services with chanting, bhajans and readings continued till 7 a.m. The next hour consisted of optional guided yoga exercises or personal reading time. Breakfast was served at 8 a.m.

The swami gave talks on these days starting at 9 a.m. and concluding at about 10:30. Both of these discourses were on the subject, "Tension Free Life, the Hindu View". Afterward attendees enjoyed free time and at 11:15 observed the offering of food to Sri Ramakrishna at the shrine and optional meditation till just prior to lunch at noon.

A rest period followed lunch and at 2 o'clock Swami led a relaxed Q&A session and a guided meditation. Tea was served at 3:30 and then the group followed the swami on sightseeing walks in the ranch area and forests surrounding KEEP. Evening vespers began half-an-hour earlier on these days, with the evening schedule keeping with that of the first evening.

The final day, Monday, included a brief discourse by Swami and the solicitation of verbal impressions from attendees. Over one hour was then allotted for all to write a review paper on the Retreat; more time for optional meditation; lunch at noon and a formal closure with the remaining attendees. •

## COMMENTS: KIOSATO OUTDOOR RETREAT PART II

**"I enjoyed the fresh air, the punctuality of the schedule."  
 "The 'silence' periods were very conducive to reflection."  
 "The atmosphere was great for mediation."**



**"I was intrigued by the concept of discrimination between me, my body, and my mind."  
 "The lecture content was so relevant for my life now. I felt an environment of love."  
 "Through this retreat my life-rhythm was reconfirmed."**

*[We will take up Part III, The Discourses, in our November issue.]*

## July Zushi Retreat

# Buddha's Birth Celebration

On Sunday, July 17, the Zushi Retreat celebrated the birth anniversary of Bhagawan Buddha. At 10:30 a.m. offerings were made to honor Lord Buddha as guests gathered, observed and meditated.

From 11 a.m. Swami Medhasananda led the chanting Vedic Mantras and Buddhist Sutras in Sanskrit and the congregation chanted Buddhist Sutras in Japanese. This was followed by a reading from a Buddhist text.

Swami then introduced Professor Keiyo Arai, a visiting lecturer at several universities and the chief priest of the Jutokuji Buddhist Temple in Tokyo, who gave a talk entitled 'Relevance of

Lord Buddha's Teachings in Modern Life" in Japanese.

This talk was followed by a meditation and a lunch prasad of Japanese and Indian dishes.

At 3:30 the afternoon session began with a reading and then Swami led a Q&A session interpreted by Ms. Yuko Sasaki. Following this the harmonium was brought out and guests joined the Swami in bhajans (devotional songs) before concluding the session with a guided meditation in Japanese. Tea was served at 4:30.



## August Zushi Retreat

# "Don't Seek God, See God" - Part II

On Sunday, August 21, Swami Medhasananda continued his talk entitled, "Don't Seek God - See God", a topic he first took up for the May Retreat (see TVK June issue) and inspired by similar words from Swami Vivekananda. In that discussion Swami had incorporated various sources including scripture and the teachings of Sri Ramakrishna and Vivekananda to support the truth that God is omnipresent and therefore "everything is the supreme reality". How ordinary devotees could practice this truth and the benefits of such practice would conclude this discussion.

"Not only human beings and animal beings, but matter, too, is made of consciousness. These are also God," said Swami. "Then again," he asked rhetorically. "if I can't see God, what is the relevance of such teachings to me? In my life? If this is the truth, then everyone should be able to realize it, not only a special or privileged few."

Swami went on to explain that the reason we cannot see it is that we are superimposing name, form and action on the reality, so we see many names forms and actions. Consciousness has taken concrete forms - we cannot see H<sub>2</sub>O as water vapor, but as water and ice. Take the coil of rope in darkness mistaken as a snake. Our ignorance being the darkness and we superimpose a snake for the rope and we see a snake. We superimpose layer upon layer.

"The myriad forms of God are temporary, that consciousness is eternal," he continued. "Remove and eliminate these super-impositions. Jesus said let them see who have eyes to see. Each soul is potentially divine." The swami said that our vision has become jaundiced and we have to cure our vision. We are hypnotized by the body, mind and senses - the ego. The cure is concentration on our true

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## August Retreat ... from page 3

nature, the Atman; existence-knowledge-bliss-absolute, through discrimination and meditation. As we progress through this process we will begin to see the divinity in our family, friends, then in all, in living beings and inanimate objects.

"If we love God, then we want to serve God. Love, an abstract idea, must have expression. A natural reaction is to serve that God in others. Work is transformed to service, and this service is transformed into worship," said Swami. We offer only the best to God, and this is practical application not theoretical understanding. As Swami Vivekananda explained, we have this theoretical understanding that God is everywhere and in everything. Yet, if we get a shove on the street and fall, we immediately jump up and confront the person who did it. All this theoretical understanding is gone. We don't reflect; 'Well, God has given me a shove.' Immediately, we confront the person.

"This is the fundamental difference between theoretical and practical Vedanta. It has no meaning unless it is practiced, and it must be practiced to be realized. The difference between intellectual understanding and practical realization is a heaven and hell difference." •



## Swami Talks on Sri Ramakrishna in Korea by Mija (Aruna) Kwak

There was a special lecture on Sri Ramakrishna given by Swami Medhasananda of the Vedanta Society of Japan on 16 August 2005. The venue for this presentation was the Sri Krishnadas Ashram located in Changwon, South Korea. Swami talked on Vedanta and the life and teachings of Sri Ramakrishna for two and half hours.

Even though the smallish room, designed to comfortably accommodate 20 people, was filled to over-capacity with 70 interested people on this hot and humid day, all in attendance were held captive by the swami's presentation. Some listened with eyes closed and with the swami's chanting of Vedic mantras the entire talk on Sri Ramakrishna seemed also as a mantra.

Learning the fact that Sri Ramakrishna was an incarnation of God brought a deep appreciation of Him and touched many people's hearts. When the swami told stories from Sri Ramakrishna's life, he was like a joyful child. There are some books on Ramakrishna translated into Korean, but what I heard from the swami was more vivid than what I had read due to his obvious love for Sri Ramakrishna.



*Upper left photo: Swami giving a talk with Sri Ramakrishna's photo placed on the altar mantle. Mr. Mukul Basu interprets.*

*Lower right photo: An interested audience of 70 at Krishnadas Ashram in Changwon, South Korea.*

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## Swami Talks in Korea ... from page 4

Attendees told me they were very impressed by the swami's presentation of Ramakrishna's passionate love for the Goddess Kali, his instruction regarding the image of Kali, and the simple clarity of his teaching of Vedanta. As a result of his easy explanations on the teachings of Ramakrishna through stories and parables, we could accept Ramakrishna as Buddha or Christ.

Swami put the photograph of Sri Ramakrishna on the mantle and gave salutations with heart-full respect both before and after the talk. He explained that Ramakrishna was in deep samadi when this photo was taken. How can we witness the ecstasy of union with God? It is possible through Ramakrishna's photo.

Swami Medhasananda's visit to the Sri Krishnadas Ashram and his talk on Ramakrishna was a blissful party for us by his lightness, humor and knowledge. He is truly a servant of Ramakrishna, of God. We were sorry he couldn't stay longer, but he left us the message that God is everywhere. We will not forget this message and look forward to his return to Korea, again touching our hearts with the bliss of Sri Ramakrishna. •

*Mija (Aruna) Kwak is Head of the Yoga Department at Choonhae College*

### Swami Also Gave Talks at Yoga Meditation Camp



*Left: Group Photo of Yoga Meditation Camp at Ulsan, South Korea, a project arranged by Mr. Basu's Universal Yoga Society, an NGO.*



*Right: Swami Distributing Candy During Night Gathering at Yoga Meditation Camp.*

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## VEDANTA IN KOREA

### OBSERVATIONS OF MR. MUKUL BASU

Mr. Mukul Basu, a college lecturer on Yoga and Ayurveda who cosponsored Swami Medhasananda's trip to Korea and acted as interpreter, visited the Zushi Centre and was asked to talk briefly about the prospects for Vedanta in Korea - a question that the swami had put before him some years earlier.

He said that he had been in the country since 1989 where he continued studies for his master's degree. During this period he witnessed a tremendous interest in basic yoga exercises and postures (asanas). Schools sprang up offering certificate courses that has led to a boom of some 10,000 yoga centers and some 50 large yoga groups. This has prompted the translation and publishing of many books, magazines and articles on yogic science, philosophy and spiritual life. Books on such yoga masters as Ramakrishna and Vivekananda have been published as well.

The availability of this information in the public realm has, in turn, has forced the many novice yoga 'instructors' to learn more about the scientific, philosophical and spiritual wholeness of yoga - lest they be discovered by potential students for their rather shallow understanding of this ancient philosophy and way of life. He noted that even monks in this Buddhist country are searching as well, examining scriptures from all the major religious traditions and discovering the depth of the Vedas.

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## Observations from page 6

Mr. Basu believes he has witnessed a growing thirst for spirituality in Korean society since he arrived. As such, he has founded an NGO, the Universal Yoga Society, to help properly educate yoga instructors. Monthly, the Society invites various educators and they plan to offer two meditation camps per year. This August, Swami Medhasananda was the first presenter at their first meditation camp and was well received by some 70 to 80 attendees. He was also introduced to another group of some 70 where he gave a talk as well.

"So many thirst for spirituality," said Basu. In his opinion Korea is ready for proper yoga instruction and the message of Sri Ramakrishna and Vivekananda. "Judging from these responses and the spiritual nature of the questions directed to Swami Medhasananda, I would say, yes, now is the time," he concluded. •

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## INDIAN EMBASSY TALK OF 20 AUGUST 2005 - REPORTED BY ASHISH GUPTA

# Harmony

If there was harmony, there wouldn't be a need for such lectures. Harmony cannot be established by giving lectures and passing resolutions, this we can see from our own experience. After World War I, President Wilson passed a 14 point resolution for world peace. When the Holy Mother, Sri Sarada Devi, was told about this, she said that it would be nice if these things were said from the heart and not only from the mouth.

This is the age of an Information explosion, technology is advancing and there is the Internet. It seems that Information is progressing at the rate of Geometric Progression, whereas Wisdom is progressing at the rate of Arithmetic Progression. So a basic contradiction exists: Unless we grow in wisdom, this problem will exist. Unless there is wisdom and people are mature in their thinking, and at the same time, ready to sacrifice, there cannot be harmony.

People are different. These differences cannot be eliminated. People are different in so many aspects - food habits, dress, thinking, etc. Think of India. So many differences in languages even. So, people communicate in English. Should we try to eliminate variety? No, for variety is the spice of life. Otherwise, everything would be monotonous. Rather, we should encourage variety. Then, again, the aptitudes and power of men are so different. By power I mean not only physical power, but the power of assimilation, appreciation, digestion, intelligence, etc.

Now the challenge is how to accept these differences and how to establish harmony at different levels of the individual, family and country? Usually, by harmony we think of a group. But what about the individual's freedom? For an individual's growth, liberty is necessary. But a limit to this liberty is necessary too. With rights, duties should also be accepted. Our rights are based on others' duties. Similarly, our duties should cater to others' rights.

There is Darwin's theory of the survival of the fittest. This is O.K. at the physical level, but not at the intellectual level. In Sanskrit, there is a term - matsya nyaya - translated it means the laws or the ways of fish; big fish eating smaller fish. At the human level this translates to anarchy.

Swami Vivekananda said that if you appoint one teacher for an intelligent boy, you should appoint seven teachers for an average boy. In this regard, Marx's policy of 'each according to his need' is a good one. Modern society teaches us to be so selfish and competitive. Terms such as "Rat Race" and "Cut Throat Competition" are commonly used. The Gospel of Selfishness is preached so much that we hardly think of others. Then, how can there be harmony? Harmony requires some sacrifice. Of what? Selfishness.

There exists conflicts of interests and ideas. At the root of selfishness is an inordinate desire for enjoyments. As Gandhiji said: there is enough in this world for everybody's needs, but not enough for even one person's greed. So we have to think in terms of Desire Management.

What is harmony?

In an orchestra, different musical instruments are played, but the result is wonderful, with enough room for the differences. We have to learn to live with each other: agreeably, peacefully, happily and with some purpose, i.e., profitably.

Live and let live is a negative approach, so not a very high ideal. There is a difference between tolerance and acceptance. Swami Vivekananda preferred acceptance. Tolerance is negative, much lower; very fragile, can break at any moment. For harmony, we have to accept. Unless there is a higher ideal for coexistence, this living together is very fragile. At the same time it is non-productive, if you are not willing to imbibe good points from the other community.

Acceptance is imbibing things which we lack and the readiness to give our good points to others. Both Swami

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## Harmony ... from page 6

Vivekananda and Rabindranath Tagore had this quality. Ready to give what is best in us to others. And ready to accept what is best in others. When we look around, We see that we are already imbibing things from other cultures, communities, countries. We notice this in the globalization of taste and food habits; dress; music; games and sports. Yoga and meditation are also becoming accepted globally.

It is easier to establish harmony in physical and cultural fields. More difficult in relationships and ideas. Think of a family. How difficult it is to establish harmony even within a family. This gives us an idea of the dimension of this problem even at such a micro level. There cannot be harmony unless there is a spirit of sacrifice, patience, understanding, of giving more and receiving less. Because this problem is related to our minds; it is not at the intellectual level.

Think of communities. Unless there is a sense of sacrifice, there will be no harmonious solution. The re-unification of East and West Germany was possible, as the people in West Germany were willing to sacrifice.

Now let us consider religious harmony. Rama, Krishna, Buddha, Jesus - all only preached love and compassion. So why is there so much disharmony amongst religions? The meaning of Islam is shanti, peace. So, why are there jihads, violence, riots etc. in the name of religion? The reasons are: misunderstanding; lack of right practice; and self-seeking interest.

There is the concept of Plurality of Religions. Sri Ramakrishna said: As many faiths, so many paths. He echoed what is mentioned in the Rig Veda: Ekam Sat Vipra Bahuda Vadanti - there is one truth, sages call it by various names. Swami Vivekananda said: I am ready to pray with the Christian in a church, ....

There is the seeming incompatibility of worshipping God with form and a formless God. Sri Ramakrishna gave the example of water, ice and water vapor. The same substance, H<sub>2</sub>O, appears as a gas, liquid and solid. Some suggest there be one religion. Some others suggest there be no religion. This is like saying, if we have a headache, let us cut off the head. Religion, apart from providing Spiritual Truths, has a sociological value too. It brings peace and joy to people.

How can we really establish harmony at the levels of the individual, family, and community? What should the philosophical basis be? We all are human beings; but this does not work because of the differences noted earlier. The Indian philosophy is; the same Self is present in all - there is no difference.

The only basis of harmony can be our increased awareness of the same Self in all. Or, put in a different way, we all are the children of the same God. Then there cannot be any violence, hatred, jealousy or selfishness. The idea is: I see me in you, and you in me.

In the Self, there are no differences of race, sex etc. How to realize that? That is the real challenge. For that, deep thinking, analysis, meditation and deep concentration are necessary. We must analyze ourselves: Who are we? Who am I? Who are you? Raman Maharishi would lay emphasis on this self enquiry; Who am I? The Upanishads say: Know Thyself. This enquiry starts with the question: Who am I? And ends with the knowledge: I am the Self; and others are the Self, too.

So, this is the philosophical basis. And initially, we have to understand these at the intellectual level. Swami Vivekananda also said that there are various things amongst which harmony is possible: East and West; Past and Present; Science and Religion; all these and others, too, can be harmonious.

At the personal level, there are three elemental levels: physical, mental, spiritual. Harmony should be established in all these three levels. Usually, what we say, we do not always do; what we think, we do not always say; and so on. Our speech, thoughts, and actions contradict each other. There is contradiction both at the intro-level and amongst the personal three levels. Unless we harmonize these, there cannot be an integrated personality.

Unless we can establish harmony within our own self, we cannot establish it outside. This disharmony will be reflected in our interactions with our family, friends etc. This is at the micro level and we can expect the same results at the macro level.

As Swami Vivekananda said, "Be and Make." Try to establish harmony within ourselves and then try to help others. •

## THOUGHT OF THE MONTH

*"Not from space must I seek my dignity, but from the ruling of my thought.  
I should have no more if I possessed whole worlds.  
By space the universe encompasses and swallows me as an atom,  
by thought I encompass it." ... Pascal*

# Lecture Series on the Bhagavad Gita in Shimbashi

*Reported by Ashish Gupta*

## ATTACHMENT AND THE GRADUAL FALL

Last class, we discussed verses 62 and 63 from Chapter 2. Here the Gita discusses our moral and spiritual fall. The fall is not sudden. It is step by step. We talked about the term used by Shankar - Kelikandukavat - like the ball which falls from the hand of a child. It gradually falls down a flight of stairs and reaches the bottom. In spiritual life too, the fall is not sudden. It is not as if you will fall from the 10th floor directly to the 1st floor. The fall is step by step.

What is the purpose of this explanation by the Lord? So that we become careful. Arise and awake, says Swami Vivekananda. If we do not know how the degradation comes, how can we arise and awake? So, if we carefully watch our mind and senses, we will know - this is the beginning of the fall. So that we become alert and know the beginning of the fall, these steps are enumerated.

We say accidents happen suddenly. But there are circumstances which lead to accidents. So, generally speaking, there are no accidents, only incidents. We are not aware of these circumstances and so term it an accident. The emphasis I want to place is on "suddenly" when I use the term accident. There are a series of incidents which culminate into something.

We say, "I suddenly became angry", but certainly there were circumstances which lead to the anger. Similarly with attachment. Suddenly a person hits another person. Here too, there were some circumstances which led to that violent action.

Liking something or someone leads to repeated thinking; which leads to attachment; if problems arise this leads to anger; this leads to delusion; this leads to the loss of decision making as to right or wrong; and this leads to improper action; the fall is complete.

In the Gospel Of Sri Ramakrishna, Sri Ramakrishna mentioned a monk who did not look at a thing or person more than once to avoid being attached. Looking twice would lead to three times and so on. In this way, the holy man controlled his mind. This is one concrete example of how we can practice control of mind and senses.

Of course this is for those who want to lead a moral or

ethical and spiritual life. Without a moral and ethical life, no spiritual life is possible. And without a spiritual life, no peace and joy is possible. There will be continuous peaceless-ness.

## WHAT IS THE WAY?

How to solve this problem of attachment and consequent problems? This is explained in verse 64:

'A man of disciplined mind, who has his senses under control and who has neither attraction nor aversion for sense objects, attains tranquility, though he may be moving amidst objects of the senses.'

There is a saying in English; 'If you encounter an adverse situation, either fight or flight.' The problem is, if this is outside, we can do it. But if the problem is inside, how can we run away? How can we avoid it, escape from it? Even if we go to a cave, forest, top of a hill, the mind and the senses will go with us and create trouble. Sri Ramakrishna gave an example to explain this point: A sage suggested to a king: come to the forest to practice spiritual life. The king replied: I have desires in my mind; even if I come to the forest, there too I shall establish a kingdom.

So, we cannot run away, we have to face it. We have to solve the problem.

One thing we have to understand: things do not happen according to our wishes. If we wish some person to behave in some way, it may not happen. People do not behave as we wish. Parents want their children to be like Einstein, Pele, Shakespeare, etc., but in how rarely this happens. Then, people think: let everybody be kind to me. But it does not happen like this. Then, about the weather: some people do not like summer or winter or the rains. But these do not stop because we do not like them.

Likewise, a spiritual aspirant may think: let there be no objects of temptation. Is this possible? No, it is not possible. In this way, we have no hold or control over our environment, over the circumstances, things will happen as they happen.

If a person has to go from one village to another and there is a river between, he may think, 'Why is this river here? It is such a botheration'. But the river will still be there. We have to cross it using a boat. We have to make ourselves in

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such a way that we can solve the problems and deal with them.

There is a beautiful poem by Rabindranath Tagore, Jutavishkar, on how the shoe was invented. There was a king who said, 'There is so much dust; wherever I walk, my feet become dirty; what to do so that my feet do not become dirty?' The chief minister said, 'We will get all the dust cleaned.' Thousands of scavengers were put to work. And this resulted in a huge cloud of dust over the kingdom. All were effected. Nobody could see. There was coughing and sneezing. An old man came to the king and said, 'I have a solution,' and he wrapped the king's feet with leather.

At the physical level this is easy. At the mental level it is not so easy. But the concept is the same. We have to protect ourselves. We cannot change the environment. There is rain. You have to go out. What do you do? You have to get an umbrella. A raincoat. A waterproof coat. So, we have to try to become temptation proof. We have to think of some system which will protect us from temptation, from provocation. If we have that, then we can feel safe and secure.

How to do it? It is not a physical thing. Shoes, raincoats are all physical. We have to control our senses, our mind. By doing this we can become temptation- and provocation-proof.

So, the senses and the mind must be controlled. If we don't do that, we have to suffer always. Either because of liking or because of aversion. Some scenes are pleasing, others are not pleasing to the eyes. Same with the sense of smell etc. It is not possible that there will only be pleasing sensations for the senses in this world.

And, the same things are pleasing to some are not pleasing to others. The world is like that. So, if our senses are not controlled and we are led by our senses, then we will sometimes be peaceful and sometimes peace-less depending on the environment.

Same is the case with our mind. Some people I like, some I don't. People whom I don't like, will they go to another planet? Or to another country or city? They, too, will live on this earth and in this country. So these are the types of problems if the mind is not controlled. We have to train the mind that these things are natural and we have to live with them.

This is how, through discrimination, through analysis, we should control our senses and mind. But this is a negative approach. What is the positive approach? If we live only in the plane of the mind and the senses, then it is very difficult to control the mind and the senses. The plane of the mind is emotional and very much controlled by feelings. The plane of the senses is sensual and always wants

to eat, see, listen.

We have to live in the plane of connectedness with God, or with our Self. Then it becomes easier to control the mind and the senses. Because that is the state in which we find peace, joy, wisdom, divinity. We then give less and less importance to the mind and the senses. That will be the natural outcome. Because we will have shifted our locus standi, our position from the mind/senses to God/Self.

The more and more we live with God/Atman (How? With connectedness), the easier it will be for us to control the mind and senses and the more we will have peace, joy and wisdom.

### CONTROL ALONE IS NOT ENOUGH

If we only want to control the mind and senses, (a) it is a negative approach, (b) it is very difficult, (c) even if we succeed, we may fall later.

How to get connected to God/Atman? Meditation, japam, praying, reading spiritual books, listening to lectures. The most important of these is japam. Wherever we go. Through doing japam inwardly, we get connected with God and it becomes easier to control our senses and mind. The verse says:

"A man of disciplined mind, who has his senses under control and who has neither attraction nor aversion for sense objects, attains tranquility, though he may be moving amidst objects of the senses."

It has a very important word: Prasadam. It has two meanings. One is the food we take after offering it to God. The other is a prolonged mental state. What type of prolonged mental state? That which has calmness and serenity, joy, a free-ness of mind (no fear, no anxiety, no obligation). How does this happen? Through connectedness with the Atman.

There is also "negative peace". People say: I am so peaceful. They mean: Absence of trouble; currently, there are no troubles. But this type of peace is very fragile. It can be broken at any time.

There are so many troubles in our lives related to health, relations, work. If we want a peaceful life, away from trouble, we cannot get it. But if we get prasadam, then problems cannot effect us because we are connected with God/Atman. Problems may effect the body and mind for some time, but we are not effected for a long time.

[Later, during the question and answer session:]

The chanting of the mantra should be slow and with feeling. That is why the mantras are usually short in length. From my experience, the most important thing is to get connected with God. •

## Important Announcements:

- **KALI PUJA** will be celebrated at the Zushi Centre on November 1, from 7-10 P.M.  
*Activities will include: \* Ritual Worship \* Devotional Songs \* Sitar Recital \* Prasad*  
*All, with family and friends are invited to attend.*
- **Swami Medhasananda** will be in India from September 22 to October 30. He will be accompanied by some devotees who will stay for some days. As such:
  - \* There will be NO Shimbashi Talk in September or October.
  - \* There will be NO Zushi Retreat in September or October.

## A Story to Remember

A learned scholar set forth on a long and difficult sea journey. Desiring to impress the crew with the depth of his learning, he would stop and question simple sailors as they went about their duties. "Tell me my good man," he would ask a sailor, "have you studied philosophy?" The sailor would answer, "Oh no, I'm just a simple sailor. I only know how to sail this ship from one shore to the other." The scholar would reply, "You poor man, you have wasted half your life."

The following day he would again question the sailor. "Have you studied geometry, my good man?" The sailor would reply again, "No, I'm sorry, sir. I just rig the sails and steer the ship." The scholar again would shake his head in despair and say only, "You poor fellow, dwelling in ignorance, you are wasting much of your life." Day after day the questions would go on. "Have you studied geometry, anthropology, zoology, psychology?" The sailor could only shake his head in denial.

One night the ship foundered in a storm. The scholar anxiously watched the crashing waves and held tightly to the mast. The sailor approached the scholar and asked him, "Have you, my good man, by any chance studied swimology?" In puzzlement the scholar could only shake his head. "That really is too bad," said the sailor. "You have wasted your whole life, for the ship is sinking."

... Buddhist

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### SWAMI VISITS IBARAKI PREFECTURE

On August 27, Swami Medhasananda paid a visit to Ibaraki Prefecture at the request of the organizer, Ms. Saito. This was the swami's second talk to this group, having visited in 2003 as well.

The venue was Katsua Work Plaza in Hitachinaka City and was attended by some 30 to 35 people. Swami talked on 'Self-Development with Practical Suggestions'. This was followed by a Q+A session and a guided meditation.

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