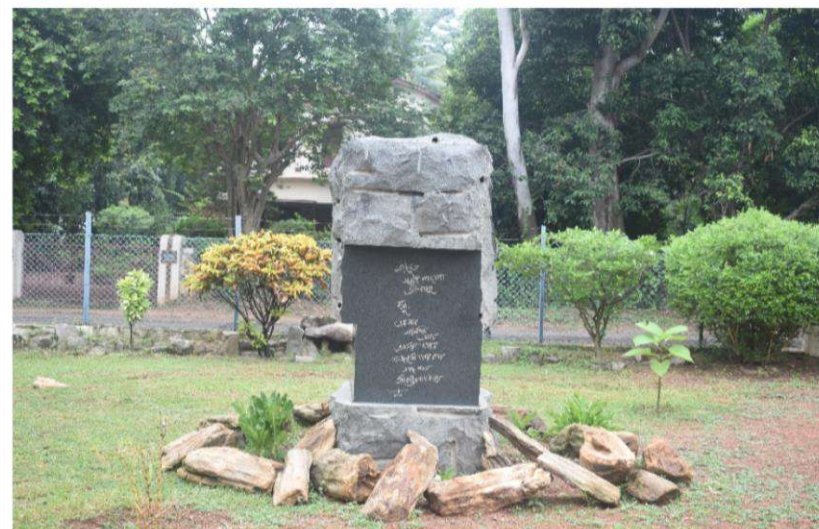




# Department of Japanese NIPPON BHAVANA

E-newsletter  
I



## Greetings and a brief history of the Department of Japanese, Nippon Bhavana, Bhasha-Bhavana, Visva-Bharati

The history of the Department may be traced back to the year 1954 when it was formally established under the patronage of Professor Prabodh Chandra Bagchi, keeping pace with the global character of Visva-Bharati. This event brings the privilege to the department of being the first institution in India to offer formal courses in Japanese Language. Since the very inception of the Department, a number of Japanese scholars graced the department and enriched the library with their personal collections of many valuable books on Buddhism and other subjects. In this context, it may be recalled that Late Professor Satya Bhusan Verma, who established the Center for Japanese in Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi, in the year 1974, studied Japanese at Santiniketan under Professor Shinya Kasugai.

The informal Japanese lessons in Santiniketan date back to 1905 with the arrival of the Jujutsu instructor, Mr. Jinnosuke Sano for a period of three years. Mr. Sano's visit gave the people of Santiniketan an opportunity to know about various facets of Japan.

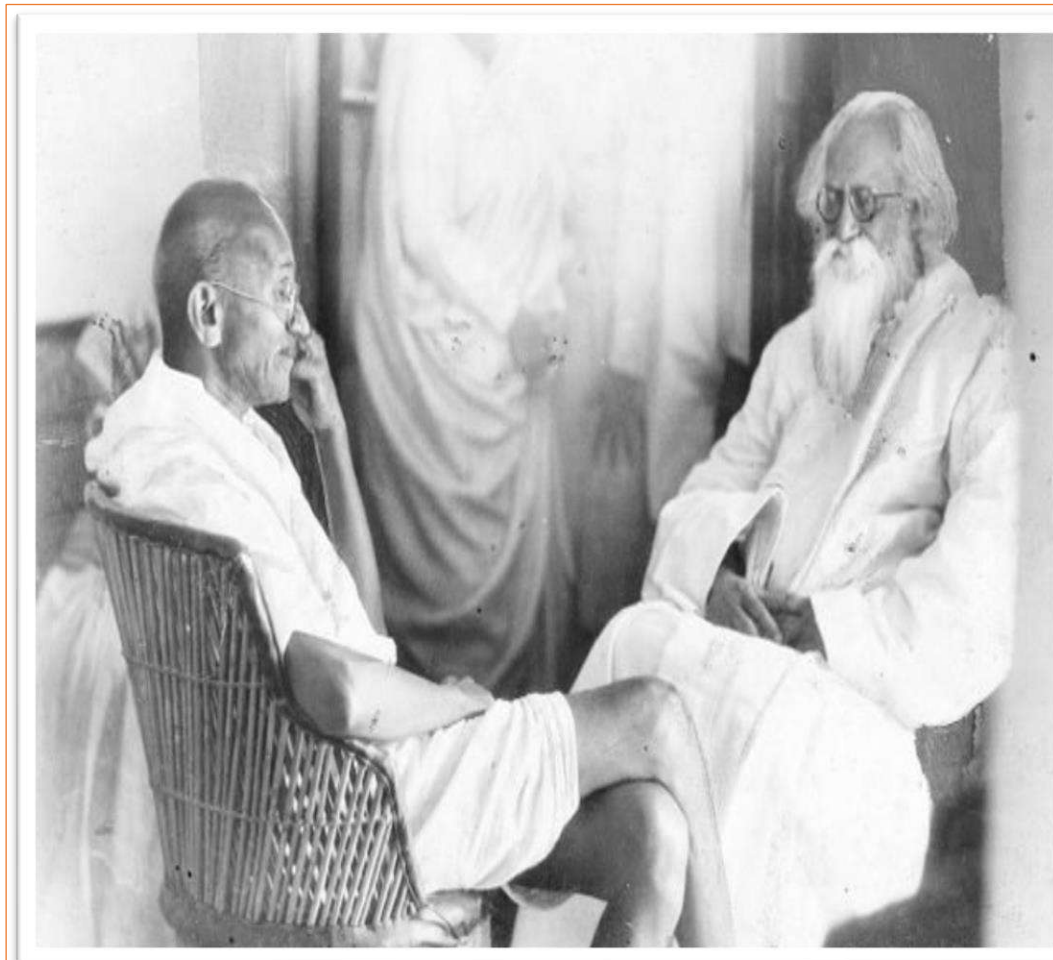
Late Reverend Tsūshō Byōdō, a monk and Buddhist scholar who came to Santiniketan in 1933 and studied Sanskrit under Pandit Bhidhu Sekhar Shastri, needs a special mention in the history of the Department of Japanese, Nippon-Bhavana. It is known that upon completion of his Sanskrit lessons, after a year, when he was set to return to Japan, Gurudev Rabindranath Tagore, the founder of Visva-Bharati, expressed his desire to him to explore the possibilities of establishing a *Japani-Bhavana* [*Nippon Gakuin*] at Santiniketan, as the talk of establishment of *Cheena-Bhavana* [*Chūgoku Gakuin*] was on at that time.

'The Establishment Committee of Nippon Bhavana of Visva-Bharati in Japan' (later in 1998 renamed as 'Japan India Tagore Association') was formed, with Reverend Byōdō as the Chair-person. In the year 1990, in spite of his old age and poor health-condition, Tsūshō Byōdō came to Santiniketan with his son, who was also an ex-student of the Department of Philosophy, Visva-Bharati, and laid the foundation stone of Nippon-Bhavana at the present site. Though being honoured as the first institution to offer courses on Japanese language, the Department got the building of its own in recent times. The building was inaugurated by the then Vice President of India Dr. K.R. Narayanan, on February 3, 1994.

This year is intriguingly significant as the department of Japanese has stepped into the Sapphire Jubilee (65th year) and yet, it is Silver Jubilee of the departmental space - the Nippon Bhavana, to conduct its academic work in tune with the dreams of Gurudev. The history of past 25 years clearly shows the gradual growth, leading to enhanced academic flavours and greater interconnectedness with academic milieu of Japanese.

The department expresses its sincere gratitude to everyone who brought the dream of Gurudev into reality and provided every necessary support to the department to grow into its present shape. To commemorate this happy and significant occasion the Department is launching this E-Newsletter, after receiving necessary approval. This is the first issue of the Newsletter of the Department of Japanese, Nippon Bhavana and we are glad to launch the same on the auspicious occasion of the 150<sup>th</sup> Birth Anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi.

Mahatma Gandhi visited Santiniketan a number of times, and a year before Gurudev's demise, he had been the recipient of a letter in which Gurudev described Visva-Bharati as "a vessel which is carrying the cargo of my life's best treasure, and I hope it may claim special care from my countrymen for its preservation."



Images' Source: Google Images



## Reiwa 令和

2019 marks a significant year in the history of Japan, as Reiwa (令和) — a new imperial era begins under the new emperor Naruhito from May 1, 2019. The history of Japan tells us that from Meiji era (1868-1912) onwards, the eras in the history of Japan are divided according to the Emperors of Japan, and since 1868, Japan adopted the practice of "one emperor, one era name". Accordingly, Japan had four eras until May 1, 2019, viz., Meiji era (1868-1912), Taisho era (1912-1926), Showa era (1926-1989) and Heisei era (1989-2019). April 30, 2019 is the last day of the Heisei era with Akihito as the Emperor. He is the first Emperor of Japan to voluntarily abdicate his throne for health reasons.

Reiwa, the name of the present era is significant, as traditionally till the last era, the Chinese characters, known as kanji, representing the names of the era were selected from ancient Chinese texts; this is the first time, the Chinese characters, representing the name of the era were taken from the first anthology of the Japanese classical poetry - *Manyoshu*, compiled in the early eighth century.



Reiwa



## Departmental Activities

### Swacchata Drive Programme

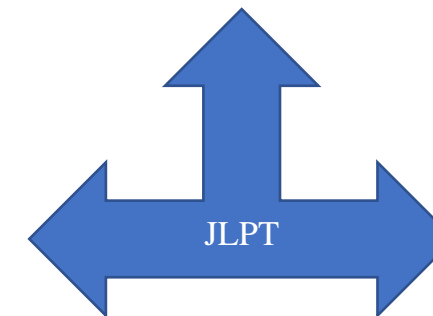
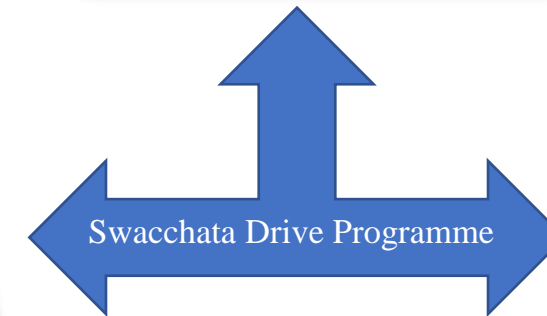
The Department started Swacchata drive programme once a month since August 2019, in addition to the second Thursday Swacchata programme of the University. Keeping in tune with the Japanese way of conducting the cleanliness drive of one's own place of study/work, students willingly volunteer to participate in the programme. As a result, presently the Department runs the Swacchata Programme twice a month.

### Japanese Language Proficiency Test (JLPT)

On July 7, 2019, the Department organized the Japanese Language Proficiency Test (JLPT) which is conducted globally on the first Sunday of July and December. This year is the fifth year for the Department to organize the test in collaboration with the Japan Foundation and with the cooperation of the Consulate General of Japan in Kolkata. Presently, Visva-Bharati holds the test once a year in the month of July. However, the Department is planning to hold the test both times in the future. In 2015, the Department organized the test with 135 applicants. The number of applicants increased gradually, and this year the number of applicants were 308, whereas the total number of students in the Department is 170. This shows that Visva-Bharati is catering to the needs of the students of Japanese language in and around Santiniketan.

### Freshers' Welcome

A welcome get-together was arranged on August 27, 2019 for the new students who took admission in the undergraduate and post-graduate courses this year. The senior students took all efforts to welcome the freshers of the Department and planned the day with a number of programme. The new students were welcomed in accordance with the tradition of Visva-Bharati. A cultural programme was arranged where students of all academic year participated. It was a good opportunity to mingle with the new talents who joined the Department. The day ended with satisfaction of the senior students (organizers of the event) as the participation was energetic and meaningful and the cheer remained on these new faces till the close of the event. A new togetherness is the hallmark of academic journey of this Department every session.



## Departmental Activities

### Teachers' Day

Teachers' Day, the birth anniversary of Dr. Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan was celebrated in an appropriate manner. Faculty members shared encouraging words about the importance of the day with the students. Students performed a cultural programme on this occasion. Later in the afternoon, the senior students took classes for junior students as per the custom followed every year.

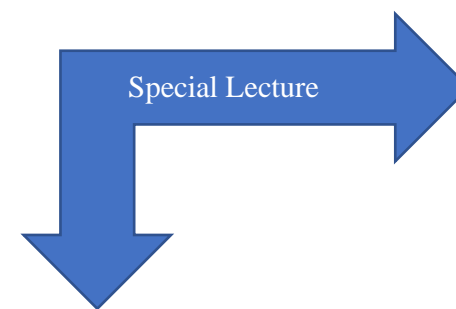
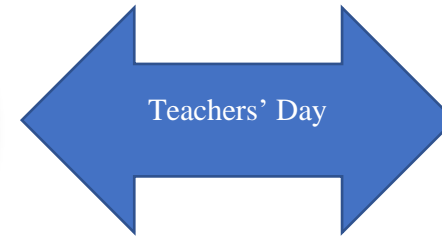
### Teachers' Training Course at Santiniketan

The Department arranged a '5-day Japanese Language Teachers' Training Course' from September 13 to 17, 2019, in collaboration with the Japanese Language Teachers' Training Centre established under the India-Japan Memorandum of Cooperation in the field of Japanese Language Education in India, for the present and aspiring teachers of Japanese Language. Mr. Junichi Arima and Ms. Hiroko Ozaki, Japanese Language experts of Japan Foundation in India, conducted the training programme. 30 applicants including external participants attended the course.

### A Special Lecture on "INA and Japan"

On August 18, 2019, a lecture titled "INA and Japan" was delivered by Prof. Purabi Roy, former professor of International Studies, Jadavpur University. Dr. Gita A. Keeni, Head, Department of Japanese, introduced the speaker and the topic of the lecture to the students. Prof. Roy talked about the background of formation of Indian National Army under the chairmanship of Rash Behari Bose and its objectives. She further elaborated on the operations of INA under the leadership of Subhash Chandra Bose. The lecture was very informative and students got an opportunity to gain knowledge about a very important and significant historical part of India-Japan relationship. In the end, the platform was opened to students for Q&A session. Students actively participated in the interactive session while noting down the important points.

Prof. Purabi Roy also donated several books belonging to personal collection of Karabi Mukherjee, related to Japanese Studies to the Department on this occasion.



In the month of August, the Department received "Karabi Mukherjee Endowment Fund" amounting to rupees five lakhs (Rs. 5,00,000) from late Karabi Mukherjee's sister Professor Purabi Roy. Late Karabi Mukherjee spent nearly four decades in Japan. She worked with the renowned Bengali Professor Tsuyoshi Nara at the Tokyo University of Foreign Studies. She also taught Bengali to many Japanese. The Department will start a yearly Endowment lecture from August 2020 onwards.

## Departmental Activities

### Visit of Consul General of Japan

His Excellency Mr. Masayuki Taga, the Consul General of Japan, Kolkata, visited the Department of Japanese on July 19 and September 1, this year. On July 19, he paid a courtesy visit to Professor Bidyut Chakrabarty, Vice Chancellor, Visva-Bharati. The Consul General of Japan appreciated the inner rock-garden maintained by the Department and interacted with the students and members of the faculty of the Department, on both occasions.

### Visiting professor and special lectures

Department of Japanese, Nippon Bhavana, Bhasha Bhavana organized special lectures from August 6, to September 2, 2019 delivered by Professor Izumi Sato from Aoyama Gakuin University under the Japan Foundation Visiting Professorship Programme.

Professor Sato delivered lectures on “Survey of Modern Japanese Literature” for Undergraduate final year & on “History of Japanese Modern Thoughts” for Postgraduate and Doctoral students.

Under “History of Modern Japanese Thoughts” for Postgraduate and Doctoral students, Professor Sato introduced some of the modern thinkers and their thoughts about the idea of modernization, political thoughts on government policies and their take on changes in Japanese society. The lectures were quite enriching, as students got an opportunity to gain insight on the subject.

Under “Survey of Modern Japanese Literature” for Undergraduate final year students, Professor Sato, while giving an outline of the history of Japanese literature from the Ancient to the Modern times, discussed the contributions of Japanese women in creation of *Hiragana*, one of the Japanese syllabary and the literary treasure created by Japanese women. The focus of the lecture was on the development of literature upon the famous and significant Meiji Restoration (1868), when Japan adopted the policy of Modernization. She also briefly discussed about the differences of the thoughts with regard to the concept of Modernization between Tagore and Shimei Futabatei.

Students bid farewell to Professor Sato on September 2, with a ‘thank you’ speech.



Visit of Consul General of Japan, Kolkata



Visiting professor





Department of Japanese



Rock Garden (Department of Japanese)



Honourable Upacharya Professor Bidyut Chakrabarty with Visiting Professor Izumi Sato



Teachers' Day 2019



Teachers' Training Course 2019



Teachers' Training Course 2019



Freshers' Welcome 2019



Distinguished visitors to the Department, August 18, 2019



Honourable Consul General of Japan Mr. M. Taga, Professor Izumi Sato and faculty members, September 1, 2019



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