



## From 1984 to 1994 in Santiniketan

- Koichi Yamashita

In June 1984, I joined the Department of Japanese Studies as a Reader and started to live in the quarter number 37 in Andrews Palli known locally as Forty-five. I really enjoyed the Santiniketan life with my family for a decade and during that time visited many places in India and Nepal. I got acquainted with many excellent people in and out of the University that enriched my own self.

In those days, only the Certificate and Diploma Courses were offered in the Department, and *Uttar Siksha* was an elective subject. When the Nippon Bhavan was inaugurated, the Department moved there from the China Bhavan. As the head of Department I tried my best to open the B.A.

Honours Course in Japanese but was not successful at that time. I am very happy that the B.A. and M.A. Course are both available now.

During my stay in Santiniketan I published two books. One was *Patanjala Yoga Philosophy* which was based on my PhD dissertation submitted to the Calcutta University and the other was *Japanese Grammar*. Both were written in English and published from KLM Firma.

I was very happy that during my stay in Santiniketan I was blessed with three daughters, Himali, Shanti and Kanchan. In 1994 at the age of forty five I resigned from Visva-Bharati and was back in Japan in February 1995. □



## Santiniketan, My Hometown

- Yukino (Himali) Amemiya

I had a very important experience 6 months ago in Santiniketan. I went back there last December almost after 9 years of separation. The visit turned my future that I had drawn until then 180 degrees around.

I grew up in Santiniketan since I was born, and came to Japan when I was 10 years old. The experiences of childhood were so impressive that I couldn't adapt to the life in Japan for a long time. However, I hadn't kept in touch with my old friends for about 8 years just because it was bothersome for me to write to my friends in English. I really missed the town and my neighborhoods very much, but I had given up going back there. I'd thought that I would spend my whole life in Japan as Japanese. However, the situation has changed since I found out one of my classmates on Facebook in November 2009 by chance. The connections with them revived and I suddenly decided to visit Santiniketan during last winter vacation.

When I arrived at my hometown and met my old friends, I felt so happy that I couldn't say anything for a while. They welcomed me even if we hadn't met for a very long time. The 7-days stay passed very quickly. Santiniketan had hardly changed for 9 years. Though the campus was enclosed by fences and more houses had been built, it seemed to me to

be as same as how Rabindranath Tagore described it in the song "Amader Santiniketan". I felt very comfortable in every moment—spending time with my friends and neighborhoods, talking in Bengali, singing Tagore songs, walking around Santiniketan, having Indian food, and sleeping at night, and so on. It was a special feeling that I hadn't had for a long time. I noticed that my background had been almost made up in Santiniketan. In other words, I am Japanese but my heart is completely Indian. I can't find exact words to describe my feeling, but one thing is clear that I could express myself with my real national identity when I was there. It was so comfortable and great feeling that I could not help going back to Santiniketan last March again.

I have a dream now; I want to go back to Santiniketan and live there. Of course I don't think it is easy. Japan may be more convenient country to live. Also I have many problems to solve before I go back there. However, I'm sure that living in Santiniketan will make me happier than living in Japan. Santiniketan is such a place for me. I greatly appreciate and respect Rabindranath Tagore as he founded Santiniketan, one of the peaceful and wonderful places in the world. I'm very proud that I grew up there and know the real meaning of the song "Amader Santiniketan". □