

News monitored for: ISB

THE TIMES OF INDIA

# Monk takes MBA route to manage temples

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**Bangalore:** What's the purpose of life? What's the meaning of life? These were some questions Keisuke Matsumoto asked of himself as a 10-year-old. His search for answers ended in a book his grandfather gave. "In those books, I learnt about religion; and that's how my interest in philosophy and religion grew," says this 31-year-old Japanese monk, who is studying management in Indian School of Business (ISB), Hyderabad.

He says it's been an interesting journey from being a monk to a management student. Today, for most people, temples are just ceremonial halls for memorial service unlike in the past, he observes.

"In 2005, to revive the temples' good traditions, I decided to initiate



Keisuke Matsumoto drinks in a new whiff of spiritualism in Temple Cafe

a project called Temple Cafe, which awarded him and his team the Shoriki Matsutaro prize for community engagement. "Management skills, leadership and entrepreneurship

helped me," he adds. "I also realized that there is a critical shortage of monks who can upgrade temples to meet modern needs without spoiling their religious traditions. Following graduation, I will return to my temple," says Keisuke.

He admits that he tried to find other courses to enhance his knowledge and skills to manage temples. There are some courses that can give him academic knowledge about temple's history, but none of them are practical in terms of management of modern temple.

"Hence, I decided to do an MBA and opted to study in India. It's making an increasing mark on the world's economic and political system. Moreover, India has significantly influenced Japan a long time through Buddhism. If there was no Indian influ-

ence, Japanese culture would not have evolved as it is today. In fact, I have named my son Ganga. I greatly admire India's diverse and profound spirituality, which is losing its vital force in Japan. Since my first visit, I have been attracted by its ancient history, contemporary culture and adorable people. Every year, I enjoy Namaste India, the largest Indian festival in Japan," he explains.

Since ISB offers an intensive and accelerated one-year programme focused on leadership and entrepreneurship, "it gives me the knowledge content of a two-year MBA programme", he adds. He says he figured out Buddhism is a strategic tool for people to attain happiness. "The combination of MBA and India experience at ISB have changed my life," Keisuke signs off.