



April 2015 - Volume 13 Number 04

# The Vedanta Kyokai Newsletter

NEWS, UPDATES AND MISCELLANY FROM THE VEDANTA SOCIETY OF JAPAN

## May Calendar

### Birthdays

**Sri Buddhadeva**  
Monday, May 4

### Kyokai Events

#### **Bhagavad Gita Study**

May 2nd Indian Embassy  
14:00 ~ 16:00  
(bring photo ID)

#### **Yoga-Asana Class**

May 10, 17, 24 & 31  
14:00 ~ 15:30  
Zushi Centre Annexe  
Contact Hanari-san :  
080-6702-2308

#### **Swami Vivekananda Public Celebration Indian Embassy**

Auditorium , Tokyo  
May 17th (Sun)  
14:00 ~ 17:30  
(See pages 6 & 7 for details)

#### **Nara Narayan**

May 22nd  
Service to Homeless  
Contact: Yoko Sato  
(090-6544-9304)

#### **Osaka Discourses**

May 23rd  
Gita & Upanishad  
Monthly Study  
in Osaka & Kyoto

#### **May Zushi Retreat**

Sunday May 24th  
AM Discourse, Lunch  
Prasad/ PM Session  
Swami Medhasananda  
All are welcome



## ✧ Thus Spake ✧

*“More are the names of God and infinite are the forms through which He may be approached. In whatever name and form you worship Him, through them you will realise Him.”*

- Sri Ramakrishna

*“Truth has many aspects. Infinite truth has infinite expressions. Though the sages speak in diverse ways, they express the one and the same truth.”*

- Sri Krishna

### February Zushi Retreat 2015 “Service as Spiritual Practice”

A talk by Swami Shamananda

*Japanese devotees got a special treat during the February Retreat with a talk by Swami Shamanandaji, a visiting Japanese swami, who has been posted for 26 years at the Ramakrishna Math's Advaita Ashrama, or Mayawati Ashram, at 6,400 ft. above sea level in Mayavati, Champawat District, Uttarakhand, India. A summary of Swami Shamananda's brief talk follows:*

Little by little I came to wonder how I should live my life. I went to study in Osaka for two years, but rather than study I wanted more time to think about my life. I bought books from bookstores and borrowed books from the library to read for ideas. One book  
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## Service as Spiritual Practice (from page 1)

was called 'The Human Condition' and I came to read about 40 volumes in this genre, but I actually could not understand them. One line from this reading that I still remember is "We only have one life, but we do not really live if we do not give meaning to our life.", which gave me cause to dwell a lot about the meaning of life itself.

My thoughts on what I was before my birth and what my relationship to God was then caused me to wonder what I should do in this life; in this birth. Most of us just want to play and enjoy our lives, but some want to accomplish some goal. Some create objectives like Mr. Nishikirori whose goal was to become a tennis champion; or Ichiro's desire to become a baseball star. 'What shall I do in life?' was what I thought about from my youth.

I wondered at the difference between the lives of animals and humans. In a book by Swami Virajanandaji, he notes how those who only live for themselves, live somewhat like animals. While feeding, a dog will growl and intimidate other approaching dogs. Their thoughts are only of themselves. In our human world we can work for and protect our family and consider what is beneficial for our local community, our country and our world. This is the difference between humans and animals.

One evening in a winter snow the water in the Ashrama had frozen, so I went out to fix it. As usual the radio was tuned to the international broadcast when I heard reports of the Great Hanshin-Awaji (Kobe) Earthquake. I listened daily to news reports of more and more confirmed casualties from the quake, reaching one thou-

sand deaths per day. Since that time volunteer activities in Japan have steadily increased, and there was a nationwide volunteer response to the Great East Japan Earthquake. In considering this and looking at the history of mankind, I believe that people may be moving away from a selfish, animalistic way of life and embracing a more altruistic, unselfish way of thinking. Swamiji (Swami Vivekananda) said, "Learn to feel yourself in other bodies, to know that we are all one."

I thought of those who think the purpose of life is the pursuit of pleasure, they spend a lifetime trying to get the things they think will bring them happiness. They attain something; tire of it, move on to the next thing, tire of that, move on to the next and the next until one's life is spent. Finally, what is it that I wanted and what is it I have done? I am born over and over again on this earth, so who am I? This is what I wanted to know. Ascetic practice is the pursuit of understanding "Who am I?" Zen does similar practices in the pursuit of knowing who we are.

I like what Sri Ramakrishna had to say about it: "The soul becomes restless for God when one is through with the enjoyment of worldly things." We can then seek truth and God. Before then concepts of liberation and deliverance fail to be understood, as we do not know our true nature. So people seek religion after having finished with pleasure. My fellow disciples would say to our guru, Swami Bhuteshanandaji, "We are ordinary people." He would respond, "Those who come here are not ordinary people." After finishing many lifetimes of enjoyment we seek God. Until then we have no need of God, we'll enjoy the World Cup or baseball.

(con't page 3)



## Service as Spiritual Practice (from page 2)

So thinking in this way I came across religion. I was living in Osaka and hated the thought of working to secure a luxurious life, and considered joining an Overseas Cooperation of Volunteers in order to help others. Then I thought since most people of Southeast Asia are Buddhists, I should learn more about Buddhism and bought the book, 'Heart Sutra'. In it I read, 'I am not the body, not the mind.' I went deeper and deeper into this teaching and my study of religion started in earnest.

To know oneself, it is necessary to purify the mind and intellect. How do we purify our heart and mind? We clean our heart and mind by changing our habits, our behaviours and changing our personality. Our habits change with changes in our conduct and gradually our personality is changed.

We have all heard of the Seven Buddha Verses (Shichi Butsu Ge). To refrain from evil, to be virtuous, to purify the mind, to practice correct Buddhism, etc. Simply said, 'Stop doing bad, do good and cleanse the mind.' All the enlightened ones teach the same. Shankara says that Vedanta says to seek the practitioners of liberation and cleanse the mind. With a purified mind, liberation is like an acorn in the hand, we are told. There is another maxim that states: "A pure heart is the end of all religion and the beginning of divinity."

We must begin our spiritual training with the purpose of purifying the mind. In the Amrita-Bindu Upanishad we read that the impure mind is that which is possessed of desire, and the pure mind is that which is devoid of desire. Our impurities arise from our sense of ego, this 'I' that seeks for it-

self is selfishness. The practice of yoga is throwing away this selfish ego and training in the service of others.

By working for other people, the mind is gradually transformed and spirituality grows little by little. The advantage of this training is a change in the focus of our activities from ourselves to others. Therefore, even though we continue to be engaged in our usual activities, the heart is purified of selfish intention.

So which school of Yoga is the easiest to follow? I believe Karma Yoga is easiest. Why? With Bhakti Yoga in the first place one must believe in God. Those who do not attend spiritual discourses probably do not believe in religion, so could never start with the practice

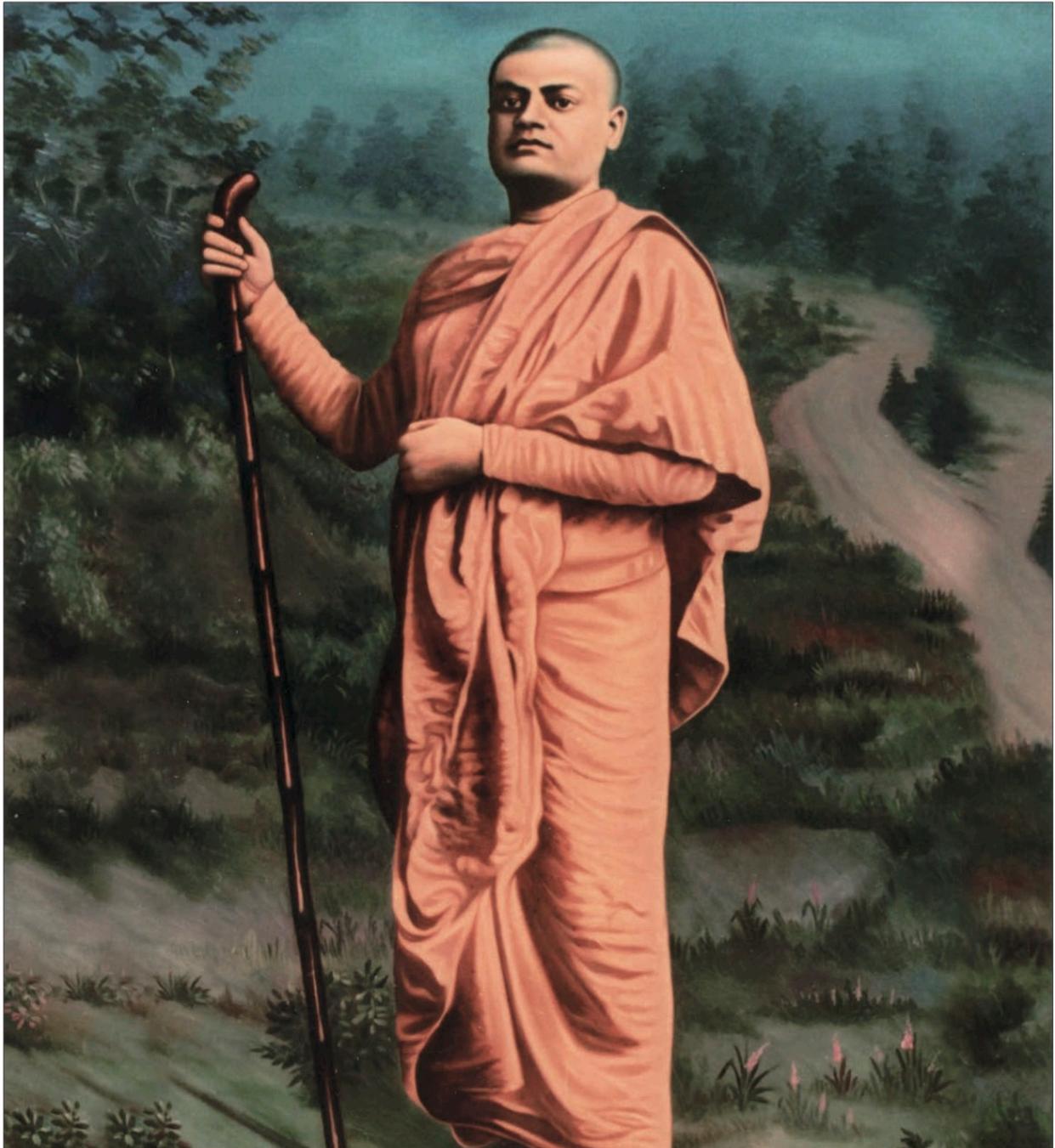
Bhakti. The image with Raja Yoga one is required to sit cross-legged and meditate for extended periods, and endure any leg pains one feels. Jnana Yoga requires much study of scriptures and reasoning. With Karma Yoga, how-

ever, all one has to do is just do good in serving others. Furthermore, the greatest advantage of this training is that we bring joy to ourselves as we bring joy to others and help them grow, too.

There is another saying; and I love sayings—my notebooks must contain thousands, 'To love all always. This is the heaven of heavens.' So to love everyone at all times is a heaven within heaven. Another saying is, 'Every charitable act is a stepping stone to heaven.' Another is from Swamiji (Swami Vivekananda), 'To be good and to do good—that is the whole of religion.' This is what constitutes the good of religion in the world.



(con't page 6)



## **SWAMI VIVEKANANDA: 152nd BIRTH ANNIVERSARY**

Date: Sunday, May 17, 2015. 2 p.m.- 5:30 p.m.

**スワミー・ヴィヴェーカーナンダ：第152回生誕記念祝賀会**

日時：2015年5月17日（日）午後2時～5時半

**Venue:** Indian Embassy Auditorium, 2-2-11 Kudan-minami Chiyoda-ku Tokyo

**Theme:** 'Indian Culture in Japan'

**場 所:** インド大使館ホール：東京都千代田区九段南 2-2-11

**テーマ:** 「日本におけるインドの文化」



# SWAMI VIVEKANANDA: 152nd BIRTH ANNIVERSARY スワミー・ヴィヴェーカーナンダ：第152回生誕記念祝賀会

Website: vedanta.jp

E-mail: info@vedanta.jp

ご家族友人お誘い合わせのうえ、ご出席ください。歓迎いたします。All, with family and friends, are cordially invited to attend!

**Date:** Sunday, 17th May, 2015. 2 p.m.- 5:30 p.m.  
**Venue:** Indian Embassy Auditorium, 2-2-11 Kudan-minami  
**Theme:** Indian Culture in Japan  
**日時:** 2015年5月17日(日)午後2時～5時半  
**場所:** インド大使館ホール：東京都千代田区九段南2-2-11  
**テーマ:** 日本におけるインドの文化

## • Speakers 講演者



**Hon'ble Sri Amit Kumar**  
Deputy chief of Mission,  
Embassy of India, Tokyo  
アミット・クマール閣下  
インド大使館、東京



**Fr. Cyril Veliath SJ**  
Professor, Sophia University  
ヴェリヤト・シリル・SJ神父  
上智大学教授



**Mr. J. S. Chandrani**  
Japan Business Service,  
President  
J.S.チャンドラーニ氏  
ジャパンビジネスサービス  
代表



**Ms. Kuniko Hirano**  
Padma Yoga,  
President  
平野久仁子氏  
パドマ・ヨーガ代表



**Ms. Subha Kokubo Chakraborty**  
Indian Classical Dance  
Troupe, Director  
シュバ・小久保・チャクラバルティ氏  
インディアン・クラシカル・ダ  
ンス・トゥループ、ディレクター

## • Cultural Programme 文化交流プログラム



**Devotional Songs**  
: Japanese devotees  
賛歌  
: 日本の信者



**Devotional Songs**  
: Tokyo weekender  
賛歌  
: トウキョウ、ウィークエンダー

**Admission free.**

**All will be treated with a light refreshment.**

**入場は無料です。**

**参加された皆さんには茶菓をお出します。**

## • Notice 注意

- Parking space not available.
- Please bring your identity card.
- 駐車場はありません。
- 写真付き身分証明書(運転免許書、パスポート、学生証など)を必ずお持ちください。

## スワミー・ヴィヴェーカーナンダ (1863~1902)

スワミー・ヴィヴェーカーナンダは、現代インドの予言者です。彼は人類愛の人、普遍宗教の説教者、国際主義の提唱者です。東西の碩学(せきがく)たちは、彼の普遍的見解、全統合的な研究態度、および魂をゆるがすような説法を高く評価しています。1897(明治30)年に彼は、真我の実現および礼拝の精神で人類に奉仕することを目的とする国際的な精神組織ラマクリシュナ・ミッションを創設しました。

### この催しの目的:

この催しの目的は、この偉大なスワミーに敬意を表し、彼の人格のさまざまな面を明らかにして、彼のメッセージを深く考えようとするものです。それは単に、私達がさまざまなレベルで直面する問題を解決する助けとなるばかりではなく、私達を、もっと高度の意識状態にまで高めようとするのでしよう。

## インド大使館地図



より詳しい情報を知りたい方は、ここに  
おかけ下さい:

スワミー・メダサーナンダ  
046-873-0428

主催: 祝賀委員会  
共催: 日本ヴェーダーンタ協会  
(ラマクリシュナ・ミッション日本支部)、  
日印文化協会

連絡先: 日本ヴェーダーンタ協会  
249-0001 神奈川県逗子市久木  
4-18-1

Tel: 046-873-0428

Fax: 046-873-0592

## Map of The Embassy of India



For further details, please call:

Swami Medhasananda  
(046)873-0428

Mr. S. Kar (045)622-6451

Mr. S. Brahma (03)3816-6075

Organized by: The Celebration  
Committee in collaboration with the  
Nippon Vedanta Kyokai (A branch  
of the Ramakrishna Mission) and  
Nichi-in Bunka Kyokai

Office Address: Nippon Vedanta  
Kyokai, 4-18-1 Hisagi Zushi-shi,  
Kanagawa-ken 249-0001, Phone  
(046)873-0428, Fax (046)873-0592

## Service as Spiritual Practice (from page 3)

With regard to the obstacles that we may encounter in this training, Swamiji said: "This is the first lesson to learn: be determined not to curse anything outside, not to lay the blame upon anyone outside, but stand up, lay the blame upon yourself." This is the first lesson to be learned; that we cannot blame or criticise other people even for the environment around us.

As Holy Mother Sarada Devi said, 'I tell you one thing. If you want peace of mind, do not find fault with others. Rather see your own faults. Learn to make the whole world your own. No one is a stranger, my child; the whole world is your own.' Blaming others is a waste of energy and brings nothing of value. In criticising others, I am corrupting myself, so it is no longer possible for me to lay blame on other people. This is the greatest benefit of service as an ascetic practice.

This training is done over a lifetime. Why? We have probably already been born hundreds of times and bring with us a lot of soil to be washed away. This takes time. I was initiated by Swami Bhuteshanandaji and some months later wrote him a letter. I told him that after many months of Japa (mantra repetition) and meditation I had experienced no results at all and asked, 'What can I do?' His written response was that if I really desired realisation, I should

### • Thought of the Month •

"What do we live for, if not to make life less difficult for each other?"

- Mary Ann Evans /aka George Eliot

be prepared to spend a lifetime in its pursuit.

Swami Vivekananda said, 'As I grow older I find that I look more and more for greatness in little things ... Anyone will be great in a great position. Even the coward will grow brave in the glare of the footlights. The world looks on! More and more the true greatness seems to me that of the worm doing its duty silently, steadily, from moment to moment and hour to hour.'

Sometimes when at the Advaita Ashram, in Mayavati I look at a Himalayan Cedar and I think that spiritual life is somewhat like that cedar tree. Some years after planting the tree, it doesn't seem to grow at all. I stay at Mayavati twice a year and it may rain for more than two months and then there are times when it doesn't rain at all. The tree has to just be patient. Though we may not see any growth, its roots grow deeper and stronger. After 10 years the little tree has shown signs of growth, and after 20 or 30 years I believe it will grow strong and tall. This is like spiritual training. •

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February Zushi Retreat 2015 - Afternoon Session

### 'The Practice of Selflessness'

A Talk by Swami Medhasananda

*Swami Medhasananda (Maharaj) began the afternoon session with the chanting of Om Sahana Vavatu from the Upanishads, which is usually recited as a prayer prior to the start of classes.*

*Then 'The Holy Place,' a very short story of two brothers sharing a farm and its profits from the Vedanta Society of Japan's bi-lingual publication, 'Eternal Stories,' was read by a member of the congregation. The reading and following talk were in Japanese.*

(con't page 7)

## The Practice of Selflessness (from page 6)

Maharaj then asked, "What was the topic of the morning talk? [The morning session with visiting Swami Shamananda is included in this issue of *The Vedanta Kyokai*.] And what are the lessons of the story that was just read?" The swami then addressed the theme of the morning talk and the moral of the story: "This morning's talk was about selfless service; on practicing unselfishness. Yet without love, the practice of service can become merely mechanical. Without love and mercy the practice of selfless service is difficult; love is basic and fundamental to selflessness.

"We must earn money to support our family, for example. This can bring difficulties, but even if we must work very hard, we do not mind. Why? Because we love our family. We support our family with our hard earned money. A man loves his wife and his children, so even hard work from morning to night does not bother him. Would we work so hard for those we have no relationship with? So here we see an example of doing all manner of things for the sake of love.



"Here at our Vedanta Society, for example, though our devotees are otherwise quite busy they also attend to all the chores necessary to prepare for our monthly Retreats and Public Celebrations. They do it because they love Sri Ramakrishna and Holy Mother and they want to serve them by serving their Society.

"It may so happen that we hear a talk in a temple or a church and be inspired to render some service to that house of worship. But though one may begin with enthusiasm, if there is no love behind it such practice becomes mechanical and does not last long.

"Now with regard to the earlier story of the two brothers, we find Swami Vivekananda's idea of complete self-sacrifice in the following from his teachings in Chapter III of *Karma Yoga*, The

Secret of Work: [A member of the congregation then read from Chapter III.]

*'This idea of complete self-sacrifice is illustrated in the following story:—After the battle of Kurukshetra the five Pandava brothers performed a great sacrifice and made very large gifts to the poor. All people expressed amazement at the greatness and richness of the sacrifice, and said that such a sacrifice the world had never seen before. But, after the ceremony, there came a little mongoose; half his body was golden, and the other half was brown; and he began to roll on the floor of the sacrificial hall. He said to those around, "You are all liars; this is no sacrifice." "What!" they exclaimed, "you say this is no sacrifice; do you not know how money and jewels were poured out to the poor and every one became rich and happy? This was the most wonderful sacrifice any man ever performed." But the mongoose said, "There was once a little village, and in it there dwelt a poor Brâhman, with his wife, his son and his son's wife. They were very poor and lived on small gifts made to them for preaching and teaching. There came in that land a three year famine, and the poor Brâhman suffered more than ever. At last when the*

*family had starved for days, the father brought home one morning a little barley flour, which he had been fortunate enough to obtain, and he divided it into four parts, one for each member of the family. They prepared it for their meal, and just as they were about to eat there was a knock at the door.*

*'The father opened it, and there stood a guest. Now in India a guest is a sacred person; he is as a god for the time being, and must be treated as such. So the poor Brâhman said, 'Come in, sir; you are welcome.' He set before the guest his own portion of the food, which the guest quickly ate and said, 'Oh, sir, you have killed me; I have been starving for ten days, and this little bit has but increased my hunger.' Then the wife said to her husband, 'Give him my share,' but the husband said, 'Not so.' The wife however insisted, saying, 'Here is a poor man, and*

(con't page 8)

## The Practice of Selflessness (from page 7)

*it is our duty as householders to see that he is fed, and it is my duty as a wife to give him my portion, seeing that you have no more to offer him.' Then she gave her share to the guest, which he ate, and said he was still burning with hunger. So the son said, 'Take my portion also; it is the duty of a son to help his father to fulfil his obligations.' The guest ate that, but remained still unsatisfied; so the son's wife gave him her portion also. That was sufficient, and the guest departed, blessing them. That night those four people died of starvation. A few granules of that flour had fallen on the floor, and when I rolled my body on them half of it became golden, as you see. Since then I have been travelling all over the world, hoping to find another sacrifice like that, but nowhere have I found one; nowhere else has the other half of my body been turned into gold. That is why I say this is no sacrifice.*

*'This idea of charity is going out of India; great men are becoming fewer and fewer. When I was first learning English I read an English story book, in which there was a story about a dutiful boy who had gone out to work and had given some of his money to his old mother, and this was praised in three or four pages. What was that? No Hindu boy can ever understand the moral of that story. Now I understand it when I hear the Western idea—every man for himself. And some men take everything for themselves, and fathers and mothers and wives and children go to the wall. That should never and nowhere be the ideal of the householder.*

*'Now you see what Karma-Yoga means; even at the point of death to help any one, without asking questions. Be cheated millions of times and never ask a question, and never think of what you are doing. Never vaunt of your gifts to the poor or expect their gratitude, but rather be grateful to them for giving you the occasion of practising charity to them. Thus it is plain that to be an ideal householder is a much more difficult task than to be an ideal Sannyasin; the true life of work is indeed as hard as, if not harder than, the equally true life of renunciation.*

"In the Upanishads there is a story of the flash of lightning. The lightning resembles three layered lines of 'da' in Sanskrit. Of course it is an imaginative representation of the lightning bolt. Anyway this 'da-da-da' is said to be a message to the gods, demons and also hu-

mans. What is this message?

"The first 'da' is to the gods, meaning 'dama.' When translated into English 'dama' means 'control.' So why is the message for the gods suppression? Because gods are immersed in enjoyment in Heaven. So the message from Brahman to the gods is to suppress their pleasure instincts and show restraint in their enjoyment. To demons the message is 'daya daya,' meaning kindness. The implication is that demons are cruel by nature and they should practice kindness and compassion. For humans it is 'dāna,' meaning 'charity'. The implication here is that human beings are selfish by nature. They should be more unselfish and charitable.

"One important practice of Karma Yoga is the remembrance that we all are but instruments of God. 'Not I, not I, but Thou.' The practice of unselfish service and remembrance that we are instruments of God are the two keys to Karma Yoga.

"Eliminating the idea of self or the small 'I' is the goal of every yoga, not only of Karma Yoga.

"In Raja Yoga the practice is the purification of the mind which creates the idea of 'I-ness' and 'my-ness' focused on the body-mind complex and causing selfishness. Through the practice of meditation the mind gets rid of this wrong idea and is focused on its true self.

"Jnana Yoga cleanses the intellect which harbours the wrong notion of the Self identifying with the body-mind complex. By realising it is the pure Self and one with Brahman, it gets rid of the petty idea of self.

"In Bhakti Yoga we practice the purification of our emotions, our feelings. If our emotions and feelings are impure, attachments arise. When we purify our emotions, there are no attachments which become the source of selfishness. This we practice by directing our emotions to God and seeing God in everyone and everything we love.

"Thus by eliminating our selfishness and ego-centric practices and thoughts, and by becoming unselfish and in rendering selfless service we realise goal of human life.

(con't page 9)

## The Practice of Selflessness (from page 8)

“To achieve this, one of the important practices recommended by Hindu scripture is to perform five daily duties known as the Pañcha Mahā Yajñas. What is the purpose of these? - To practice unselfishness. The meaning of yajñas in English is sacrifice. Don't use all your time, energy and money for yourself, share it with others.

“The five daily duties prescribed in the Pañcha Mahā Yajñas include Deva Yajña is devotion to God. In India there is the traditional rite of daily offerings to God at the family altar. In Japan there is also the tradition of offering prayers to God at a family altar, too. So everyday we should offer oblations, food and drink to the Lord. This is to acknowledge our devotion and thankfulness to God and to please God, which invokes the idea of practicing service.

“Rishi Yajña is dedication to the saints and to offer that which is pleasing to them. How do we please the saints? It is a very interesting concept. The saints are not pleased by offerings of things, they are pleased with our daily study of the scriptures and when we intone the sacred Om.

“Pitri Yajña is the pleasing of ancestors with daily remembrance and offerings of food and drink. This is also a familiar tradition in Japan as well.

“Nri Yajña is serving fellow human beings, such as guests, the poor and distressed people.

“Next is Bhoota yajña. This is taking care of animals, the feeding birds and the like.

“We are to practice the five yajñas daily. This is a mandatory obligation of all family members. What is the purpose? That we should not only live for ourselves, we should live for others as well. We cannot live without various forms of support from others so we must repay these

services by serving others. As we mentioned earlier, we should share with others what we have. The purpose of sharing is the practice of unselfish service.

“There is this famous quote from Albert Einstein: ‘A hundred times every day I remind myself that my inner and outer life are based on the labours of other men, living and dead, and that I must exert myself in order to give in the same measure as I have received and am still receiving.’ If we try to practice what Einstein said, we can develop a feeling of fellowship with all people.

“I recall after the Great Tohoku Earthquake seeing a news video of a woman alerting her neighbours to the coming tsunami and urging them to safety. It was said that she lost her own life thereafter.



“In the life of Swami Saradanandaji it is noted that he was climbing a hill with a walking stick, when he noticed an elderly man having difficulty in climbing. It was a dangerous path as well, so Saradanandaji give the man his walking stick. Why? As the saying attributed to Sir Philip Sidney says, ‘Thy

necessity is yet greater than mine.’

“These are great examples of practicing unselfish service even at the risk or cost of one's life. There are three basic types of charity The first is that I first care for myself; if there is some surplus, I can give it to others. A higher type of charity is; whatever I have I will share. The highest is; I do not think of myself, if you are in need, whatever I have I shall give you.

“So let us all start with; ‘Whatever surplus I have, let me share it with others.’ To achieve this we must set some limits on our personal enjoyments in order to save some excess. Thus, we can set our foot on the path of becoming unselfish and offering unselfish service, which is not only important for spiritual seekers, but for a true human being. •

• Story to Remember •

### **Non-attachment**

Kitano Gempo, Abbot of Eihei Temple, was ninety-two years old when he passed away in the year 1933. He had endeavoured his whole life not to be attached to anything.

As a wandering mendicant when he was twenty years old, he happened to meet a traveler who smoked tobacco. As they walked together down a mountain road, they stopped under a tree to rest. The traveler offered Kitano a smoke, which he accepted, as he was very hungry at the time.

"How pleasant this smoking is," he commented. The traveler then gave him an extra pipe and tobacco when they parted. Kitano thought: "Such pleasant things may distract my mind and disturb meditation. Before this goes too far, I will stop now." So he threw the smoking apparatus away.

When he was twenty-three years old he studied I-Ching, a profound doctrine of the power of divination. It was winter at the time and he needed some heavier clothing. He wrote to his teacher, who lived a hundred miles away, telling him of his need, and gave the letter to a traveler to deliver.

Almost the whole winter passed and neither answer nor clothes arrived. So Kitano resorted to the prescience of I-Ching to determine whether or not his letter had been delivered. He perceived that it had not and a letter from his teacher that arrived afterwards confirmed this, as it made no mention of his request for winter clothing.

"If I can perform such accurate prophetic works with I-Ching, I may neglect my meditation," felt Kitano. So he gave up this supernatural teaching and never resorted to its powers again.

When he was twenty-eight he studied Chinese calligraphy and poetry. He grew so skilful in these arts that his teacher praised him highly. Kitano mused: "If I don't stop now, I'll become a poet, not a Zen teacher." So he never mused upon nor wrote another poem.

101 Zen Stories

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4-18-1 Hisagi, Zushi-shi, Kanagawa-ken 249-0001 JAPAN  
Phone: 81-46-873-0428 Fax: 81-46-873-0592  
Website: <http://www.vedanta.jp> / Email: [info@vedanta.jp](mailto:info@vedanta.jp)