



MAY 2018 - Volume 16 Number 05

The Vedanta Kyokai Newsletter

NEWS, UPDATES AND MISCELLANY FROM THE VEDANTA SOCIETY OF JAPAN

JUNE 2018
Calendar

Birthdays

There are no birthday celebrations for June of 2018 according to the Vishuddha Siddhanta Almanac.

Kyokai Events

3rd (Sun)
14:00~16:00

NEW

Half Day Retreats at Zushi

Chanting, Readings, Meditation, Discussions on Spiritual Life, Tea and light snacks.
<benkyo.nvk@gmail.com>

17th (Sun)
10:30~16:30

June Monthly Retreat 2018

Gautama Buddha Birth Celebration
Chanting, Reading, Discourse
Lunch Prasad
Afternoon Session
All are welcome!

**Details on these &
other events on page 2**



✧ Thus Spake ✧

"Always discriminate. Try to realise that the outside object which is attracting your mind is impermanent, and turn your attention to God."

- Holy Mother Sri Sarada Devi

"Adore God as you would if you saw Him; for, if you see Him not, He sees you."

- Prophet Muhammad

Public Celebration in Tokyo Vedanta Society of Japan's 2018 Celebration of Swami Vivekananda's 155th Birth Anniversary and the 125th Anniversary of Swamiji's Visit to Japan

The Vedanta Society of Japan held its annual public celebration of Swami Vivekananda's birth anniversary in tandem with the 125th anniversary of Swamiji's visit to Japan on his momentous trip to Chicago to represent India and Hinduism during the first World's Parliament of Religions in September of 1893.

The event was held on Saturday, 19 May at 1:30 pm in Tokyo's Toshima Ward at the Minami Otsuka Public Hall, a spacious

(con't page 3)

In this Issue:

- Thus Spake ... page 01
- Monthly Calendar ... page 01
- Vedanta Society's Public Celebration Swami Vivekananda 155th Birth & 125th Visit to Japan Anniversary ... page 01
- Public Celebration Message Belur President Swami Smarananandaji ... page 04
- Public Celebration Message Indian Ambassador Tokyo ... page 03
- April Monthly Retreat Talk 'The Yoga of Service' by Swami Medhasananda ... page 07
- Thought of the Month ... page 08
- Public Celebration Photos ... page 12
- Story to Remember ... page 15

• June 2018 Schedule of Events •
Vedanta Society of Japan

2nd (Sat)

Discourse on Bhagavad Gita

At the Embassy of India in Tokyo
(in Japanese only) (10:00~12:00)

3rd (Sun)

Half Day Retreat at Zushi 14:00~16:00

Chanting, Reading on Spiritual Life, Discussion, Meditation, Tea and Snacks
Please Contact: benkyo.nvk@gmail.com

12th (Tue)

Gospel Class (from 14:00 pm-16:30pm)

Please Contact: benkyo.nvk@gmail.com

16th (Sat) (10:00~12:00)

Discourse on Upanishad - 'Akarenga Hall in Shinbashi'

Maruito Shinbashi Akarengadori Building 4F
2-14-4 Shinbashi, Minato-ku, Tokyo 105-0004
(in Japanese only) Please Contact: Kyokai (045-873-0428) <gitaembassy@gmail.com>

17th (Sun) 10:30~

June Zushi Retreat 2018

Gautama Buddha Birth Celebration
Chanting, Reading, Discourse
Lunch Prasad
Afternoon Session

22nd (Fri)

Nara Narayan: Service to Homeless Narayan

Please Contact: Yoko Sato (090-6544-9304)

23rd (Sat)

Satsanga in Nagoya

Please Contact: Kyokai (046-873-0428)

24th (Sun)

Satsanga in Tajimi

Please Contact: Ueno (090-6363-8558)

30th (Sat)

Swami Vivekananda's Visit to Japan: 125th Anniversary

Please Contact: Kyokai (046-873-0428)

Every Saturday

Yoga-Asana Class - At the Annexe (from 10:45-11:45)

Please Contact: Hanari 080-6702-2308 (羽成淳)
<http://zushi-hatayoga.jimdo.com/>

Public Celebration (from page 1)

new location for the annual event. Commemorating the two anniversaries, this year's theme was 'India-Japan Relationship and Swami Vivekananda.'

The invocation began at 1:30 pm with Vedic Peace Prayers led by Swami Medhasananda and devotees of the Vedanta Society of Japan. This was followed by the offering of a bouquet to the standing photo of Swami Vivekanandaji positioned stage left by Mr. Raj Kumar Srivastava, Deputy Chief of Mission, Embassy of India, Tokyo.

Next he was asked to release a special edition of the Vedanta Society's 'Universal Gospel' published on this occasion. He then read a message from Mr. Sujan R. Chinoy, Ambassador of India, offering his heartfelt felicitations to the Vedanta Society on the occasion (in this issue of The Vedanta Kyoka). Mr. Srivastava then gave a brief address commenting on Swamiji's foresight and scientific approach to concepts of physics and metaphysics with Karma Yoga and Raja Yoga, and his message of strength.

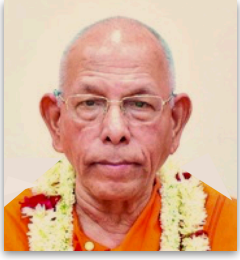
Professor Fukunaga Masaaki, Visiting Fellow, Sophia University, was asked to release a new Japanese-language publication from the Vedanta Society of Japan 'Jissenteki Vedanta' (Practical Vedanta). He then gave an interesting historical address exploring Japan's Buddhist ties to India, once known in Asia as 'Tenjiku,' and how the Japanese long held view of India as a most ideal place on earth was to be challenged later as the Meiji Era allowed Japanese to travel abroad. His talk ended with comparisons of the median ages and market places of the two countries, and the importance of the two peoples to assist one another to the benefit of both in a spirit of mutual respect as Swamiji had advised.

Swami Medhasananda then gave a talk highlighting Swamiji's short, but historically important, visit to Japan and his role as a pioneer of the India-Japan Relationship in the modern age. He also discussed Swamiji's vision and heartfelt desire for mutually beneficial exchanges between the peoples of the two nations, and how the launch of the Vedanta Society of Japan in 1958 and affiliation to the Ramakrishna Mission in 1984 had answered in part Swamiji's desire to 'do something for Japan.'

With the event proceeding well on schedule, Mr. Atsushi Suzuki, Secretary, Vedanta Society of Japan, closed the first part of the programme offering a 'Vote of Thanks.' Recess was called by emcees, Ms. Kathy Matsui (English language) and Ms. Satsuki Yokota (Japanese language) and refreshments were provided by Spice Magic Calcutta of Tokyo.

The Cultural Programme began at 3:45 pm starting with an Indian Group singing devotional songs. This was followed by a Japanese group from the Vedanta Society performing their original songs and encouraging the audience to join in singing. Then a large group from the Kailas Yoga School of Yokohama sang a couple of numbers. Then the Kailas and the Vedanta Society groups joined forces for a final grand finale. These groups were followed by the Cultural Programme's special invited guests, The Mayuka Indian Classical Dance Troup.

This year's celebration ended with a vote of thanks from Mr. Jagmohan Chandrani, Secretary, Celebration Committee, offering his vote of thanks. •



RAMAKRISHNA MATH AND
RAMAKRISHNA MISSION
(The Headquarters)
P.O. BELUR MATH, DIST. HOWRAH
WEST BENGAL: 711 202

Message

I am happy to learn that on the occasion of the the Public Celebration, to be held on 19 May 2018, in connection with the 155th Birth Anniversary of Swami Vivekananda and the 125th Anniversary of Swami Vivekananda's visit to Japan, the Vedanta Society of Japan has arranged a series of talks on the 'India-Japan Relationship,' Cultural Programmes and an Exhibition.

Swami Vivekananda had great love and admiration for Japan. In his writings, again and again, he mentions about the country and the wonderful qualities of the people of Japan. In an interview with 'The Hindu', in Madras in February of 1897, while speaking about the greatness of the people of Japan, he said, *"The faith of the Japanese in themselves, and their love of country ... When you have men who are ready to sacrifice their everything for their country, sincere to the backbone - when such men arise, India will become great in every respect."* Swamiji wanted that *'every one of our young men could visit Japan once at least in his lifetime.'*

Praising the country and its people in a letter to his Madras friends, he wrote: *"The Japanese are one of the cleanliest people on earth. Everything is neat and tidy. Their streets are nearly all broad, straight, and regularly paved. Their little houses are cage-like and their pine-covered evergreen little hills form the background of almost every town and village. The short-statured, fair-skinned, quaintly-dressed Japanese, their movements, attitudes, gestures, everything is picturesque, Japan is the land of the picturesque! Almost every house has a garden at the back, very nicely laid out according to Japanese fashion with small shrubs, grass-plots, artificial waters, and small, stone bridges."*

In this famous writing 'The East and The West,' in the chapter 'France-Paris,' greatly narrating the art, culture, love for nature and beauty of the country, Swamiji remarked, *"Such love for nature and art have I seen nowhere else, except in Japan."*

May the celebrations be greatly successful is my humble prayer to Bhagawan Sri Ramakrishna, Holy Mother Sri Sarada Devi and Swamiji!

I convey my good wishes to all,

April 26, 2018

Swami Smaranananda, President



Embassy of India
Tokyo, Japan

2-2-11 Kudan Minami, Chiyoda-ku, Tokyo 102 0074



Message

I would like to take this opportunity to offer my heartfelt felicitations to the Vedanta Society of Japan on the occasion of the 155th Birth Anniversary of the great spiritual leader Swami Vivekananda, who today continues to inspire millions across the world with his teachings of universal principles.

Swami Vivekananda was undoubtedly India's foremost spiritual Ambassador to the world, representing Hinduism at the first World Parliament of Religions in Chicago in 1893 where the participants were instantly taken by his deep human insight, eloquence and inspiring personality. He advocated unity and harmony among peoples of different faiths, and his thinking resonated with the thousands of people who attended his lectures throughout America, Europe and India. As such, he became internationally recognised as one of the most influential thinkers of his time.

This year marks the 125th anniversary of Swami Vivekananda's visit to Japan in 1893 en route to Chicago. From 30 June to 14 July 1893, he had visited cities like Kobe, Osaka, Kyoto, Tokyo and Yokohama. He was very impressed by the country and its people and said, "I would wish that every one of our young men could visit Japan once at least in his lifetime".

During the course of his celebrated life, he bestowed a wealth of knowledge upon all humanity through his writings and lectures on Hindu philosophy. He founded the Ramakrishna Mission which has since continued to engage in philanthropic activities promoting harmony, cooperation and co-existence.

I wish to extend my very best wishes to the Vedanta Society of Japan for the success of the programme. I would also like to express my appreciation for the Society's efforts to foster closer bonds between India and Japan.

Tokyo

11 April 2018

Sujan R. Chinoy

April Zushi Retreat 2018
AM Session

'The Yoga of Service'

A talk by Swami Medhasananda

The Yoga of Service, Sevā Yoga, and Karma Yoga are almost the same. However, in Karma Yoga there are some ruminative and non-ruminative ways. For example when one goes to work with the attitude of service, we may still call it Karma Yoga. With Sevā Yoga, on the other hand, there is always the sense of non-rumination there is no idea of getting back anything. Other than this the two are the same thing.

Sevā and Sewa

In India we generally do not use the term 'Karma Yoga', actually we always say Seva (sewa) instead. In Japan we hear the same word. The wife says, 'danna-san o-sewa' (serving husband- the 'o' being honorific) or other family members, like in-laws o-sewa. Not only that; but members of NGOs serving the homeless and the aged is referred to as 'sewa'. Some temple activities, too, are called 'o-sewa'. In India and Japan this word is used in the same way.

Upon checking a Japanese dictionary to see if there is some connection with the Sanskrit 'seva' I only found references to 'helping'. I could find no reference linking the two, but still in my mind with the pronunciation and meaning so similar, I wonder if there is any relationship between these two. Seva is a Sanskrit word, and as you know in Japanese Buddhism many Sanskrit words have been adopted. This is not confirmed by the dictionary, but I feel that perhaps there is some relationship.

Today we'll discuss our theme with the idea that it is not just a theological discussion, but that attendees will receive some inspiration from today's theme.

Dayā and Sevā

Devotees of the Ramakrishna Order are regularly to do some kind of service or 'seva' to others. So in addition to spiritual instructions regarding devotion, spiritual knowledge, realisation and practices, at the same time, we are instructed to do some kind of service, as far as possible, for others.

How was this idea of sevā introduced in our Ramakrishna Order? There was a famous incident at Dakshineswar during a discussion of some ideas in Vaishnava scripture regarding three symptoms of one who is a devotee of Vishnu. The first is to be fond of the name of the Lord; the second is compassion for humanity; and the third is service to devotees. While quoting this from the Vaishnava scripture, Sri Ramakrishna remarked, 'Why should we say compassion for suffering humanity? No, it is Sevā. Sevā.' And he coined a familiar and oft-quoted phrase, "Shiva Jnāne, Jīva Sevā", meaning o'sewa of humanity is equal to the o'sewa of Shiva, the Lord. He is inside the poor and troubled and we should serve them; not with the idea of compassion or doing some act of kindness, but to serve them. Every word has a degree of nuance, like dayā and sevā. Dayā is an act of charity or the showing some mercy or kindness. This nuance is not in the word sevā, wherein every act of service is done with humility. The words associated with seva are love, respect and humility.

(con't page 7)

Yoga of Service (from page 6)

For instance, a devotee would never say, 'I am doing dayā to God!' (laughter) Can you imagine? 'I am doing dayā to Sri Ramakrishna!' No, it would be sevā to God, serving God. From this we can understand the difference. So sevā is the idea of love, respect and humility in a act to please the Lord, these nuances apply to the word sevā, but not dayā. The idea behind dayā is an act of compassion by someone superior to someone somehow inferior. Sevā is the exact opposite. In Sevā the person performing the act is always lower or inferior, and the object of the action higher or superior. This is why Sri Ramakrishna specifically said "Shiva Jnāne" and added "Jiva Sevā." The idea of Shiva must accompany the idea of sevā, otherwise there would be no difference between dayā and sevā. The action may be the same, but not the attitude.

Service and Self-Realisation

There were many devotees present during this discussion, but only one Sri Ramakrishna considered the most intelligent among them. That person was Swamiji (Vivekananda), who said, 'Today I have learned something wonderful, and if the day, the appropriate time, comes, I shall teach this to the whole world.' Everyone had heard Sri Ramakrishna declare, 'Shiva Jnāne Jiva Sevā', but no one else among the disciples had recognised the deep meaning and great significance of this expression. The result of this teaching culminated in the founding of the Ramakrishna Mission.

What is the difference between the Ramakrishna Mission, a monastic organisation, and several other Indian monastic organisations? Most of the other institutions concern themselves solely with realisation of God or realisation of Truth. In Buddhist sects the idea of realisation is there, but also many acts of charity and service are pursued, not connected with the main purpose of realisation. Buddha had tremendous love for humanity and that is expressed through service and charity, but again, not connected with the main philosophy of Buddhism and purpose of realisation. But when Swami Vivekananda founded the Ramakrishna Mission, he established its motto as 'Atmano Mokshartham Jagad-hitaya Cha'. The first part 'Atmano Mokshartham' means 'for the realisation of the self' and is very common among monastic organisations and sects; but the second part 'Jagad-hitaya Cha' means 'helping or doing good to humanity'. The accepted translation is 'For one's own salvation, and for the good of the world.' One's own salvation and/or serving others are not optional, these two forms are inextricably connected as one idea. One, 'Atmano Mokshartham', is realisation of the Self and at the same time, in equal measure, striving to serve humanity, 'Jagad-hitaya Cha'. They are not contradictory, they are supplementary teachings.

Traditionally the thought of monks, from the moment they become a monk, is that they have only one concern, one purpose, one motive and one goal, that is realisation of the Self. Any other activity no matter how good causes distractions to the mind meditating on God. So one is to be very careful to not be distracted even by serving others. Therefore such things are to be shunned. But Swamiji said no, they should be combined because rather than cause distractions, such activity helps in one's realisation. Swamiji's approach and logic are absolutely different in this regard.

Path of Self-Realisation

(con't page 8)

Yoga of Service (from page 7)

How does this idea of helping others help in the path of realisation? The Atman is all pervading. In the scriptures it says, 'He is a great yogi who sees the same Self in him dwelling in others' or according to Bhakti, 'The God which is in us is the same God in others.' We have to learn; we have to imbibe this idea. Do you really see that same Self that dwells in you dwelling in others, too? So Sevā Yoga will actually test whether we see our Self in others. If we don't see this, then we are far from realisation of the Self. Among us here today, how many of us can see Sri Ramakrishna in a person we like and do not like alike.

Thought of the Month

"A jug fills drop by drop."

- Rabindranath Tagore

Secondly, for self-realisation we must make our mind pure. Without purity the Atman within us will not be revealed. One of the greatest obstacles to purity is our ego. Here, if we want to serve others, we see how greatly the ego becomes an obstacle. From the ego comes pride; from that ego comes jealousy; from that ego comes some sort of expectation; from that ego comes attachments. How much we are affected by these features of the ego is tested when we try Sevā Yoga.

Complimentary Practices

These two tests become our practice of Seva Yoga—seeing the same self in me as well as in others and seeing how much ego still persists in me. If we practice Sevā in the real spirit of Sevā, it will help us eliminate the ego. The two tests then become two practices. Finally, this will help in self-realisation.

After Sri Ramakrishna's passing, Swamiji travelled to many places around India, including the Himalayas, and he observed many monks or holy men. In his observations he came to the conclusion that most of these monks are under the illusion that they will have realisation just by giving up the world and doing meditation. Unless the two steps we discussed before are cleared: Seeing one's same Self in others and a purified mind—free from selfishness, ego and the like. Unless this preparation is there, by simply renouncing the world and meditating one can never have realisation. This is what Swamiji concluded observing holy men of the Himalayas. Just as a bird needs two wings for flying into the infinite sky, the spiritual aspirant needs two wings; one of striving for self-realisation through meditation, and the other elimination of eliminating the ego. Then he can take flight into infinity.

Some spiritual aspirants who came to the Ramakrishna Order found it a little frustrating. They had come for self-realisation, but when they join the Order as monks they see they do not get long hours for meditation, maybe one or two hours in the mornings and one or two hours at night. Their other hours are spent in work, work, and more work. Their frustration has them asking if this working schedule was why they had become monks. So much work and not five or six hours for meditation? Initially they do not understand that the Ramakrishna Mission gives equal emphasis to these two, because they are supplementary to each other—striving for realisation through meditation, discrimination, scripture study, and on the other hand, Sevā.

(con't page 9)

Conditions of Sevā

Firstly is the idea that we have some special status; this being we have acquired a good education, or we are from a family of wealth or high status, which produces the idea of one being of higher or lower in status. In the practice of Sevā we are never to compare our status with those whom we are to serve. Yet, this idea comes very naturally. To counteract this we should not think, 'I am not higher, I am not higher, I am not higher.' No, this is negative thinking. The positive approach is to think, 'The Lord is in him.' Without thinking of one's own status, just simply think that the Lord is in whom I would like to serve. This is 'Shiva Jnāne Jīva Sevā'.

Secondly, Seva is to serve without discriminating. How does this discrimination come? For example, we all belong to some social community or another, and we should not consider that the person whom we are about to serve belongs to a different community. Obviously, my feelings flow easily and naturally with those of my own community. If the person I am about to serve is not of my community, this flow is not spontaneous. Another



test is religion. India is a country of many religions. When we, Hindu monks of the Ramakrishna Order, are working in flood relief, there is a natural tendency is to be kind to other Hindus. But many of the afflicted people are Muslims and we serve them equally without discrimination.

The third and most difficult thing is not to expect anything in return from the person who is being served. What is this expectation? We expect some sort of gain or benefit from our Seva. Sometimes there is expectation of name and fame. For example a rich man or company give a large donation to some group, like an NGO, immediately what do they want? They want to pose for pictures presenting their donation to be published in the newspaper for public appreciation of their generosity. It is calculated that from this, some benefit will accrue to their enterprise as well. This is public appreciation, while in many cases at the personal or private level we may at least expect a 'Thank you!'

If I prepare a dish and the devotee comments on how nicely it tastes, am I not pleased? This is a natural expectation with deep psychology behind it. Asking, 'How was it?' is not

(con't page 10)

A StoryYoga of Service (from page 9)

just confirming whether or not I over-salted the dish or not, but a sub-conscious expectation of appreciation from others.

It is customary to thank someone in return for receiving something. It is a common courtesy and part of the culture of a civilisation. Every act is to receive a thanks of acknowledgement or appreciation. Not thanking someone is actually considered rude. That is the custom, but the spirit of Seva is that without expecting anything—not even in terms of money or recognition—but we should not even have the idea of appreciation and do our Sevā.

The next, and possibly most difficult, is not minding any criticisms from the person served. This actually also happens on occasion. Not only is there no appreciation of an act of charity, the same person you helped may instead criticise you, but we are not to feel bad, sad or perturbed about it. This is the spirit of Sevā.

I can give many wonderful examples of how Seva is practiced in the Ramakrishna Order. The ancient scriptures are rich in extraordinary examples, but I want to share with you at least one modern day example as practiced by the Ramakrishna Order in general and especially by two monks in particular.

As we discussed, traditional monastics held that the idea of service was a distraction to their goal. This story concerns two of Swamiji's disciples, Swami Kalyananandaji and Swami Nischayanandaji. Swamiji had sent Swami Kalyananandaji to Haridwar. When Swamiji was travelling as a wondering monk, he noticed that when sadhus became sick there was no one to take care of them. No arrangement of medicine or provision for hospitalisation or doctor care was to be had. Remember, this was during the British period and they were rarely sensitive to the poor conditions of their Indian subjects, as they had come to exploit. Hospitals were far off from Haridwar, Rishikesh, and other locations along the Himalayas because these areas were wild jungles and only sadhus resided there. Swamiji sent Swami Kalyananandaji with the idea to please do something for the sick of the area by opening a dispensary. This is how the Ramakrishna Mission at Kankhal near Haridwar started, beginning as a very small establishment without much money in two huts, one for living and one to for serving the sick. After the passing away of Swamiji, Swami Nischayanandaji joined Swami Kalyananandaji in that effort.

With no money and no staff, everything from preparing food; to tending to the sick; to cleaning toilets was done by these two monks. Only between two and ten patients could be cared for at a time, but some were too sick to rise from bed and go to toilet and the monks had to clean up after them as well. Independent sadhus or monks from other Orders would often come there for treatment. These same monks who had received care from these two monks of the Ramakrishna Order, often referred to them as the 'bhangi sadhus' or 'sweeper monks,' insinuating they were not real monks, but a polluted janitor class of monks.

On occasion feasts would be provided for monks in the area, but the two dispensary monks were never invited to any such congregation, as they were not regarded as authentic monks, but mere sweeper sadhus. They had no status even within the monastic community. The context here is an example of how we can serve people and those same

(con't page 11)

A StoryYoga of Service (from page 10)

people will criticise us.

Most monastic organisations have a leader, and any disagreements or conflicts of opinion are brought to the leader for a resolution. Such a leader is studied, spiritual and very highly regarded. There was one such abbot of the Kailash Ashram in Rishikesh, Dhanraj Giri-ji, who was regarded as a leader among all the area monks. He was an erudite scholar of scripture and also a great soul. He would be invited to any feasts and be given prime respect.

On one occasion a great feast, a 'bhandara', the offering of special foods to monks, was arranged in Haridwar. Dhanraj Giri-ji was invited from Rishikesh, and all the other monks from many places were also invited, except for those two, Kalyananandaji and Nischayanandaji. Such bhandaras are usually sponsored by the well-to-do in expectation of some merit.

Many monks had arrived and food items were being served when Dhanraj Giriji said he had heard that two monastic disciples of Swami Vivekananda were providing medical services and live in the area. He asked, 'Where are they?' He was told they were not invited and he demanded to know why. He was told they were not invited because they are but sweeper monks—at this he became very angry. 'Bhangi sadhus?' 'Why do you call them such?' He was then told of that they clean-up after people. He asked if they too had been treated by those two monks. Some answered that yes, they had. He then asked who had cleaned-up after them, and the answer was that those two monks had.

'So you get service from them, even to the extent of your toilet when you are incapacitated? What about your mother when you were a baby? Did she not care for you the same? Did you call your mother, bhangi Maa?' At this they were instructed to go and invite the two monks to join them; and that the bhandara would not start without them.

Immediately someone was sent to invite them, but the two monks refused since they had been ostracised for so long by that community even while accepting care from them. The messenger returned with their refusal, but Dhanraj Giri-ji said that the bhandara could not start without them. They must come. The invitation was again extended and Kalyananandaji accepted, but Nischayanandaji refused. Kalyananandaji would not go without him, so again the messenger returned alone. Next Dhanraj Giri sent his personal secretary to invite them on his behalf and explain that unless they attended the bhandara would be cancelled.

At this the two accepted and upon their arrival, in front of everyone, Dhanraj Giri embraced them both and took the dust from their feet, an unthinkable act on the part of a highly respected soul, and offered his apologies on behalf of all those gathered. From that day on the attitude of the local sadus completely reversed and the first to be invited to any feasts or gatherings were monks of the Ramakrishna Order. Not only that, but by their example, most of those other traditional organisations introduced Sevā or service to greater or lesser extents.

So our task is to not mind criticism from those we serve, we are to serve. This is Sevā.

This concluded the Morning Session.

Public Celebration in Tokyo
Vedanta Society of Japan's 2018 Celebration of
Swami Vivekananda's 155th Birth Anniversary and the
125th Anniversary of Swamiji's Visit to Japan



Volunteer Closing Group Photo



Swami Medhasananda



DCM Raj Kumar Srivastava



Prof. Fukunaga



Vedic Peace Prayers



Registering & Receiving Programme Materials



Refreshment Break



Principals Backstage



One Last Rehearsal



Vedanta Society Group



Kailas Group



Combined Group



Dance Troupe

• A Story to Remember •

Tetsugen and the Sutras

Tetsugen Doko, a student of Zen, resolved on a mighty undertaking: the printing of seven thousand copies of the sutras which till then were available only in Chinese.

He travelled the length and breadth of Japan to collect funds for this project. Some wealthy people offered him as much as a hundred pieces of gold, but mostly he received small coins from peasants. Tetsugen expressed equal gratitude to each donor regardless of the sum of money given.

After ten long years of travel he finally collected the funds necessary for the task. Just then the river Uji overflowed and thousands were left without food and shelter. Tetsugen spent all the money he had collected for his cherished project to save these poor people from starvation.

Then he began the work of raising funds again. Again it was several years before he got the money he needed. Then an epidemic spread all over the country, so Tetsugen gave away all he had collected to help relieve the suffering.

Once again he set out on his travel and, twenty years later, his dream of having the scriptures in the Japanese language finally came true. The printing block that produced this first edition of the sutras is on display at the Ōbaku Monastery in Kyoto.

The Japanese tell their children that Tetsugen got out three editions of the sutras in all; and that the first two are invisible and far superior to the third.

Short Wisdom Stories by Anthony de Mello

The Vedanta Society of Japan (Nippon Vedanta Kyokai)
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