



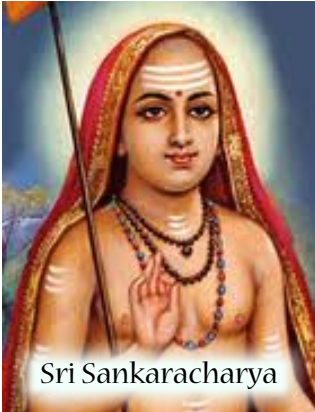
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日本ヴェダンタ協会ニュースレター

# The Vedanta Kyokai Newsletter

NEWS, UPDATES AND MISCELLANY FROM THE VEDANTA SOCIETY OF JAPAN

## May Calendar



Sri Sankaracharya

## ✧ Thus Spake ✧

*"All is the Self or Brahman. The saint, the sinner, the lamb, the tiger, even the murderer, as far as they have any reality, can be nothing else, because there is nothing else."*

- Swami Vivekananda

*"Like bubbles in the water, the worlds rise, exist and dissolve in the Supreme Self, which is the material cause and the prop of everything."*

- Sri Sankara

## Birthdays

Dates according to the  
**'Vishuddha Siddhanta'  
Almanac**

**Sri Shankaracharya**  
Sunday, May 4

**Sri Buddha Deva**  
Wednesday, May 14

## Kyokai Events

### • May Zushi Retreat •

Sunday, May 18, 11:am  
Talk by Sw Medhasananda  
'Practice of Bhakti Yoga'

### • Closing Ceremony • Vivekanandaji 150th

Sunday, May 25,  
**Seisen University  
Auditorium - Tokyo**  
4~7 p.m.  
Talks and Tributes  
**Cultural Programme**  
Song, Dance, Sitar  
Refreshments  
More Information On  
Pages 15 & 16



## March Zushi Retreat 2014

Celebrating Sri Ramakrishna Deva's 179th Birth Anniversary

The Vedanta Society of Japan's (Nippon Vedanta Kyokai) monthly retreat celebrated the 179th birth anniversary of Sri Sri Ramakrishna Deva on Sunday, March 16, 2014.

While the programme began in the Ashram's main shrine at 06:00 with mangalarati, chanting and meditation, the Puja, Offering, Homa, and Pushpanjali were conducted in the Annexe building to better accommodate the congregation. At the conclusion of Homa and prior to giving everyone a dab of the sacred ash on their foreheads (vibuthi), Swami Medhasananda announced the release of an updated 2nd edition Japanese-language version of 'The Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna.' This edition is a result of a 4-year effort to complete and the swami called upon visiting Ambassador Madan Kumar Bhattarai of the Federal Democratic Republic of Nepal to make the official release. The swami noted that when he had asked Ambassador Bhattarai if he was familiar with Belur Math, the Ramakrishna Math and Mission headquarters campus, he replied that, 'Yes,' he was quite familiar with the place – having visited 'about a hundred times.'

(con't page 2)

## In this Issue:

- Thus Spake ... page 1
- Monthly Calendar ... page 1
- March Zushi Retreat Celebrating Sri Ramakrishna's 179th Birth Anniversary ... page 1
- Sw Medhasananda Visits Repaired Schools at Gawaygaway, Cebu, Philippines in Wake of Typhoon 'Yolanda' ... page 4

- Embassy Holds 150th Seminar and Exhibit for Vivekananda and Okakura ... page 6
- Sw Vivekananda and His Relationship with Sri Ramakrishna - Feb Zushi Retreat Talk ...page 8
- Thought of the Month ... page 12
- Sw Tyaganandaji Visits ...page 13
- Sw Atmapriyananda Visits ... page 14
- A Story to Remember ... page 14



## March Retreat (from page1)

with Belur Math, the Ramakrishna Math and Mission headquarters campus, he replied that, 'Yes,' he was quite familiar with the place – having visited 'about a hundred times.'

Lunch Prasad consisted of gourmet vegetarian or fish curries with fruits and local and Indian sweets served in the main Ashrama utilising both the ground floor dinning areas and the upstairs meeting room. The upstairs library and ground floor bookstore were busy areas prior to the start of the afternoon session at 14:30.

The afternoon session began with a chant and reading from 'The Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna' in Japanese Chapter 13, The Master and M, August 19,1883:

*It was Sunday, the first day after the full moon. Sri Ramakrishna was resting after his noon meal. The midday offering had been made in the temples, and the temple doors were closed.*

*In the early afternoon the Master sat up on the small couch in his room. M. prostrated himself before him and sat on the floor. The Master was talking to him on the philosophy of Vedanta.*

### Householders and Non-dualism

*Master (to M.): "Self-Knowledge is discussed in the Ashtāvakra Samhitā. The non-dualists say, 'Soham', that is, 'I am the Supreme Self.'*

*This is the view of the sannyasis of the Vedantic school. But this is not the right attitude for householders, who are conscious of doing everything themselves. That being so, how can they declare, 'I am That, the action-less Supreme Self'?*

*According to the non-dualists the Self is unattached. Good and bad, virtue and vice, and the other pairs of opposites, cannot in any way injure the Self, though they undoubtedly afflict those who have identified themselves with their bodies. Smoke soils the wall, certainly, but it cannot in any way affect Ākāśa, space. Following the Vedantists of this class, Krishnakishore used to say, 'I am Kha', meaning Ākāśa. Being a great devotee, he could say that with some justification; but it is not becoming for others to do so.*

*"But to feel that one is a free soul is very good. By constantly repeating, 'I am free, I am free', a man verily becomes free. On the other hand, by constantly repeating, 'I am bound, I am bound', he certainly becomes bound to worldliness. The fool who says only, 'I am a sinner, I am a sinner', verily drowns himself in worldliness. One should rather say: I have chanted the name of God. How can I be a sinner? How can I be bound?"*

*(To M.) "You see, I am very much depressed today. Hriday has written me that he is very ill. Why should I feel dejected about it? Is it because of maya or daya?"*



## March Retreat (from page 2)

*M. could not find suitable words for a reply, and remained silent.*

After this reading, Swami Medhasananda offered more prayerful chants before giving a talk in English on Sri Ramakrishna interpreted by Ms. Yoko Sasaki. (This talk will be presented in a future issue of The Vedanta Kyokai.)

At the close of the discourse Swami invited members of the Society and members of the Kailas Yoga School to commence with their offerings of a collaborative choral effort of original Japanese-language devotional songs.

Ms. Shanti Izumida and Society devotees introduced the first number with an explanation of the lyric and encouraged all to join in the phrase that repeats the name of 'Ramakrishna' and to think of it as japam. The congregation then opened lyric books and sang along with the next number, 'Kokoro Ni Saku Hana' or Flower Blooming in the Mind. Space then had to be made to accommodate the combined choral team of some 26 members, and included the raised platform, who performed two numbers.

Following this the keyboard was removed and microphones repositioned as the raised platform used for Puja and talks became the stage for a sitar recital by Mr. Kenji Inoue accompanied by Mr. Dinesh Dyondi on tabla.

Before the pair eased into their inspiring performance Swami Medhasananda noted that this portion of the musical programme would be from 45 to 50 minutes and that tea would be served afterward. The microphone was then turned over to Mr. Inoue who briefly explained that he visits his teacher in India yearly for the past 27 years. Inoue was asked by this teacher what else he would like to learn most and he said it was the raga he was about to perform today, which he practiced for

more than two months with the teacher. He explained the mood is one of shanti or heian (peace) and picks up tempo. The two then eased into a sterling 50-minute performance.

Before urging all to head over to the Ashrama for tea, Swami praised the fine performance and noted the hours and years of dedica-

tion and practice required to master such instruments as the tabla and sitar. Swami then said, "It is like spiritual practice. It doesn't come quickly. One visitor asked Sri Ramakrishna, 'Can you teach me how to get samadhi?' Only a very few can reach it, and it is a natural consequence of continuous practice and dedication. Of course, everyone wants to achieve the goal without practice. It is the same for all classical pursuits, music and dance and spiritual life. I would like to thank both for agreeing to perform for us today and let's give them another round of applause!" A request the congregation enthusiastically responded to. •



## Swami Medhasananda Visits the Village of Gawaygaway Where the Ramakrishna Vedanta Society of the Philippines Performed Relief Work Following Super Typhoon 'Yolanda'



Between November 2013 and the beginning of February 2014 the Ramakrishna Vedanta Society of the Philippines carried out relief work in the village of Gawaygaway, which is located in the municipality of San Remigio, on the north-eastern tip of Cebu island. This small community consists of 365 households, mostly composed of very poor and indigent people relying for their survival on cutting sugar cane on the plantation of a local landlord.

While the village reported no casualties caused by the typhoon, about 80% of the dwellings there were damaged or totally flattened by the powerful winds. Also, the elementary and high schools, a small clinic and the chapel, where a visiting priest officiates mass every three weeks, were also badly affected. Power lines were downed and also the main pipe bringing water to the village was damaged, hence the place had no electricity or water for several weeks.

On November 30, 2013, soon after the typhoon, members of our Society arrived and distributed relief goods consisting of 750 kg. of rice; 1,835 cans of sardines; 1,835 packets of instant noodles and 1,835 individual rations of instant coffee. Later on Society funds were used to reconstruct several classrooms of both the elementary and, especially, the high school, the roofs of which had been torn away by the strong winds during the typhoon. The necessary funds were collected in the Philippines (75,000 PHP) and by the generous devotees of the Vedanta Centre of Sydney (147,000 PHP or

3,550 AUD) and the Vedanta Society of Japan (168,000 PHP or 387,796 JPY).

During his visit to Manila from March 6 to March 10, 2014, Swami Medhasananda, the Spiritual Adviser of the Ramakrishna Vedanta Society of the Philippines, was invited to attend a thanksgiving and recognition ceremony in Gawaygaway, arranged by the local officials. Accordingly Maharaj left Manila in the early morning of Saturday, March 6, accompanied by seven devotees on a flight bound for Cebu, in the central Philippines. The flight took about one hour and another group of devotees and friends received him at Cebu airport. From there he and fairly large number of companions reached Gawaygaway by car after a ride of about two and a half hours.

The mayor of the town of San Remigio, Mr. Mariano Martinez, the 'Barangay Captain' (village head), Mr. Romeo Sumbi, the principal of the high school, Ms. Sheila Damayo, and the students of both the elementary and the high schools welcomed Medhasananda and led him on a brief tour of classrooms which the Ramakrishna Vedanta Society of the Philippines had repaired.

Later on, a ceremony took place on the high school the premises, where most of the relief work had been carried out, and was attended by the students with their teachers, the mayor,

(con't page 5)

**Manila** (from page 4)



the village head, the principal and the swami with the devotees and friends from Manila and Cebu.

Short speeches were given by the village head, some school teachers and the school principal expressing thankfulness for the help lent by the Society to the village. A commemorative plaque was given by the mayor, Mr. Mariano Martinez, and the school principal, Ms. Sheila Damayo, to Mr. Carlo Colombo, representing the Ramakrishna Vedanta Society of the Philippines.

Swami Medhasananda then made the following brief remarks, thanking the Gawaygaway officials for arranging the ceremony and addressing the audience, and particularly the students:

‘Jesus said that those who help others are lucky. So it was the good fortune of the Ramakrishna Vedanta Society of the Philippines that, following typhoon Yolanda, we were able to lend some help to the village of Gawaygaway, its population, and, particularly, its elementary and high schools. We should therefore be thankful to you for giving us the opportunity of being of help to others who found themselves in need of help.

‘I was told that Ms. Sheila Damayo, the principal of this high school, prayed very hard to God in order to restore her school, badly damaged by the typhoon, and tearfully applied for help. Well, help came—although it came from the Ramakrishna Vedanta Society of the Philippines, a non-profit organisation connected to Hinduism.

‘Yes, we are Hindus, but we do respect Jesus Christ and all the other prophets, great spiritual

personalities, and scriptures of other religions. In our temples we read the Hindu scriptures, but also the Bible, the Koran and the teachings of Buddha; and we also celebrate Christmas and the birthday of Buddha.

‘In conclusion I would like to give, particularly to the students assembled today for this ceremony, a few short and clear guidelines to always keep in their minds:

‘Number one: Try to be of help to others.

‘Number two: Try to help without any selfish interest, without expecting anything in return. Remember: unselfishness is God.

‘Number three: Whenever you are in trouble pray to God, help will come.

‘Number four: Worship your own God and Prophet, but at the same time show respect to other Gods, Prophets and Scriptures.

‘That is my message to all of you, thank you very much, Salamat Po.’

The mayor, who closed the ceremony, remarked that he had been requested by the school to say a few ‘inspirational’ words, but

that he himself had been inspired by Swami Medhasananda words.

In a very friendly atmosphere, a tasty lunch, consisting of Filipino preparations prepared respecting the dietary requirements of the visitors, was offered to Swami and his companions, who left afterwards for another long car ride back to Cebu.

Swami and company flew back to Manila the following morning, on Sunday, March 9, as he was scheduled to give a talk there in the afternoon at the Manila Centre. •



## Embassy of India, Tokyo Holds Seminar and Exhibition on Swami Vivekananda and Okakura Tenshin to Commemorate Their 150th Birth Anniversary in Collaboration with Vedanta Society of Japan and Discover India

On 26 March 2014 the Embassy of India's ICC (India Cultural Centre) Auditorium was the venue for a Seminar and Exhibition on Swami Vivekananda and Okakura Tenshin to jointly commemorate their 150th birth anniversaries in collaboration with the Vedanta Society of Japan (Nippon Vedanta Kyokai), Tagore 150 Japan and Discover India Club (DIC).

The ambitious programme was scheduled to run from 13:30 to 19:00 hrs and began with a pre-public opening of an exhaustive photo, print, poster and book exhibition including depictions of the Japan-India Relationship, photos of the Pioneers of Modern Era Indo-Japan Relationship, Swami Vivekananda and Okakura Tenshin, and bilingual posters portraying Swami Vivekananda's life, teachings and message.

### Seminar

At 14:00 the opening invocation prayer was offered by Swami Medhasanandaji of the

Vedanta Society of Japan and Swami Tyaganandaji of the Vedanta Society of Boston, both of whom also addressed the seminar.

Her Excellency Srimati Deepa Gopalan Wadhwa, Ambassador of the India to Japan, presented 'Opening Remarks' expressing her pleasure and gratitude at hosting an event honouring the Pioneers of the Modern Era Indo-Japan Relationship to share greater understanding about India and her culture to Japan, while deepening cultural ties and mutual understanding between two great Asian nations, Japan and India.

The first speech was by Dr. Kana Tomizawa from Tokyo University discussing Swami Vivekananda's Concept of Religious Harmony.' Swami Tyaganandaji gave an encompassing and instructive talk on the 'Impact of Swami Vivekananda' on India, on

(con't page 7)





Dr. Tomizawa

Swami Tyaganandaji

Dr. Hirano

**Embassy Seminar** (from page 6)

the West and on the East. Dr. Kuniko Hirano of Sophia University talked on her impressions of 'The Humanism of Swami Vivekananda.'

Swami Medhasananda wove together both documented and recently unearthed data to present a picture of Swami Vivekananda, two of his Western lady disciples, and the events leading to the relationships between them all and Tenshin in his talk titled 'Swami Vivekananda and Okakura Tenshin.'

After a short tea break Mr. Takashi Okakura, grandson of Kakuzo (Tenshin) Okakura, expressed his view that Kakuzo was a 'Dispatcher/Originator of Japanese Culture Overseas' both working in Boston's Museum of Fine Arts and visiting India and meeting with the Tagores and traveling with Swami Vivekananda.

A Q&A session then followed and a brief 'Vote of Thanks' was provided by Mr. Rabinder Malik, President, Discover India Club (DIC), Japan. There was another break before the presentation of a documentary film on Swami Vivekananda's Life and Mes-

sage by offered by Mr. Pranay Ray. A light buffet-style Indian dinner was then provided all from 18:00.

The Seminar was attended by about 100 people, many of whom were university professors, affiliated scholars and researchers.

*[The Vedanta Kyokai newsletter hopes to publish the above noted talks as practicable.]*

**Exhibition**

The Seminar Exhibition was conceived and prepared by the Vedanta Society and displayed in the large gallery area downstairs from the ICC Auditorium foyer, between the spacious meeting room and the auditorium greenroom. Although officially launched along with the Seminar for attendees to peruse, this exhaustive exhibit was open to the general public from 3-6 April, coinciding perfectly with the large yearly crowds of cherry blossom viewers along this popular parkway above the Chidorigafuchi moat of the Imperial Palace that runs across the broad Embassy frontage. The exhibit ran daily from 11:30 a.m. to 17:00 with some 3000 people visiting.

(con't page 8)



Swami Medhasananda

Tea and Culture

Mr. Okakura



## Embassy Seminar

(from page 7)

The first section of exhibit featured photos of India and Japan evoking the deep cultural ties of the Indo-Japanese Relationship. The second section featured historical photos of Swami Vivekananda and Okakura Tenshin and photos of places and persons associated with the life of Swami Vivekananda such as Rabindranath Tagore, Sister Nivedita and others. There were many photos of Swami Vivekananda with his messages. This led to the next section of some 30 posters secured from India depicting Swamiji's life, teachings and messages. This was followed by a display of commentaries from distinguished personages such as Mahatma Gandhi, Roman Romain, Rabindranath Tagore, Leo Tolstoy and Max Müller. Following the documented commentaries was a section devoted to the many lan-



guage translations of Swamiji's Complete Works and the many scholarly research publications on Swami Vivekananda, with a few hardcopies of these on display. Next was a video documentary on Swamiji with Japanese subtitles which ran continuously.

The sales area contained many books on Swamiji in Japanese translated editions published by the Japan Vedanta Society, as well as DVDs.

Most visitors were surprised and very impressed with the exhibit. One elderly woman said it was regrettable that she learned of Swamiji so late in life, as study of him would have been very helpful in raising her sons, while a primary school student said she was very impressed with both Swamiji's personality and his message.



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### February Zushi Retreat 2014

#### 'Swami Vivekananda and His Relationship with Sri Ramakrishna'

A talk by Swami Medhasananda

Sri Ramakrishna said that he had a vision in which he saw the Seven Sages, or the Saptarishi extolled in Indian scripture, absorbed in meditation and that Vivekananda was one of these sages, Nara. Swami Vivekananda's mother had had daughters but no sons, and she prayed to Lord Shiva that a son to honour the family might be born. She had requested that a relative living in sacred Varanasi offer worship to Vireswara Shiva, and she even dreamt that Lord Shiva had agreed to be born as her son. Sri Ra-

makrishna would also later say he had a vision that Vivekananda was an incarnation of Shiva. This is how we can see that he was born as an incarnation of one of the seven sages, Nara, and again, as Shiva.

An incarnation has the character traits of the being or deity one is an incarnation of. For example, if one is an incarnation of Vishnu, then he possesses some of the

(con't page 9)



## Relationship (from page 8)

characteristics or qualities of Vishnu. In this way, Swamiji possessed traits of both Nara, the sage, and Shiva. Nara's characteristics include knowledge, spiritual love, devotion and samadhi. Shiva's traits are meditation, samadhi, renunciation and compassion. And while Shiva can be quick to anger, He is also easily pacified and becomes merciful. Some of these characteristics are common between Nara and Shiva. In Swamiji we see the same knowledge, spiritual love, devotion, samadhi, renunciation and compassion. At the same time he was often quick to anger and at the next moment full of love and mercy.

Sri Ramakrishna had other monastic disciples, but he would always give special honours to Narendranath. Generally, the Master would not allow Swamiji to perform menial tasks of service for him. Not only that, if someone would criticise Naren, the Master would scold the person and say that it was the same as criticising Shiva himself. Sometimes the Master would behave as if the two were friends. Sometimes it would happen that somebody would point out that Swami Vivekananda had had some lapse or deviation from the ideal. The Master would not believe these reports. Swamiji once said that there were times when his own parents would not believe him, but Sri Ramakrishna always would. In fact, the magnitude and depth of love shown to Swamiji by the Master could not be matched by his parents.

Sri Ramakrishna also gave a lot of freedom to Narendranath so that he would grow. The Master would also create situa-

tions wherein Naren's self-confidence would be strengthened, because he knew that Swamiji was the rock upon which His future organisation would be built. The Master gave him a lot of spiritual training and spiritual experiences, for example nirvikalpa samadhi. This state is reached when there becomes no difference between the meditation, the one who meditates and the object of that meditation. When all three of these meet, that is nirvikalpa samadhi. By the grace of Sri Ramakrishna Narendranath experienced this samadhi.

At times the Master would also test Naren. Once Sri Ramakrishna offered to give him occult powers. There are many people



who want such powers to gain money, name and fame, or power and position. Upon receiving this offer from the Master he asked if such powers would help him in his spiritual realisation. To this the Master said, 'Not at all. Rather, it would be a hindrance ... an obstacle to spiritual experi-

ence.' To this Naren replied that in that case he did not need supernatural powers now, but would rather realise them on his own and then determine whether or not he would use them.

On another occasion the Master stopped talking to Narendranath, to whom he had constantly shown so much care and love for, and just ignored him. He would talk to the other devotees and not even acknowledge Naren's presence. Finally, the Master asked him that since he didn't even talk to him, why was it that Naren continued to come to visit. Immediately Narendranath answered that he didn't come to hear his talking, but because he loved the Master

(con't page 10)

## **Relationship** (from page 9)

and wanted to see him. This immensely pleased the Master and he confessed that the test was to determine whether or not Narendranath would simply leave should he not receive the special treatment he had grown accustomed to.

On the other-hand, even though Sri Ramakrishna had proven himself an accomplished spiritual Master to Narendra, the latter never stopped testing the Master. At other times Swamiji would frankly state that the Master's understanding was not correct and that some of what he said came from imaginings derived from this incorrect understanding. 'I am not going to accept what you say until I am fully convinced,' Narendra would declare. There are two types of attitude; one where most devotees accept what teachers say as truth, and the other class of devotees, who are rare that say, I cannot accept what you say as true unless I, myself, really understand and realise it. Naren belonged to the second group.

As we know, several times Ramakrishna stated that could not bear the touch of coins. One day Naren secretly put a coin under the Master's bed. Not knowing of the coin, when the Master returned and touched the bed, he recoiled as if receiving an electric shock. Immediately he understood Naren was testing him, but he was not annoyed or angry about it because he had encouraged Naren to test what he says.

The Master said that if a person of impure character should serve him a glass of water, he could not drink from that glass. Once Naren had accompanied Sri Ramakrishna and others to Calcutta. After some spiritual discussion the Master became thirsty. One attendee appearing to be holy-man brought a glass of water, but he Master could not drink it. Someone else then brought a glass of water and the Master drank it. Afterward some wondered at this peculiar behaviour. Narendra

said that he would verify the reason the Master could not drink from the first glass. When most of the assembly had gone, one person asked the younger brother of the apparent holy man to please tell him what type of man his elder brother was. With some hesitation, the younger brother admitted that his character was not so good. In this way the Master's words were verified again. Only after much such testing did Narendranath accepted Sri Ramakrishna as his Guru.

There was a Christian Bengali who taught at the college in Calcutta where Narendra attended. Every teacher had a high opinion of Naren's character and intelligence. It became known that Naren had become a disciple of a priest of the Kali Temple at Dakshineswar. The Christian instructor, having learnt that such a brilliant boy had accepted a temple priest as his guru, became very surprised and distressed about it. Upon seeing Narendra one day, he approached and asked if it were true that he had accepted a Kali temple priest as his guru. Swamiji replied that it was indeed true. The teacher asked how it had come about. Swamiji answered that he had tested the priest in many ways and that finally he had no other choice but to accept him as his guru.

Although at this time Narendra had accepted Sri Ramakrishna as his guru, he had still not accepted the idea that the Master was an Avatar, an incarnation of God. While almost all the other devotees had accepted the Master as Avatar, Narendranath still had not. Sri Ramakrishna himself would note that many had said he was an Avatar and ask Naren about it. Naren would reply that he could not accept this idea without direct knowledge of it himself.

Just two or three days from the Master's passing, when he was so weak and could no longer eat and would spit-up blood, Narendra was standing beside Ramakrishna's bed when a thought suddenly

(con't page 11)

## Relationship (from page 10)

crossed his mind 'was this person really an incarnation of God? If he says in this present state of health that he is so, I shall accept it.' Narendra could not find answer to this question, when suddenly he noticed the lips of Ramakrishna, who was lying ill on the bed, moving, slowly he uttered — 'He who in the past was born as Rama and Krishna is now living in this very body as Ramakrishna,' but then he added, 'but not from the standpoint of your Vedanta.' Why not Vedanta? Because Vedanta does not believe in any special incarnations of God, but believes that one and all are manifestations of Brahman.

Just before his passing the Master asked to be alone with Naren. Sri Ramakrishna stared into his eyes and it became as if the two had lost their senses. After some time Narendranath gained his senses and saw that the Master was weeping.

Asked why he was crying the Master said that he had passed on to Narendranath any power that he possessed and asked that being armed with this power Naren should set about doing good for humanity.

On yet another previous occasion Sri Ramakrishna wrote on a slip of paper in Bengali

'Naren will teach people'. When the young man objected, the Master told him, 'Your very bones will do it.' After his passing, we see that Sri Ramakrishna's cross (mission) was borne by Swamiji. Sri Ramakrishna asked Narendranath to do mainly two things. First of all, that he lead the other monastic disciples and start an organisa-

tion. Secondly, that he preach the universal gospel of Sri Ramakrishna. We see that in fact after the Master's passing, Narendranath and the others formed the first Ramakrishna Math (monastery) at Baranagar, where Narendranath Datta became Swami Vivekananda and leader of the other monastic disciples whom he trained in various ways. Later the Ramakrishna Math shifted to Alambazar.

In 1897, after his return from overseas, Swami Vivekananda founded the Ramakrishna Mission with two purposes; 'Atmano mokshartham jagat hitaya cha' - meaning realisation of the Self and doing good for the world. Later, the permanent Ramakrishna Math and Mission headquar-

ters at Belur Math was founded at Belur village on the banks of the Ganga not far from Dakshineswar in 1898.

Swamiji had gone to the West to preach Vedanta as exemplified by the life of Sri Ramakrishna. He

had to struggle and pass through a lot of hardships to bring this message to the West. Later on he commented that he did not really know who this Sri Ramakrishna truly was, but that this much he did know, 'Whenever I had trouble He appeared and showed me the way. When ever there was danger, He protected me. Whenever there was a problem, He solved it.'

Interestingly, many of us do not know that when some disciples of South India heard that the first Parliament of Religions was being organised to be held in Chicago, they requested Swami Vivekananda to represent Hinduism there. They thought that Swamiji would be the fittest person to

(con't page 12)





## Relationship (from page 11)

represent Hinduism at such a momentous event. At that time Swamiji was rather unconcerned with such an event and had no plans to travel to Chicago to represent Hinduism. In fact, he was rather hesitant to go, since in that era it was highly unusual and there was no historical precedent for a Hindu monk to travel to foreign lands to preach Vedanta. There was no such example whatsoever.

At this time, when Swamiji was pondering the pros and cons of such a journey, he was staying in South India at the home of a devotee. This devotee later said that he distinctly heard the voices of two people in a rather heated discussion emanating from Swamiji's room, yet he was very sure that only Swamiji could have been in the room. After a few nights of hearing this ongoing debate, the devotee became very curious and decided to ask Swamiji about it. 'I am very sure that you are alone in your room,' he said, 'but I hear an ongoing argument between two people. What is happening?' Swamiji didn't respond right away, but after a little more prodding, he told the devotee that his guru (Sri Ramakrishna) had appeared before him and said that he had arranged for the Parliament of Religions for the purpose of Swamiji's successful participation in it. 'I refused to go, so we argued nightly about it,' he said, 'until I agreed to attend.'

I am sure this is the first most of us have heard of this—that Sri Ramakrishna had arranged for the Parliament of Religions so that Swami Vivekananda could go and preach the Master's message of the Universal Religion of Vedanta to the world—that Sri Ramakrishna told Swamiji that He, Himself, had created this magnificent platform. We now see how much Swamiji's participation at that Parliament of Religions changed the religious history of the world. From this incident we can clearly see how God has His own way, His own plan, about which we have almost no idea

unless it is revealed to us.

We find that when Swamiji was preaching Vedanta in the West, every week he gave four or five talks and on some days he delivered two discourses. Giving so many addresses, there were times when Swamiji felt he had run out of new ideas to express, or had no new content to present. At such times it would again be reported by devotees with whom he stayed that from his room they would hear a strong voice continuously for some time, and that this voice was not that of Swamiji. What was this? It was the Master supplying points of discussion to Swamiji to present in his next talk.

As Swamiji's celebrity and popularity grew with his inspiring and riveting sermons, many Christian evangelists became antagonised and jealous. The reasons for their anger was that some Christian missions collected lots of donations from the wealthy for their works in India based on the ideas that Indians were heathens; that they believe in superstitions; that they have no 'true' religion; and that their missions were to preach Christianity; to convert and bring Indians from the darkness to light. To this purpose rich Americans had donated generously. But upon hearing or reading of the Swamiji's talks, Americans began to realise how false the propagations and preachings of such missionaries were, and how little they truly understood of Indian spiritual culture.

Many stopped giving missionary donations to these denominations questioning how such a gifted and learned man as Swamiji could be born and raised in a land  
(con't page 13)

### • Thought of the Month •

"Doubt is a pain too lonely to know  
that faith is his twin brother"

- Khalil Gibran

## Relationship (from page 12)

of superstitious heathens. When missionary donations dwindled many of these men of the cloth became furious, some even plotting his demise. At one dinner party Swamiji was given a poisonous drink, yet he had some feeling that he should not drink it. Just then Ramakrishna appeared and asked him not to drink. Swamiji did not drink or mention anything of this to the host. This shows how Sri Ramakrishna protected Swamiji when he was in danger or in need. Even after death, Sri Ramakrishna always accompanied Vivekananda and took care of him.

Once while in South India just before his departure to America, Swamiji dreamt that his mother had passed away. This dream disturbed him and he wanted to verify the news, but communications were more difficult at that time. He was staying at the home of Manmatha Babu, a Bengali devotee, who learning of the dream and its disconcerting effect on Swamiji, sent a wire to Calcutta seeking information. As it was nearly time for Swamiji to set off on his journey, Manmatha also suggested that Swamiji consult an occultist who had acquired some mystic powers, and so a party of devotees set off to find this occultist, Govinda Chetti.

They found Chetti living in a cremation ground with some assistants covered in ashes. As the party approached the occultist paid no attention to them, but as they turned to leave he called out that he would help. He suddenly went into a

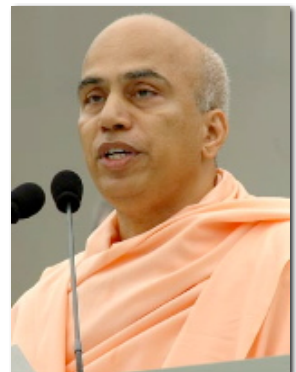
trance saying, 'Your mother is fine. Soon you must go to a foreign country to preach Vedanta; and your guru is always with you and protecting you.'

Although Swamiji preached the Universal Religion of Vedanta, in his personal dialog with close devotees he would talk more often of Sri Ramakrishna than of Vedanta. There is a book titled 'Swami Sishya Samvad' in Bengali, meaning 'Diary of a Disciple,' consisting of the dialog between a monk and his disciple. In actuality it is the dialog between Swami Vivekananda and his disciple, Sharat Chandra Chakravarti, who was a great scholar of Sanskrit; a great devotee who composed the song 'Murta Maheswara'; and he was initiated by Swamiji. Sharat Chandra comments in this book, 'Swamiji, when to give discourses you mostly talk of Vedanta, yet when speaking privately, you mostly talk of Sri Ramakrishna. Why?'

Swamiji did not give any answer, but the answer is that Sri Ramakrishna is Vedanta personified. In other words, Vedanta is in the abstract, but if you want to concretise it, turn to Sri Ramakrishna. As I mentioned earlier Swami Vivekananda had doubted whether or not Sri Ramakrishna was an Incarnation of God. But when he composed 'Om Hrim Ritam Tvam Achalo,' our evening arati song, the lines, 'Sthapakaya cha dharmasya, sarva dharma-svarupne; Avatara-varsthaya, Ramakrishnaya te namah,' indicating that Swamiji not only recognises Sri Ramakrishna is an Avatar, but declares that He is the greatest of the Incarnations of God. •

## Swami Tyaganandaji Visits Japan

Swami Tyaganandaji, Minister-in-Chief, Vedanta Society of Boston, visited the Vedanta Society of Japan from March 25th through 31st. The swami attended the 'Seminar and Exhibition on Swami Vivekananda and Okakura Tenshin to commemorate their 150th Birth Anniversaries' held at the Indian Embassy, Tokyo, where he gave an illuminating talk entitled 'Impact of Swami Vivekananda on the Philosophical and Religious Ideas of the World: Present Scenario and Future Prospect. [*The Vedanta Kyokai intends to present this talk in its entirety in our May issue.*]





## Swami Atmapriyanandaji Visits Japan

Swami Atmapriyanandaji, Vice-Chancellor, of the recently established Ramakrishna Mission Vivekananda University (RKMVU) at Belur, West Bengal, India, visited the Society from the 6th to 8th of April when he came to Tokyo to attend a board meeting of 'Ari-gatou International,' an NGO. More about the works of this organisation can be found at: <http://www.arigatouinternational.org>

### • A Story to Remember •

#### Unity is Strength

Once upon a time, there was a flock of doves that flew in search of food led by their king. One day, they had flown a long distance and were very tired. The dove king encouraged them to fly a little further. The smallest dove picked up speed and found some rice scattered beneath a banyan tree. So all the doves landed and began to eat.

Suddenly a net fell over them and they were all trapped. They saw a hunter approaching carrying a huge club. The doves desperately fluttered their wings trying to get out, but to no avail. The king had an idea. He advised all the doves to fly up together carrying the net with them. He said that there was strength in unity.

Each dove picked up a portion of the net and together they flew off carrying the net with them. The hunter looked up in astonishment. He tried to follow them, but they were flying high over hills and valleys. They flew to a hill near a city of temples where there lived a mouse who could help them. He was a faithful friend of the dove king.

When the mouse heard the loud noise of their approach, he went into hiding. The dove king gently called out to him and then the mouse was happy to see him. The dove king explained that they had been caught in a trap and needed the mouse's help to gnaw at the net with his teeth and set them free.

The mouse agreed saying that he would set the king free first. The king insisted that he first free his subjects and the king last. The mouse understood the king's feelings and complied with his wishes. He began to cut the net and one by one all the doves were freed including the dove king.

They all thanked the mouse and flew away together, united in their strength.

**Moral: When you work together, you are stronger.**

[www.moralstories.org](http://www.moralstories.org)

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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)



**Arise, Awake and Stop not till the Goal is Reached!**

— Swami Vivekananda

**立あがれ、目ざめよ、ゴールに達するまで立ちどまるな！**

— スワミー・ヴィヴェーカーナンダ

**If you want to know India study Vivekananda. In him every thing is positive and nothing negative.**

— Rabindranath Tagore

インドを知りたいと思われるなら、ヴィヴェーカーナンダを研究なさい。彼の中では一切が積極的で、消極的なものは一つもありません。— ラビンドラナート・タゴール



1863

2013

*150<sup>th</sup>*  
*Birth Anniversary Celebration of*  
**SWAMI VIVEKANANDA**  
*Closing Ceremony*

Sunday, 25th May 2014, 4 p.m – 7 p.m.

Seisen University Auditorium (Admission free)

スワミー・ヴィヴェーカーナンダ生誕 150 周年祝賀記念行事：閉会式

2014 年 5 月 25 日 (日) 午後 4 : 00 – 7 : 00

清泉女子大学講堂 (入場無料)



## Swami Vivekananda's 150th Birth Anniversary Celebration : Closing Ceremony スワーミー・ヴィヴェーカーナンダ生誕 150 周年祝賀記念行事：閉会式

**Date:** Sunday, 25th May, 2014. 4 p.m.- 7 p.m.

**Venue:** Seisen University Auditorium, 3-16-21 Higashi-gotanda Shinagawa-ku Tokyo

**日時:** 2014年5月25日(日) 午後4時～7時

**場所:** 清泉女子大学講堂、東京都品川区東五反田3-16-21

### • Speakers 講演者



**Swami Suhitananda**  
General Secretary  
Ramakrishna Math and Mission  
スワーミー・スヒターナンダ  
ラマクリシュナ・マト・アンド・ミッション  
事務総長



**Smt. Deepa Gopalan Wadhwa**  
Ambassador of India  
ディーパ・ゴパラン・ワドワ閣下  
インド大使



**Professor Sengaku Mayeda**  
Professor Emeritus, Uni-  
versity of Tokyo  
前田 専学 教授  
東京大学名誉教授

### • Tributes to Swami Vivekananda スワーミー・ヴィヴェーカーナンダへの敬意

H. E. Mr. Masud Bin Momen, Ambassador of Bangladesh マスド・ビン・モメン閣下、バングラデシュ大使

H. E. Mr. Madan Kumar Bhattarai, Ambassador of Nepal マダン・クマール・バットライ閣下、ネパール大使

Sister Junko Shioya, Chairperson, Managing Board, Seisen University シスター塩谷惇子理事長、清泉女子大学

Swami Sadyojaatah, 'Art of Living' スワーミー・サッディオジャータハ、アート・オブ・リビング

Reverend Hakuei Yamaguchi, Nounin-ji Temple, Chiba 山口博永老師、能忍寺、千葉県

Father Cyril Veliath, Professor, Sophia University シリル・ヴェリヤト神父、教授、上智大学

Mr. Ryuko Hira, Chairperson, Managing Board, Institute of the Sathya Sai Education 比良竜虎理事長、サティアサイ教育協会

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