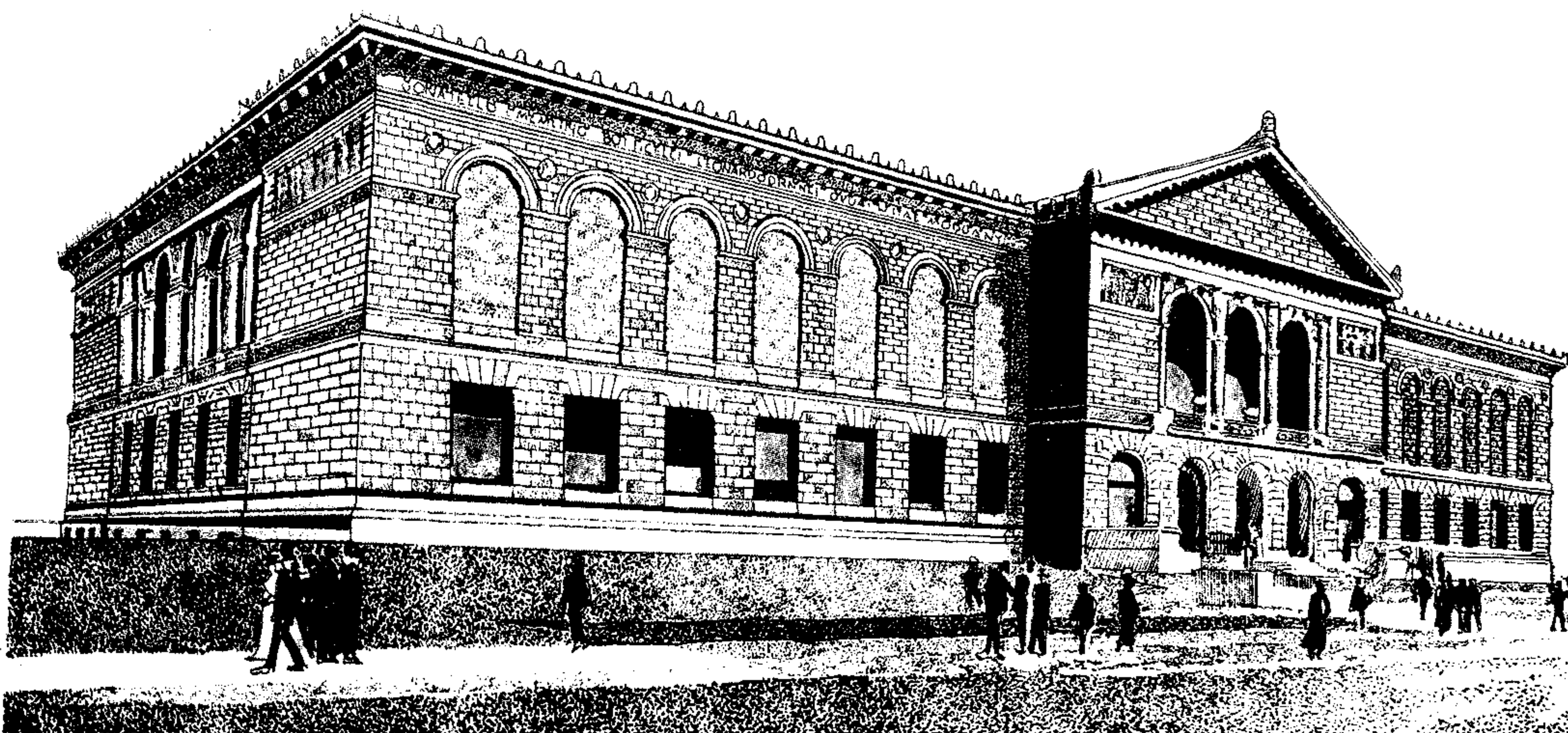




Prabuddha Bharata

or Awakened India



"Upon the banner of every religion will soon be written, in spite of resistance: 'Help and not Fight,'
'Assimilation and not Destruction,' 'Harmony and Peace and not Dissension.'"

*Closing Address by Swami Vivekananda,
Chicago Parliament of Religions, September 1893*



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Prabuddha Bharata

A Monthly Journal of the
Ramakrishna Order

Started by Swami Vivekananda in 1896

FEBRUARY 1993

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Arise! Awake!
And stop not till the Goal is reached.

Prabuddha Bharata

VOL. 98

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No. 2

Divine Wisdom

Ramakrishna, though fully aware that the world is an illusory appearance, instead of slighting māyā, like an orthodox monist, acknowledged its power in the relative life. He was all love and reverence for māyā, perceiving in it a mysterious and majestic expression of Divinity. To him māyā itself was God, for everything was God. It was one of the faces of Brahman. What he had realized on the heights of the transcendental plane, he also found here below, under the mysterious garb of names and forms. This garb was a perfectly transparent sheath, through which he recognized the glory of the Divine Immanence.

Māyā, the mighty weaver of the garb, is none other than Kālī, the Divine Mother. She is the primordial Divine Energy, Śakti, and She can no more be distinguished from the Supreme Brahman than can the power of burning be distinguished from fire. She projects the world and again withdraws it, spinning it as a spider spins its web. She is the Mother of the Universe, identical with the Brahman of Vedānta and the Ātman of Yoga. As eternal Lawgiver, She makes and unmakes laws; it is by Her imperious will that karma yields its fruit. She ensnares men with illusion and again releases them from bondage with a look of Her benign eyes. She is the supreme Mistress of the cosmic play; all objects, animate and inanimate, dance by Her will. Even those who realize the Absolute in nirvikalpa samādhi are under Her jurisdiction as long as they still live on the relative plane.

Thus, after nirvikalpa samādhi, Sri Ramakrishna realized māyā in an altogether new role. The binding aspect of Kālī vanished from before his vision. She no longer obscured his understanding. The world became the glorious manifestation of the Divine Mother. Māyā became Brahman. The Transcendental Itself broke through the Immanent. Sri Ramakrishna discovered that māyā operates in the relative world in two ways, and he termed these 'avidyāmāyā' and 'vidyāmāyā'. Avidyāmāyā represents the dark forces of creation: sensuous desires, evil passions, greed, lust, cruelty, and so on. It sustains the world system on the lower planes. It is responsible for the round of man's birth and death. It must be fought and vanquished. But vidyāmāyā is the higher force of creation: the spiritual virtues, the enlightening qualities, kindness, purity, love, devotion. Vidyāmāyā elevates man to the higher planes of consciousness. With the help of vidyāmāyā the devotee rids himself of avidyāmāyā; he then becomes māyātīta, free of māyā. The two aspects of māyā are the two forces of creation, the two powers of Kālī; and She stands beyond them both. She is like the effulgent sun, bringing into existence and shining through and standing behind the clouds of different colours and shapes, conjuring up wonderful forms in the blue autumn heaven.

(Swami Nikhilananda, in his Introduction to *The Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna*)

Vivekananda in Kumaon—II

According to Purāṇas, the Himalayas are traditionally divided into five regions: Nepal, Kurmachala, Kedar, Jalandhar (Kangra), and Kashmir.¹ The Kurmachala and Kedar together compose what is known as the *Uttaranchal*, literally, the northern parts. In the present state of Uttar Pradesh the former is known as Kumaon, and the latter, Garhwal. In early Vedic literature we do not find much information about the land and people here. It is only in the later Vedic literature that one finds sufficient descriptions. In the *Vāyu Purāṇa* the Uttaranchal is called the Khas province *Khas*, according to scholars, is derived from the Sanskrit *Karśaka*, meaning 'agriculturist'. The *Aitareya Brāhmaṇa* refers to the Himalayas as the place of *Uttar* (north) Kurus. The place of *Dakṣiṇa* (southern) Kurus was Hastinapur, lower down on the Gangetic plain. In the early Vedic period (first millennium B.C.), some of the *Dakṣiṇa* Kurus migrated towards the Himalayas. In the *Mahābhārata* (*Vana Parva* and *Sabha Parva*) one finds descriptions of this place and its people, and also association of early Kurus with the region. It can be assumed that during the *Mahābhārata* period the province was quite famous for its natural resources, its holy places, its abundance and variety of flora and fauna, and above all, its scenic splendour.

During the rule of Kuru kings this northern part of the country was a great seat of Sanskrit learning. In later Vedic

literature one finds that the *Brāhmaṇās* (scholars) were advised to go to Uttaranchal to learn the Sanskrit language. "Thus the Kurus appear to be one of the earliest Aryan settlers in this region and hence it would not be unreasonable to credit them with the introduction of the Vedic culture here—a fact supported by the teeming legends and traditions associating them with this region".²

The people of Uttaranchal had trade connections with the Harappans (2500-1500 B.C.). These contacts with the contemporary cultures were bolstered later when the Kuru kings established their hegemony over the whole North. Vedic culture and the Sanskrit language took deep root in Uttaranchal after the coming of the Kurus. Because of the widespread and powerful Brāhmaṇical culture, Buddhism and Jainism could not gain much headway here and their influence was minimal. Scholars still believe that the Kumaoni language is derived from Sanskrit and not from the later Hindi. The language developed independently as one of the neo-Āryan languages, from Sanskrit in the eleventh and twelfth centuries A.D. Many Sanskrit works on astrology, ayurveda, the Tantras, the Dharmaśāstras, and Sanskrit literature and grammar were composed. The Kumaoni language is not only rich in colourful folklore and literature, but also possesses important epics and dramas. In the course of several millennia, the region has seen the harmonious blending of some of its own indigenous traditions with those of the Vedic culture.

1. खंडः पञ्च हिमालयस्य कथिता नेपाल कूर्माचला ।

केदारोथ जलंधरोथ रुचिरः काश्मीर

समज्ञोतिमहः ॥

2. Cf. Dr. M.P. Joshi, *Uttaranchal Himalaya* (Almora : Sri Almora Book Depot, 1990) p. 17.

During the time of the *Rāmāyaṇa* this part of the Himalayas was known as *Uttar-Kauśal*. It is believed that in a place called *Sītāvāni* (Nainital District), being charmed by its beauty and the cool shade of the Asoka trees, Rama and Sita spent some days. Legend also says that the Seven Sages (*Saptarṣi-s*) did their *tapas* (austerities) in *Sītāvāni*. Another story tells that Hanuman flew to Dronagiri (the present Dunagiri in Nainital District) to get the medicinal herb *sanjivini* to revive Lakṣmaṇa fallen after he had been hit by the magic dart in battle with Rāvaṇa. There are many places which are traditionally believed to have been sanctified by the visits of the Pāṇḍava kings. Hidimba, the tribal wife of Bhimasena, was from Champavat. There is still a temple dedicated to Ghatotkach, their valiant son. Buddha, according to historians, is said to have visited Goviṣaṇ (the present Kasipur in Nainital District) and preached his sermons. The famous Buddhist traveller Hsuan-tsang from China in the seventh century recorded the existence of the Buddhist monasteries in this place. Śaṅkara too visited Kumaon while on his mission to resurrect the Vedic religion. Śaṅkara is said to have established harmony between the two quarrelling sects of Śaivas and Vaiṣṇavas here. He is also believed to have introduced some of south Indian disciples in the administration of the famous Jageśwar temple in Almora District. Stories and mythological lore abound. What is most significant and remarkable is that every place, temple, river and cave is associated with some god or goddess or ancient sage.

Second Visit to Kumaon—May-August 1897

Drawn irresistibly by this *Devabhūmi*, land of gods and goddesses, Vivekananda visited the north-western part of the

Himalayan ranges four times. On February 19, 1897, after planting the seedling of Vedanta in the West, he returned to Calcutta to an unprecedentedly grand reception and welcome by the citizens of the state. The heavy schedule, the hectic round of activities and the incessant demand of people who wanted to meet with him at all hours of the day sapped what remained of his energy and left him utterly exhausted. Of his health he wrote thus to Mrs. Bull on March 26, 1897: "The demonstration and national jubilations over me are over, at least I had to cut them short as my health broke completely down. The result of this steady work in the West and the tremendous work of a month in India upon the Bengali constitution is 'diabetes'." Swamiji was advised to take complete rest and so he went to Darjeeling for a few days of recuperation. On May 5, he again wrote to Mrs. Bull: "I have been to Darjeeling...to recuperate my shattered health. I am very much better now. The disease disappeared altogether in Darjeeling. I am going to Almora tomorrow, another hill station, to perfect this improvement." The citizens of Almora were very eager to welcome Swamiji and wanted to keep him within their midst for some days. During his first visit, in September 1890, when he was an unknown wandering monk, few like Lala Badri Shah had met him. Now the entire populace was in great expectation of his return to the town.

On May 6, Swamiji's party consisting of a few of his *Gurubhāis* (brother-disciples) started from Calcutta direct for Almora. They reached Kathgodam, the most northerly station at the end of the line. Here there was a warm reception for him by a group of Almora citizens. At Lodea, close to Almora, a large crowd was waiting. When he arrived in the afternoon they escorted their beloved sannyāsin on the last lap into

town. "At their request the Swami mounted a horse handsomely trapped, and headed a procession into Almora town. When the bazar was reached, the crowd was so dense that there was difficulty in leading the Swami's horse through. Scores of Hindu ladies from windows and housetops showered flowers and rice on the Swami as he passed below. Every home displayed lights so that the town was a blaze of lights."³ There were some four to five thousand enthusiastic people gathered to see and hear the heroic son of India. Swamiji delivered a short speech. His days in the town were fully occupied with talking to numerous visitors, among whom were many pandits. As in Almora it was unusually warm that summer, Swamiji went to Dewaldhar at a higher altitude and about thirty kilometres further into the forest-covered hills. The spacious bungalow where he stayed, the beautifully laid out orchard and the altogether picturesque surroundings had a salutary effect on his health. The garden and bungalow belonged to Rai Sahib Chiranjilal Sah of Almora.

In one of his letters (to Marie Halboister, June 2, 1897), he wrote: "I am living in a beautiful garden belonging to a merchant of Almora—a garden abutting several miles of mountains and forests. Night before last a leopard came here and took away a goat from the flock kept in this garden. It was a frightful din the servants made and the barking of the big Tibetan watch-dogs. These dogs are kept chained at a distance all night since I am here, so that they may not disturb my sleep with their deep barks. The leopard thus found his opportunity and got a decent meal, perhaps after weeks. May it do much good to him."

Swamiji's days were not spent in total quietude—there were disturbing moments. Watching with trepidation the unprecedented large receptions and thunderous ovations given to Vivekananda throughout the country, certain churlish missionaries started a campaign of mean vilification to malign his immense popularity. Dr. J. H. Barrows, who had been the chairman of the general committee of the World Parliament of Religions, did direct some derogatory remarks against Swamiji. Swamiji silenced several of the petty-minded calumniators with his utter humility tinged with humour, and his fearless demeanor. Indians also took interest in defending Swamiji against the handful of malcontents and lent their wholehearted support to Vivekananda and his noble work. On February 25, 1897 he writes to Mrs. Bull, "the country is full of persons jealous and pitiless who would leave no stone unturned to pull my work to pieces. But as you know well, the more the opposition the more the demon in me is roused." In another letter, to Christine Greenstiel on June 3, he expresses his total detachment: "As for myself, I am quite content. I have roused a good many of our people and that was all I wanted. Let things have their course and Karma its way. I have no bonds here below." Vivekananda was born to fulfil the mission of God. Therefore he was the personification of purity of motivation, truth, and spiritual power. He knew that the great blessings of the Lord were working through him. From Almora, on June 2, he writes to Mary Hale, "Therefore my dear Mary, do not be frightened at whatever drops from my lips, for the Power behind me is not Vivekananda, but He, the Lord, and He knows the best. If I have to please the world, that will be injuring the world;

Every new thought must create opposition—in the civilized, a polite sneer; in the savage, vulgar howls and filthy scandals."

3. *The Life of Swami Vivekananda*, By His Eastern and Western Disciples (Calcutta: Advaita Ashrama, 1981) Vol II, p. 257

Sri Ramakrishna rightly said about his disciple, "He seems to be walking with an unsheathed sword in his hand."⁴

In spite of these few unsavoury controversies, Swamiji was elated by the wonderful relief work being done by Akhandananda in Murshidabad, the successful work of Ramakrishnananda in Madras and of Saradananda and Abhedananda in America and Europe. During his stay in Almora he sent Shivananda to Sri Lanka in answer to the hopes of people there, and Goodwin to Madras to start a new English language journal. At the request of the British residents of the town he delivered a speech at the English Club. Another lecture on 'Vedic Teachings in Theory and Practice' was given in Hindi for the benefit of the local people at the Zilla School. On July 31, he enthralled an educated audience of about four hundred with another address in English. Swamiji's twelve weeks of stay in Almora drew to a close. Invitations from the plains were so pressing that he left the hill station on 2nd August 1897. He halted one day at Bhimtal on account of fever and reached Kathgodam the next day. From there he proceeded further on his tour to Punjab and Kashmir.

Third Visit—May-June 1898.

In the beginning of April 1898 there was an outbreak of plague in Calcutta. People were panic-stricken and were running away from the city to avoid the dreaded epidemic. The atmosphere was gloomy and threatening. Swamiji rose to the occasion and with others plunged into the arena of work, organizing immediate relief measures. He was ready to sell the newly acquired Math

property to finance the immense relief work if necessary. "What should we care for the Math and its possessions when by the disposing of them we could relieve thousands suffering before our eyes," he declared. This extreme step was, however, not necessary. The relief which was thus provided was enormous and the effective measures taken by Swamiji restored the confidence in people. This mammoth work endeared Vivekananda and the Ramakrishna Mission to people of Calcutta. He remained in Calcutta until the possibility of a devastating epidemic breaking out passed away.

The incessant work affected his health and he was persuaded by others to take some rest. Meanwhile, frequent letters were coming from Mr. and Mrs. Sevier inviting him to come up to their residence at Almora. Also his disciple, the Raja of Khetri, was in Nainital. So Vivekananda decided to go again to Almora and from there to Kashmir. On the night of 11 May 1898, the party consisting of Swamiji and Swamis Turiyananda, Niranjanananda, Sadananda and Swarupananda, and Mrs. Bull, Sister Nivedita, Mrs. Patterson, and Josephine MacLeod left Calcutta. It was not simply a pleasure tour, but was, for the Western disciples, a spiritual odyssey. To be with Vivekananda, a veritable reservoir of knowledge and strength, was in itself a supreme blessing. The journey from Calcutta to Nainital was an enthralling and extraordinary experience for them. The Swami filled the hours enlightening his rapt hearers with talks on the various epochs of India's history and also fascinating them with his spiritual insights into all the sacred and secular folklore. "With passionate enthusiasm he would introduce them to each matter of interest, one after another, as the train passed through the different states and localities. The greatness of

4. Sri 'M', *The Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna*, trans. Swami Nikhilananda (Madras: Sri Ramakrishna Math, Mylapore, 1985) p. 968.

ancient Pataliputra (modern Patna), and of Varanasi, and later of the old Nawab Courts of Lucknow, were each touched upon and described with such ardour and fervour that the party felt that they were in the presence of one who had lived, and still had his being, in his country's past".⁵

In her 'Notes of Some Wanderings with the Swami Vivekananda', Sister Nivedita recalls, "Beautiful have been the days of this year. In them the ideal has become the real. First in our riverside cottage at Belur; then in the Himalayas, at Nainital and Almora; afterwards wandering here and there through Kashmir; everywhere have come hours never to be forgotten, words that will echo through our lives forever...."⁶

The party reached Nainital, a town surrounded by the tall and majestic Siwalik hills, on the morning of Friday, 18 May 1898. Vivekananda was received by a large gathering of the residents. He went to meet the Raja of Khetri who was spending his summer days in the hill resort. It was in Nainital that Vivekananda met a Muslim gentleman, who was at heart an *Advaita Vedantist*. Highly impressed by the extraordinary spiritual powers and divine radiance of Swamiji, he exclaimed, "Swamiji, if in after-times any claim you as an avatāra, a special incarnation of the God-head, remember that I, a Mohammedan, am the first." Swamiji was deeply touched by his devotion. This Muslim gentleman counted himself one of the disciples of Swamiji, under the name Mohammedananda. Swamiji, from Almora, wrote his now famous letter to this pious devotee on June 10, 1898 in which he said, "For our own motherland a

junction of the two great systems, Hinduism and Islam—Vedanta brain and Islam body—is the only hope..." Another incident that took place in Nainital reveals the tenderness of Swamiji's heart. One day the party visited the temple of the Divine Mother in the town. The Western ladies happened to meet two dancing-girls of unknown identity and talked to them in broken language. In their simplicity and ignorance the Western disciples took these girls for respectable ladies. The two nautch-girls were eager to know where they could find Vivekananda. Having ascertained the place of his residence they went there and begged people gathered there to allow them to meet the great sage and receive his blessings. The orthodox people vehemently refused their request. Vivekananda, brushing aside these vociferous protests, allowed the humble girls to come to him. He, the compassionate one, blessed them and spoke to them words of power, full of loving kindness, without a trace of denunciation. It was in connection with this episode, Sister Nivedita recalls, that Swamiji first told them the story of the nautch-girl of Khetri.

In Nainital the distinguished residents thronged to meet the famous Swami. He had several talks with them. In one of these talks he extensively dwelt on the work and message of the luminary Raja Ram Mohan Roy. He was delighted to meet his old school-fellow, one Jogesh Chandra Datta. When Swamiji began to speak to Jogesh Babu about the deplorable plight of India, her poverty and the dismal lethargy of people, and how to improve the condition of the country, tears of anguish wet his face. Jogesh Babu, deeply moved by the great sannyāsi's deep feeling, writes: "I shall never forget that scene in my life! He was a Tyāgi, he had renounced the world, yet India was in the inmost depth of his soul. India was his love, he felt and wept for

5. *The Life*, Vol. II, page 331.

6. *The Complete Works of Sister Nivedita* (Calcutta: Sister Nivedita Girls' School, 1967) Vol. I, p. 277.

India, he died for India. India throbbed in his breast, beat in his pulses, in short, was inseparably bound up with his very life.”⁷

Vivekananda with his companions left Nainital on May 16 for Almora, a few hours before dusk. When they entered the deep forest of oak, pine and deodar, the thick blanket of darkness covered them. The eerie silence under the star-lit sky was enhanced by the buzzing of thousands of insects. The party was preceded by men carrying pine torches and lanterns to keep off bears and tigers. Jim Corbett, in many of his books has given lucid descriptions of the profusion of wildlife in the Nainital and Kumaon jungles at the time, and his thrilling encounters with tigers, bears, wild pigs, king cobras and leopards. To Swamiji, who had seen and wandered in these sylvan surroundings before, the threatening darkness and silence were enchanting and he was full of fun and gaiety. Late at night they reached a dak-bungalow and spent the night listening to the weird cacophony of the jungle. Next day they arrived at Almora. Vivekananda, his Gurubhais and sannyāsi disciples stayed at Thompson House, the guests of the Sevijs. The Western ladies stayed in nearby Oakley House. Everyday early in the morning Swamiji would go to Oakley House and have his breakfast, and would spend some hours in inspired talk.

At Almora, Swamiji and his companions stayed for about a month. He devoted much of his energy and time in training his Western disciples, specially Sister Nivedita. Swamiji could speak on any subject concerning especially India for hours with amazing clarity and astonishing depth. He

always presented a subject from many sides and threw new illumination on it. The range of subjects he spoke on at Almora to these Western ladies was mind-boggling. His talks covered: the central ideals of civilization, Indian history, Akbar, Sivaji, China, Buddha and Buddhism, Siva and Uma, the sage Sukhadeva, social reforms, spiritual oneness of mankind, and so on. “With Almora,” Sister Nivedita remarks, “it seemed as if a going to school had commenced.” During this stay at Almora he met for the first time Mrs. Annie Besant and they had a couple of long conversations with each other.

In the midst of his busy schedule an urge for solitary life and meditation took hold of him. He retired to the forest-covered hills near Shīya Devī (Shyama) temple. It is about fourteen km. from Almora. From the top of the hill the panoramic scenery is breathtaking. Having spent three days in a tent in that pervasive tranquillity he returned radiating peace and divinity. At this time he received two great shocks, one the death of Pavahari Baba, and another, the sudden passing away of his beloved and faithful disciple, J. J. Goodwin. He remarked with great sorrow, “My right hand is gone. Goodwin, if he had lived could have done so much!” Swamiji rewrote the poem ‘Requiescat in Pace’ and sent it to Goodwin’s mother. Another noteworthy event that took place at the town was the revival of the publication ‘Prabuddha Bharata’ under the editorship of Swami Swarup-ananda. The loss of gentle Goodwin hung heavily on his mind, so unexpected that it was hard for him to endure. So he decided to move out of Almora where he had received the disquieting news. On June 11, 1898 he left Almora with his companions for Kashmir.

7. *The Life*, Vol. II, p. 334.

Swami Trigunatitananda

SWAMI CHETANANANDA

(Continued from the previous issue)

Obstacles in spiritual life are not always bad: first, they reveal the evil nature of maya, second, they create intense longing for the goal. If there is no obstruction to its flow, the river stagnates and eventually dies. Similarly, when one's spiritual life passes through test after test, one achieves experience and strength, leading ultimately to fulfillment. Swami Trigunatita's parents and other family members tried their utmost to stop his spiritual journey, but the grace of his guru helped him to overcome the obstacles they set in his way. If a person has sincere love for God, He makes everything favourable. Although Trigunatita was a monk, he had love and respect for his parents. After his father's death on November 9, 1888, he took his mother and younger brother Ashutosh to Holy Mother. Ashutosh became a disciple of Holy Mother and served her in Udbodhan. His mother died on November 19, 1895.

Pilgrimage

There is a saying: "The river is pure that flows, and the monk is pure who goes." A real monk always thinks of Brahman and the teachings of Vedanta. He is content with the food which chance brings him, and he roams the world with a joyful mind. Swami Trigunatita had a desire to visit the holy places throughout India. Sometime in 1891 he left for Varanasi and visited the temples of Lord Viśwanāth and Mother

Annapūrṇā. There he met Pramadas Mitra, a great Sanskrit scholar and a good friend of Swami Vivekananda. From Varanasi he went to Chunar and visited the temple of the Goddess Durgā. It was a solitary place on the top of a hill. He lived there a few days, but could not stay long as there was no food available nearby. Then he visited Kālī and the eight-handed goddess Durgā at Vindhyachal. Afterwards he went to Prayag, the confluence of the Ganga and the Jamuna, where he suffered from fever for twelve days. There he attended Durga Puja, the autumn worship of the Divine Mother, and also Ramlīla, a performance on the divine play of Rama-chandra.

Swami Trigunatita then went to Kanpur, an historical place, and Vithore, which is also called Brahmavarta, an ancient Hindu holy place. There he saw the seat of the Creator, Brahmā, the ashrama of Dhruva, and the hermitage of the sage Valmiki. Next he travelled to the ancient city of Etowa where he met his brother disciple Swami Akhandananda. There he visited the ashrama of Khaikhatia Baba, a great soul. Then both swamis went to Agra to visit the Taj Mahal, one of the seven wonders of the world. Trigunatita was not much impressed with the Taj Mahal. From Agra they went to Mathura, the birthplace of Kṛṣṇa, and then to Vrindaban, where Kṛṣṇa had spent his boyhood. They stayed

at Kalababu's kunja (a family retreat of Balaram Basu), attended the festival of lights at Govardhan, Raslila, and the food festival of Yatipur. They also visited Shyam-kunda, Radha-kunda, and other holy places.

In December 1891, Swami Trigunatita resumed his journey. He went first to Bharatpur, then visited Madanmohan temple in Keroni, and again met Swami Akhandananda at Pushkar. They climbed the Savitri hill and visited the Brahma temple. Afterwards they reached Ajmir, where Swami Trigunatita was sick for more than two weeks. When he got well, a devotee bought a train ticket for him and he left for Chitore alone. After visiting various places, he arrived at Dwaraka, a place where Kṛṣṇa had lived, on the coast of the Arabian Sea. Then he went to Porbandar, or Sudama Puri, by boat and found lodging at the Hatkeshwar Śiva Temple. There he met some monks who were planning to visit Hinglaj, a difficult pilgrimage in the western desert of India.

They thought it would be easier if they could go to Karachi by boat and then by camel to Hinglaj. But who would bear the expenses? They heard of a learned Bengali monk living with the Dewan of Porbandar, so they decided to go with Trigunatita, as he was Bengali, to ask the monk for financial help. This learned monk turned out to be Swami Vivekananda, who was surprised to see Trigunatita there. When Swamiji learned the cause of his visit, he said to him: "I can't ask for money from anybody. Whatever you have you give to them."

Trigunatita talked to Swamiji for a long time and then returned to the Hatkeshwar Temple. The next day, when he was about to leave with the other monks, Swamiji

came and took him to his residence. Trigunatita stayed with Swamiji a couple of days, and then according to Swamiji's request went to Junagadh. There he lived with Haridas Viharidas, the Dewan of Junagadh, for a few days. Then after visiting several other places, he returned to the monastery, which had been shifted from Baranagore to Alambazar.

Swami Trigunatita began to help his brother disciples in the household duties of the monastery. He had tremendous concentration and perseverance. Whatever he undertook he would work on until it was finished. Sometimes he became absorbed day and night in studies of books of his choice. After staying in the monastery a year, he went to Darjeeling. A few months later he returned to Calcutta and then left for Almora, in the Himalayan region.

Pascal, the famous French philosopher, said, "Thou wouldst not have looked for Me, if thou hadst not found Me." Swami Trigunatita tried to satisfy his insatiable desire to see the Lord by visiting holy places. In 1895 he left for Tibet to visit Kailas and Manasarovar. It was the most difficult pilgrimage anyone could undertake; but Trigunatita's indomitable spirit carried him through thick and thin. It was June or July and the snow had just begun to melt. He was overwhelmed by the panoramic beauty of the Himalayas.

One evening he found himself on the bank of a river with no way to cross except by going over an old ruined dam. There was enough moonlight, so he decided to cross the river by jumping from one rock to another. When he reached the middle, a thick patch of cloud covered the moon, obscuring his vision. He was completely helpless. One false step meant he would be carried away by the swift current of the icy

water. He began to chant the name of Sri Ramakrishna. All of a sudden he heard a voice say, "Follow me," and he went forward. Before he knew it, his feet touched the firm ground of the other shore. Just then the clouds disappeared and the moon shone forth with all her former brilliance. He did not see anyone around. He realized that his Master's grace and protection were still with him.

While travelling in the Himalayas, Trigunatita came across a village with an old, dilapidated temple on its outskirts. Generally, itinerant mendicants love to stay overnight in such temples. However, at sunset the villagers closed the temple gates and asked him to leave. They told him that with the approach of dusk, dense clouds of mosquitoes would descend on the temple compound and anyone who remained at night would surely bleed to death. Some unfortunate travellers had died that way in the past. Therefore, the gates were always closed at night. Swami Trigunatita decided to stay at the temple that night in spite of the warnings. The villagers closed the gates and left.

Scarcely had the sun disappeared below the horizon, when a cloud of mosquitoes descended on the compound. He had never before experienced such horrible torture. Protected only by a thin blanket, he crouched in a corner or rushed hither and thither trying to escape their onslaught. There was no escape, no refuge anywhere. He prayed to the Master and endured with his superhuman willpower. At daybreak the mosquitoes quickly disappeared. The anxious villagers opened the gates and were surprised to see the swami still alive. However, he had to stay in the village for a week to recover from the mosquito bites.

On another occasion he lost his way at night in a pouring rain. Overcome by

hunger and weariness, he lay down to sleep in the rain by the side of the road. Without knowing it he had come near a railway station. At that time a railway porter with a lantern was returning home, and he noticed the pitiable condition of the swami. He took the swami to his home, gave him a dry cloth for the night, fed him, and arranged for a place to sleep. When Trigunatita left the next morning, he blessed the porter.

Swami Trigunatita had an analytical mind and he was very skeptical regarding undue claims of miraculous power. Once in his travels he came to a place where a small spring flowed over the top of an overhanging rock. A fakir lived nearby, and for a small sum of money, he claimed to be able to make the water flow at will. Many people paid to see the water flow at the command of the fakir, but the swami was not so easily convinced. When the visitors left, the swami climbed up around the rocks and discovered an intermittent spring. Thus the indefatigable mind of the swami tested every claim to the supernatural.

In Calcutta and with Swami Vivekananda

After returning from pilgrimage in the latter part of 1895, Swami Trigunatita stayed at the Calcutta residence of Dr. Shashi Bhushan Ghosh to recuperate from his many illnesses. He then began to write accounts of his travels in Tibet, which were published serially in the *Indian Mirror*, starting December 22, 1895. He started to study Vedanta literature extensively and gave classes at various places in Calcutta on the Gītā and the Upaniṣads. He inaugurated three centres in Calcutta to teach morality and spirituality to young people. He also thought of starting a Bengali magazine to propagate Vedic culture and the message of Sri Ramakrishna. In January 1896 Swami Vivekananda wrote

to Swami Brahmananda from America: appreciating Swami Trigunatita's proposal of the magazine. However, the paper, *Udbodhan*, was not started until 1899.

During his stay in Calcutta, Swami Trigunatita developed an abscess which needed surgery. Dr. Matilal Mukherjee of Baranagore informed the swami that since the operation would take some time and would be painful, he would use chloroform to put him to sleep. Trigunatita told the doctor to do the surgery without chloroform and that he would endure the pain. The surgeon was amazed but agreed to perform the surgery as the swami requested. He spent half an hour and removed the abscess, cutting nearly six inches. The surgeon and nurses did not see any change in the face of the swami—he was as calm as if he were in deep meditation.

Swami Vivekananda returned from the West in January 1897, and in May established the Ramakrishna Mission at Calcutta. In 1898 a plot of land, along with a house, was purchased at Belur and the monastery was shifted there in 1899. Swamiji made a rule that any monk who didn't go to the shrine for meditation at 4:00 a.m. would have to beg for his food outside the monastery that day. Once Swamis Shivananda and Trigunatita were late getting to the shrine and Swamiji asked them to live on alms that day. When they came back with food from Belur village, Swamiji took a share of it joyfully. The brother disciples obeyed Swamiji's orders as they had the Master's.

Another morning at Belur Math, Swamiji was going to the shrine for meditation and found that Swami Trigunatita was in bed with a high temperature. Swamiji said to him: "Get up. Let us go for meditation. If you meditate, your fever will disappear."

Swami Akhandananda was nearby and he thought that perhaps Swamiji was joking. But he was not joking! Swamiji took Trigunatita's hand and pulled him to the Master's shrine. There they meditated for a couple of hours. It is said that after that meditation Trigunatita's temperature returned to normal.

To spread the message of Sri Ramakrishna in Bengali, Swamiji asked Swami Trigunatita to start the magazine that he had thought of in 1896. Swamiji contributed one thousand rupees, which Miss MacLeod donated to him, and Haramohan Mitra gave another thousand as a loan to buy a press and start the publication of *Udbodhan*. Swami Trigunatita bought the press and rented a couple of rooms at Combuliatola Lane, Calcutta. He started this pioneering job alone, without any previous experience. His main assets were his sincerity, patience, and above all, his love for the ideal. As he had no monastic assistants at first, Trigunatita was the editor, proofreader, manager, and supervisor of the press; and when the typesetters were sick, he had to compose the type also.

Sometimes he would go door to door to collect subscriptions, as well as getting articles from various writers. His funds were limited, so instead of travelling by tram, he would walk ten miles a day, eat one meal at a devotee's house at noon, and eat some puffed rice in the morning and evening. He would sleep one hour a day, between 3 and 4 a.m. To avoid sleep he would splash cold water on his eyes or read the proofs at night while standing. Over and above all this, if any of his press workers were sick, he would nurse them. When he was sick, he would lie down and cover himself with a blanket for a while, then continue his regular work the next morning.

Thus in January 1899, the bi-weekly, later monthly, magazine came into existence. Swamiji named the magazine *Udbodhan*, "The Awakening." Sharat Chandra Chakrabarty, a disciple of Swamiji, recorded the following in his *Talks with Swami Vivekananda*:

Disciple: "Sir, it is impossible for any other man to exert himself as Swami Trigunatita is doing for the magazine."

Swamiji: "Do you think these monastic children of Sri Ramakrishna are born simply to sit for meditation under trees lighting dhuni-fires? Whenever any of them will take up some work, people will be astonished to see their energy. Learn from them how to work. Look, Trigunatita has given up his spiritual practices, his meditation and everything, to carry out my orders, and he has set himself to work. Is it a matter of small sacrifice? He will not stop short of success!"

Disciple: "But, sir, it looks rather odd in our eyes that monks in ochre robes should go about from door to door as the swami is doing."

Swamiji: "Why? The circulation of the magazine is only for the good of the householders. The masses will benefit by the spread of these new ideas in the country. Do you think this unselfish work is in any way inferior to devotional practices? Our object is to do good to humanity."

Disciple: "Sir, the other day I saw that Swami Trigunatita worshipped the photograph of Sri Ramakrishna in the press room before beginning to work, and he asked for your blessings for the success of the work."

Swamiji: "Well, the Master is our centre. Each one of us is a ray of that light-centre.

So Trigunatita has started the work by worshipping the Master—he did the right thing...Tell him when you go that I am exceedingly delighted with his work. Give him my loving blessings."

Swami Trigunatita edited and organized the *Udbodhan* for four years. Later Swami Shuddhananda was engaged to assist him. Trigunatita was methodical, frugal, and carried the responsibility without complaint. His love for the ideal never allowed him to be discouraged. In spite of his heavy workload, he remained cheerful. He kept a picture of Mother Durga on his desk. The Divine Mother endowed him with both physical and mental strength. Once at Balaram's house, where he used to stay at night, he carried a tin of kerosene oil (weighing nearly 50 pounds) from the first floor to the second floor with one finger. He was short and heavysset and would sometimes put a book on a high stool and read standing the whole night.

With Holy Mother

When Holy Mother was living at Nilambar Babu's garden house in Belur (1894-95), Swami Trigunatita was her attendant. He would spread a white cloth under the *shefalika* flower tree (an autumnal white fragrant flower) so that the blooms might not fall in the dust. Holy Mother would use those flowers for her morning worship. He was extremely thoughtful and resourceful in every action.

After Swami Yogananda's death in March 1899, Trigunatita took charge of Holy Mother's physical needs in addition to editing the *Udbodhan*. His zeal to serve her appeared to be almost an obsession. In October 1899, Holy Mother was going to Jayrambati in a bullock cart via Burdwan. It was past midnight. Trigunatita was walk-

ing in front of the carriage as her bodyguard, with a heavy stick on his shoulder. Suddenly he saw a wide breach in the road made by a flood. At once he realized that when the carriage came to the opening, it would either be overturned or receive a terrific jolt, not only disturbing the Mother's sleep but possibly hurting her physically. Immediately he laid his large body in the breach and asked the driver to drive the vehicle over him. But suddenly the Mother awoke, took in the situation, and rebuked her disciple for his rashness.

While returning from Jayrambati, he stopped at Baidyabati and went to a hotel for a meal. The owner told the swami that the rate was six pice per meal. The swami said to him that he was a good eater and would be glad to pay extra for his meal. But the owner declined to receive any extra money from a monk. The swami was hungry and began to eat his meal—mainly rice and dal (lentil). The waiter went on serving the swami until there was no cooked rice and dal in the hotel. The poor hotel keeper, approaching the swami, said: "Father, please leave now. I can't feed you anymore. You will not have to pay anything." Trigunatita blessed the hotel keeper and left. Later the swami greatly enjoyed narrating this incident.

Swami Trigunatita's love for and faith in Holy Mother was phenomenal. Once Yoginma, a disciple of Sri Ramakrishna, asked the swami to buy some hot chilies for the Mother. In his eagerness to get the hottest possible, he walked through many markets from Baghbazar to Burabazar (roughly four kilometres), tasting all the hot chilies by chewing one of each, until his tongue became red and swollen. At last he found the hottest ones at Burabazar and brought them to the Mother. When Holy Mother heard about it, she said, "What

devotion to the guru!" Later when Swami Trigunatita went to America, he sent money regularly for Holy Mother's personal service.

In America

By 1902 Swami Turiyananda had worked strenuously for three years in America. When his health broke, he decided to return to India. Dr. M. H. Logan, the President of the Vedanta Society of San Francisco, wrote to Swami Vivekananda and asked him to send another swami to take charge of the centre. Swamiji asked Trigunatita to replace Turiyananda. Trigunatita handed over charge of the *Udbodhan* to Swami Shuddhananda and began to make the necessary arrangements for his departure. In the meantime, Swami Vivekananda passed away on July 4, 1902. Despite this tragedy, Trigunatita sailed for the United States in the early part of November via Colombo and Japan, and arrived in San Francisco on January 2, 1903. Believing, in his simplicity, that there might not be any vegetables in America, he went fully prepared to live on bread and water. He was determined to remain a vegetarian at all costs. He found afterwards, of course, that vegetables and cereals of all kinds were available in America in great abundance.

Swami Trigunatita was well received by Dr. Logan, Mr. and Mrs. C. F. Peterson, and other members of the Society. He began lecturing at the Petersons' house, but it could not accommodate the large crowds. So, in March 1903, the Society rented a commodious place at 40 Steiner Street, where the swami and the Peterson family could live and he could conduct the services. Swami Trigunatita gave classes on the Gītā on Monday evenings and on the Upaniṣads on Thursday evenings, and he lectured in the morning and evening on Sundays. Music, of course, was part of every service.

(Continued on page 95)

Mahatma Gandhi's Visit to Belur Math in 1921

Mahatma Gandhi visited Belur Math on the 30th January, 1921 when the fifty-ninth birth anniversary of Swami Vivekananda was being celebrated there. At the earnest request of the people assembled Gandhiji addressed them just for a few minutes. He acknowledged his indebtedness to Swami Vivekananda and appealed to the young men to draw inspiration from the great Swamiji. An account of this memorable visit collected from old journals and books is given below. It may be remembered in this connection that Gandhiji wrote on 22.7.1941 the following two sentences from Sevagram (Wardha) by way of an introduction to a compilation of Swami Vivekananda's sayings on Education: "Surely Swami Vivekananda's writings need no introduction from any body. They make their own irresistible appeal."

The 59th Anniversary of the birthday of Swami Vivekananda was celebrated on Sunday, the 30th January 1921 at the Belur Math with great success. The special feature of the day was the Seva of Daridra Narayana (feeding of the God in the poor) on whom the Swami looked with a special eye of consideration and reverence.¹ An incident of the day was the unexpected arrival of Mahatma Gandhi and party who came to pay a tribute of homage to Swami Vivekananda's memory—the patriot-saint of India. Mahatmaji was accompanied by his wife, Mr. Motilal Nehru, Mr. Mohammed Ali and some other notable coadjutors. Swami Shivananda (Mahapurush Maharaj) graciously received the party and had very interesting conversation with them. In particular, he took them to the shrine and to Swami Vivekananda's room. Mahatmaji showed keen interest in everything and eagerly examined many precious relics treasured in the shrine including articles used by Sri Ramakrishna and samples of his handwriting. With great reverence he touched the mattress used by Sri Ramakrishna. Mahatmaji and companions asked many questions as to how many institutions

the Mission had, how many workers,—the Mayavati Ashrama on the Himalayas, how to go there and so forth. He enquired of the method of worship not overlooking even the figure of Mahavir in the temple room. The attention of the Mahatma was then drawn to the figure of Sri Ramakrishna's wife and on enquiry he was told of the life led by her—her madonahood—and life-long purity.

That day, as it always happens on festival days, a huge congregation consisting of men and women of various classes filled the monastery grounds. In response to the demand of the people Mahatmaji stood on the first floor front verandah of the main monastery building facing the Ganga and addressed the crowd. He said in Hindi:

"Please do not think for a moment that I have come here with the idea of preaching my doctrine of Non-cooperation and Spinning Wheel." "I have come here to pay my homage and respect to the revered memory of Swami Vivekananda, whose birthday is being celebrated today. I have gone through his works very thoroughly and after having gone through them, the love that I had for my country became a thousand-fold. I ask you young men, not to go away empty-handed with-

1. Through mistake the date was printed as 6th February 1921 in some places.

out imbibing something of the spirit of the place where Swami Vivekananda lived and died.”²

Records of Intelligence Branch, I.G.P., West Bengal, dated 30th January 1921 contain a report of this visit of Gandhiji to Belur Math. Among other points the report states: ‘He (Mahatma Gandhi) began by saying that he bore great respect

2. Vide *Prabuddha Bharata*, March 1921, May 1963, *History of Ramakrishna Math and Ramakrishna Mission* (1957), pp. 282-283, *Mahapurush Shivananda*, Udbodhan (1949), pp. 211-223, and *A Man of God*, Madras Math (1957), pp. 108-109.

for late Swami Vivekananda. He had studied many of his books and said that his ideals agreed in many respects with that great man. If Vivekananda were alive it would have been a great help for their national awakening. However, his spirit was amongst them and that they should do their best to establish Swaraj. He said that they should learn to love their country before anything else and they should be of one mind.”³

3. Vide *The Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi*, Vol. 19, (1966 Edition), pp. 307-308, published by Publication Division, Government of India).

SWAMI TRIGUNATITANANDA

(Continued from page 93)

In 1904 some students invited Swami Trigunatita to start a Vedanta centre at Los Angeles, nearly 450 miles away from San Francisco. The swami began the work there, but later found it difficult to manage both places ; so he asked for an assistant from India. The authorities of Belur Math sent Swami Satchidananda, who received a hearty welcome in San Francisco and then, under Trigunatita's guidance, started the work in Los Angeles. But after only a year, Satchidananda was compelled to return to India because of poor health.

In the same year, the work in San Francisco had grown to such proportions that the swami felt the society should have a suitable building of its own. With Swami Trigunatita, to think was to act, and a committee was at once appointed to look for a suitable site. Soon a meeting of all the members was called, the funds were quickly

raised, and a plot of land was purchased on the corner of Webster and Filbert streets. On August 25, 1905, with appropriate ceremonies, the cornerstone was laid. The temple was then built and was consecrated on the 7th January 1906. Regarding the future of the temple, the swami said, “I shall not live to enjoy ; others will come later who will enjoy” ; and, referring to his own participation, he boldly proclaimed : “Believe me, if there is the least tinge of selfishness in building this temple, it will fall ; but if it is the Master's work, it will stand.” It is amazing that the terrible earthquake and fire of 1906, which destroyed much of the city of San Francisco, did no damage to the temple. This was the first Hindu temple in the Western world. The first services were held there on Sunday, January 15, 1906.

(To be continued)

The Bhava-Lilas of Sri Ramakrishna

RICHARD C. PRESCOTT

Sri Ramakrishna is a limitless ocean of spirituality. In him we find the happy confluence of all sects and religions. This moving portrayal by Mr. Prescott brings before our eyes the wondrous play of the Master. The author is of U.S.A. and has recently published several books of poems.

In the final analysis, ultimately, Sri Ramakrishna's One Teacher was the Blissful Divine Mother Herself. She was his one and only Reality, his Chosen Ideal. It is my strong feeling that Sri Ramakrishna is the finest example of spiritual health in this modern age. He dealt with everything. Every path was his own experience and he showed us that they all lead to the One Truth when properly followed. It will take a thousand years to fully understand the drama of his life on this earth.

Unlike the common Indian tradition of having only one teacher, Ramakrishna had many teachers or gurus as they are more often called. Yet it is hard to say, "who was the teacher and who was the student?", with Sri Ramakrishna. For inevitably every one of his teachers ultimately learn a greater lesson from him that they themselves thought they were teaching him. He never sought the teacher, save the Blissful Divine Mother, and it was through Her movements all his teachers were brought at his doorstep. This clearly shows us that everything one might need is within the Blissful Mother and that nothing, nothing at all is outside of Her.

Many were Ramakrishna's teachers and he had the infinite capacity to learn from everything around him. Such was the gift of the Blissful Mother to him. All human experiences are in the Realm of the *Bhāva*-s (Feelings, Moods, Attitudes) and the Pure Advaitic Consciousness is 'experienced' in

Nirvikalpa Samādhi alone. We should ever keep this understanding in front of our minds. Sri Ramakrishna knew this well and could clearly distinguish the difference between the two. But it must also be stated that he was continually in that Blessed State of *Bhāva-Mukha*, Inconceivable Difference-In-Non-Difference. This is a divine possibility only in the life of an Incarnation. After the Blissful Mother's command to "Remain in *Bhāvamukha*," he lived his life either in this wondrous *Bhāvamukha* or immersed in Advaitic Nirvikalpa. How amazing!

Infinite capacity expressed itself in him when he was very young. He had the experience of Samādhi, Indescribable Joy, when he saw the flight of seven snow white cranes across a dark raincloud. During his days of spiritual practice a Sannyāsin, who looked just like himself, would emerge from his own body and instruct him in various spiritual matters pertaining to the Vedanta and the Tantra. What else could be more demonstrative to us of the Emergence of Self, as teacher and as Reality Itself.

But it should never be failed to mention that it was Kālī, the Blissful Mother, who was his all in all, his heart's highest Joy. He became God Intoxicated with Her, when She appeared to him in the Kālī Temple. She became everything, the door, the door sill, the marble, the altar and even as the cat who was present there. In short, there was

only the Luminous Conscious Effulgence of Kālī, the Blissful Mother, nothing else. It would be impossible to number these Experiences, for only some are recorded by human beings and others are unknown to us. Yet we may rest assured that the Waves of Her Luminosity spread forth through his life continually and the Effulgent Sea of Her is never exhausted.

At one point during the blissful drama of his life he was initiated into the *Śakti Mantra* of the Divine Mother. Yet the teacher, Kenaram Bhattacharya, had a big surprise in store. As soon as Ramakrishna received the Mantra of the Goddess he went into Ecstasy. Kenaram had never seen such a thing before, when giving mantras to others. Again, it was his infinite capacity to assimilate and experience spiritual realities.

It is difficult if not impossible to enumerate all of the Master's experiences, so we shall not even try, so as to free ourselves from the expectation of doing so. When he took up the *sādhana* (spiritual practice) of Hanuman's devotion to Rāma, he actually caused a physiological change in his own human body. So powerful is the psychosomatic influence of spiritual thoughts. It was here that he had the experience of seeing and meeting the Goddess Sītā, inheriting her smile.

It was Bhairavi Brahmani (Yogeswari) who trained Sri Ramakrishna in the Sixty-Four Tantras. She guided him through so many spiritual exercises that this stage of his life is a story within a story. The experiences were numerous. The vision of *Brahmayoni*, the Divine Womb, the Unstruck Sound of OM, the vision of the Divine Mother giving birth to, sustaining and nourishing and eventually devouring the Universe in the form of a child, many were his experiences. It is said that Yogeswari,

the Tantric Brahmani, was herself manifestation of the Yogamaya of the Blissful Mother, though, she may not have been fully aware of this.

When Jatadhari, the Sadhu with matted hair, arrived, the Master of all Bhāvas took up the worship of the little metal statue of the Boy Rama. After a short while, the Boy Rama appeared to the Master in 'subtle form.' The Boy would play with Ramakrishna, tease him, trick him, folly with him, jump on his back, sit in his lap and thus kindle some loving parent-child moods that we cannot possibly imagine. Eventually the Master taught the good Jatadhari to relinquish his attachment to the material (metal) form of the Boy Rama and his attachment also to the 'subtle form' of Rama. By Sri Ramakrishna's help this Jatadhari found the Real Rama in his own heart and then took leave of the Master. Jatadhari Emerged within his own Reality, in accordance to his dearest, most cherished Chosen Ideal. What more that must have passed between them we can never know. That must remain Mother's Mystery.

The Sweet Mood (*Madhura Bhāva*) might be quite difficult for most of us to understand. It is to be the 'sweetheart' of the Ineffable Effulgence. Ultimately, the Ātma Brahman is the 'Sexless Self.' The idea of this spiritual exercise is to get rid of the body-consciousness, identified in the dualistic phenomena with female and male sexuality. The Self as Pure Satcidananda is neither male, female, neuter or androgynous. To consider thus is to still think in the dualistic terms of the finite phenomenal world. Real, Self, Reality is Infinite. The culmination of this practice is the experience of the 'nineteen emotions' of *Mahābhāva* (the Great Mood), which is an extremely rare spiritual state. The Master practised this Mood for six months and during this time the Brahmani was there. He became the

'handmaid of the Blissful Mother.' In all respects he virtually became 'a woman.' He spoke, thought, felt, and lived as a woman, in dress, in mood, behaviour and mannerism. He worshipped the Blissful Mother as a woman would worship Her, transcending the idea of being born in a male or female body. Eventually the Divine Mother came to him as Radha. Her 'luminous form' appeared, spoke to, communed with and instructed him, then entered and merged into the Master's own body. And by the grace of the Blissful Mother in the form of Radha, Krishna appeared in the same manner, in His 'luminous form.' The Master became 'one' with the Divine Consorts, the Supernal Lovers. And through the two who are one, he again experienced the non-dual Satcidananda. An open and pure mind is necessary to understand this mystery. Soon afterwards, Totapuri arrived at Dakshineswar.

Ramakrishna called him Nangta, the naked one. Totapuri was the classical Advaitic Vedāntin, of the highest type. He had no illusions and he was full of himself, yet this part of the blissful drama revealed some interesting and special things. Totapuri had reached the ultimate Nirvikalpa Samādhi after forty years of hard discipline. Now, little did he know that an amazing surprise was in store for him. The Master took the Vow of Sannyāsa and was instructed in the Advaita Vedānta by the 'naked one.' Only one thing kept the Master from immediately plunging into Nirvikalpa, the Blissful 'Form' of the Divine Mother. Nirvikalpa is the Infinite Formless and, really and truly speaking, the Divine Mother is ultimately Formless. Yet, for some special spiritual reason we are taught here by the example of the Master that the sword of *viveka* (discrimination between the real and the unreal) must be used to cut through all dualities in order to plunge into the absolute non-duality of

Nirvikalpa Samādhi. And so it was that Sri Ramakrishna reached in a few days what it took Totapuri years to attain. But this is not the end of the drama. Nangta stayed at Dakshineswar for months to make sure the Master was firmly and entirely established in the Vedānta. Bhairavi Brahmani was upset, she said, "His Vedānta will destroy all your *Bhāva*." But what she was afraid of would never come true. In fact, it was the other way round. Totapuri had decided to cast off his body because it had become ill. He did not want it anymore, so he tried to drown the body in the Ganga river. The normally deep river had become shallow. He walked from one shore nearly to the other, but nowhere was there water enough for him to achieve his task. This was kind of comical in that the Blissful Mother was about to appear to him. And She did, he saw Her. She was Luminous in everything, the river, the trees, the sky . . . everywhere. A change had come over Totapuri. Love for the Blissful Mother had awakened in him. He realized that he could not even die without Her Decree. He went to the Kālī Temple to worship Her. Ramakrishna knew that Nangta had seen the Blissful Mother. It was for this reason that She had kept him at Dakshineswar.

Totapuri took leave of the Master to wander the earth like a lion, but now he was full of new realization. Eventually Bhairavi Brahmani took leave of the Master too. But this was painful for her as she loved him so dearly. Her lesson from the Mother and the Master was that she had to let go of her clinging to the 'person of Ramakrishna.' And so it was.

Sometime after these divine episodes, the Muslim Sufi, Govinda Rai arrived at Dakshineswar. Ramakrishna now took up the way of Islam. He became a Muslim in every sense. Govinda Ray initiated the Master into the 'mantra' of Allah. Again, in a very

short time Sri Ramakrishna realized the conclusion of this practice. He saw and realized Allah as that one non-dual Consciousness. Again the Master had demonstrated that the attainment of non-dual Consciousness is the final goal of all paths. It seems that at this time the Master came to know of all his former lives through *Jātismaratva* (the Yoga-power of remembering previous incarnations, past lives).

There were so many that were brought into the Master's company by the Divine Mother. It would be hard to know all that went on. Some were brought by Her to play the role of teachers, others to play the role of students and still others as visitors. For example : what was the role of the 'mad' Paramahansa who stated that they were Knowers of Brahman who saw no difference between the water of the Ganga and the water in a puddle. Again, what was the relationship of the Master with Trailanga Swami who stated that Samadhi is Unity and the mind diversity, multiplicity. Were they friends, similar, not teacher or student to one another ? And what of the great woman saint, Gangamayi, who experienced the constant company of the Baby Krishna. The Master was so fond of her that he did not want to leave and she felt that he was an Incarnation.

At Benares, Ramakrishna actually saw the 'luminous form' of Lord Śiva taking and accepting the souls of those who were leaving their former bodies. It is a reality. And the Master stated that he saw this. Indeed, how true it is that we know so little of what is in this wondrous universe.

And what of the most miraculous transference of all powers and experiences to his wife, Sarada Ma, during the *Ṣoḍaṣi Pūjā* of her. The worship of her as the Blissful Mother Herself. This remarkably beautiful

event must surely shatter all of our previous concepts of what 'marriage' truly means.

Then we must not forget the appearance of Christ in the temple garden. Ramakrishna recognized the holy man walking in the temple garden as Īshāmāsi, the Christ, the great yogi, the living son of God. They met and embraced each other as friends, then merged into one another. What a beautiful spiritual event. What is the meaning of their relationship ?

The Master felt that Lord Buddha had realized the Advaita, the one non-dual Consciousness. He stated that this was so. He felt that King Janaka had come back to reincarnate as the Sikh Guru Nanak. And Sri Ramakrishna held great adoration for the Jaina Mahavira, the Great Hero of the Cosmic Crossing. So many spiritual treasures are found in the life of the Great Master.

Ramakrishna knew that it was Narendranath whom he had pulled down from the Heaven of the Seven Sages, to be born with him on Earth, to play this Divine Play. Other *Īśvarakotis* (fully realized souls who incarnate into the 'human plane') were there as well. They all came to partake and participate in this spiritual play.

Looking at Latu he said : "There sits Latu resting his head on the palm of his hand. To me it is the Lord who is seated in that posture." Ramakrishna saw the Blissful Mother moving in the hands and heads of all beings. Where is relationship then ? Where is duality now ? In the life of the Master we see all the Spiritual Moods (*Bhāvas*) played out for us. Even in apparently adversarial relations he would see that it was the Divine Mother (Pure Consciousness) moving there. What a Wonder !

What does it all mean ? It is the Play of the Blissful Mother ! Where is the Mood

(Continued on page 107)

Some Notes on Thai Buddhism

WILLIAM PAGE

(Continued from the previous issue)

Buddhist Meditation

A word should be said about meditation (*bhāvana*). There are two types: *samatha* (concentration) meditation and *vipassana* (insight) meditation.

Samatha meditation is intended to develop one-pointedness of mind, and consists of focusing on a particular mental object. One somewhat heterodox centre of Thai Buddhism, the Dhammakaya Temple, advocates visualizing a crystal a few inches above the abdomen. This practice seems to be more typical of Mahayana than of Theravada, and is supposed to lead to visions and trance states. The Dhammakaya Temple is very popular among university students and urban Thai "yuppies."

But *samatha* meditation is not very much esteemed among orthodox Theravadins; Dr. Walpola Rahula remarks rather disparagingly that it leads to mystic states which are "mind-created, mind-produced, conditioned They have nothing to do with Reality, Nirvana. This form of meditation existed before the Buddha. Hence it is not purely Buddhist [and] ... is not essential for the realization of Nirvana." (Walpola Rahula, *What the Buddha Taught*, New York, Grove Press, Inc., 1974; p. 70.)

Vipassana is much more popular and widespread. Dr. Rahula notes approvingly that it was discovered by the Buddha and is "essentially Buddhist." (Rahula, p. 70.) It is based on a discourse of the Buddha called the *Satipatthana Sutta* (The Discourse on the Foundations of Mindfulness). Basically it involves maintaining constant mindfulness, or awareness, of the various states of the body and mind. Since these states are always in flux, this kind of medita-

tion reinforces the central Buddhist doctrine that all phenomena are transient. Indeed, the aim of *vipassana*, as its name implies, is to attain insight into the transient and unsatisfactory nature of phenomena.

Of the several varieties of *vipassana*, the most highly esteemed, and probably the easiest to practise, is called mindfulness of breathing (*anapanasati*). This is the type of meditation which the Buddha practised on the night of his enlightenment. It consists of observing and mentally noting the inflow and outflow of one's own breath.

You begin by sitting in a comfortable place in a relaxed position, but with your back straight. The traditional posture, of course, is cross-legged, although Westerners may prefer to sit in a chair. With your eyes open, you pay attention to your breathing, mentally noting each step in the process of inhalation and exhalation. When you breathe in, think "Breathing in." When you breathe out, think "Breathing out." When you take a long breath, think "Taking a long breath." When you take a short breath, think "Taking a short breath."

If the mind wanders from your breathing and extraneous thoughts or images arise, gently bring it back to your breathing. If distractions occur, such as a cramp in your back or a mosquito biting your arm, mentally take note of them and return your attention to your breathing.

Some teachers advise focusing attention on the nostrils, the point at which the breath enters and leaves the body. Others advocate observing the rising and falling of the abdomen. Still others suggest following the entire course of the breath as it enters the nostrils, goes into the lungs, and

passes out through the nostrils again. Some recommend mentally repeating a two-syllable mantra, "Buddho": as you inhale, think "Bud"; as you exhale, think "dho." All of these variations may be useful, but the main idea is simply to remain continually aware of the inflow and outflow of each breath.

As mentioned above, this type of meditation leads to increased insight into the transient nature of phenomena; for what is more fleeting than a single breath? If you try to calculate the number of breaths you've taken since you were born, the conclusion is inescapable that the breaths we take are very fleeting phenomena indeed. And yet we are utterly dependent on them; without them we could not survive. In a sense, the thousands upon millions of breaths we've taken throughout our lives, all of which are now long extinct, have made us what we are. Just as a coral reef is a composite entity made up of the shells of millions of long-dead organisms, so are we composite entities who would not be here now if it were not for millions of long-dead breaths. Thus, *anapanasati* not only reinforces the doctrine of the transience of phenomena; it also reinforces the Buddhist idea that the individual is nothing more than a composite of aggregates whose existence depends on a vast concatenation of preceding causes.

But those who come to *anapanasati* meditation from another thought-system may experience something quite different. At times while practising *anapanasati* the body seems like a giant bellows, breathing on its own; the meditator seems to stand apart, detached, observing. At other times, the meditator gets the distinct feeling that *he is not the breather*. It is something else, deep within, behind the surface ego, that is doing the breathing; the meditator is simply standing aside, watching, while something else does his breathing for him.

Once you've become proficient at observing your breathing, it is possible to shift the object of meditation to more complex phenomena, such as various bodily and mental states, in accordance with the progression advocated in the *Satipatthana Sutta*. But at this point it is helpful to have a teacher, and in fact, it is best to have a teacher from the very beginning.

There is one type of meditation which, so far as I know, is unique to Buddhism. This is walking meditation. If you practise sitting meditation continuously for long periods of time, the body gets stiff and sore. So to provide some variety, the Buddhists recommend walking meditation. In this kind of meditation, you leave off paying attention to your breathing, and instead pay attention to each separate motion involved in the process of walking.

Here you find an unobstructed piece of ground to walk on. But you walk with excruciating slowness. As you lift your left foot, you think "Lifting, lifting." As you place your left foot down, you think "Stepping, stepping." Then you do the same with your right foot. No doubt this is a perfectly valid type of meditation, and is in accordance with the Buddhist emphasis on maintaining mindfulness of what you are doing at every moment. The idea behind walking meditation, and Buddhist meditation in general, can be extended to every sphere of human activity. That idea is simply this: Whatever you are doing, whatever you are saying, whatever you are thinking, do it mindfully. Be aware of what you are doing and what is happening around you at every moment. Be alert; be heedful; pay attention to what's going on. Ultimately Buddhist meditation aims to make you mindful not only of your breathing and your walking, but of everything you do.

The Vedanta Society of Southern California : Its History and Traditions

PRAVRAJIKA VARADAPRANA

(Continued from the previous issue)

Sannyas Vows

The first sannyas vows given to women in this country by the Ramakrishna Mission took place in the Santa Barbara temple in August 1959. Swami Prabhavananda had received permission from the Belur Math headquarters to give sannyas vows to five nuns. Seven swamis came from other centres to attend the vows.

In the following September, Swami Prabhavananda took the five Pravrajikas to India, where they became known as the "Pancha Pranas."

Vedanta in the 1960s

During the 1960s there was a steady increase in attendance in the Hollywood and Santa Barbara temples. Young people, who were rebelling against traditional religion and values, were turning to Eastern religions. In Hollywood a closed circuit television system was set up, so the overflow audience could hear the lecture from another room. In Santa Barbara people were sitting in the aisles and on the steps leading to the podium.

The Catholic convents and monasteries were experiencing a decrease in their numbers during the 1960s. The Vedanta convents and monasteries, on the other hand, were receiving a new influx of probationary members.

Both Swamis Prabhavananda and Vandanananda were able to hold the interest of

the people who came to the temple ; Swami Prabhavananda by his powerful lectures and personality, and Swami Vandanananda by the loving way he related to people.

Dr. Manchester had taught Swami Prabhavananda how to organize a lecture by establishing a solid foundation and building to a climax. Swami said, "I never think I am going to give a lecture. I always pray to Holy Mother, 'Mother, let me say words that will do good to these people.'"

Swami Prabhavananda spoke to a number of student groups from high schools, colleges and universities during this period. In Santa Barbara he was one of the main speakers at an interreligious series called "A Ferment in Religion," which was organized by the Catholics. Some Franciscan monks heard him speak there, and invited him to their monastery. Swami had an intimate talk with the monks about spiritual life, and answered their many questions.

Swami Asaktananda arrived in Hollywood in 1967 to assist in the work. Swami Vandanananda returned to India in 1969, and Swami Chetanananda was sent here in 1971. Both of the new swamis received lessons from Madhuri (Arlene Crane) in voice, English diction and lecture organization. Madhuri was a stage actress, writer, and an excellent teacher.

Katharine Whitmarsh (Prasanna), the grandniece of Tantine, built a house across from the temple in Santa Barbara in 1969,

She deeded it to the Vedanta Society, reserving her life tenure in the house. Prasanna had sat on the lap of Swami Vivekananda when she was two years old. She and her little brother ran races, and Swamiji gave pennies to the winner. Prasanna still loves to tell us stories about Tantine and stories she heard from her family about Swamiji's visits to Ridgely Manor.

Prasanna has been able to give valuable information to people who were writing books or articles about Tantine. She also worked for many years compiling *The Concordance to the Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna*, which was published in 1985 by the Vedanta Society of Southern California.

New Trends in the 1970s

After the growth that took place in the 1960s, we observed a new trend starting after the mid-seventies. The Vedanta Press book sales had peaked around the mid seventies and then started to decrease. Some of the people who had turned to Eastern religions were going back to the religion of their birth, but with a new insight. By 1977 *The Sermon on the Mount According to Vedanta* was becoming more popular.

Zen and other forms of Buddhism have been popular with many Americans since the sixties. Tibetan Buddhism has become increasingly popular, due in part to the frequent visits of the Dalai Lama and the Tibetan monks, who have established monasteries here. The Dalai Lama is universally respected and venerated for his loving nature and spirituality.

Swami Prabhavananda's Last Illness

Near the end of May in 1976, Swami Prabhavananda had a serious heart attack and was hospitalized. When he was taken

out of the intensive care unit he asked for all the monastic members to visit him in the hospital. He was in a joyful mood and had a special message for each one. Swami had said he wanted to die at home, and he wanted to be alone when he made the transition. Both of these wishes were granted.

When he came home from the hospital in mid-June Swami had nurses around the clock. On the 3rd of July the nurse stepped out of the room a few minutes before midnight. When she came back, the transition had come about and everyone was alerted. Swami went into mahasamadhi at three minutes past midnight on the fourth of July. All through the night and on the following morning, devotees came to pay their last respects.

After thirteen days, memorial services were held in both the Hollywood and Santa Barbara temples. Talks were given by Swamis Aseshananda, Shraddhananda, Sarvagatananda, Swahananda, Adiswarananda, Prabuddhananda, Bhaskarananda, Chetanananda and Christopher Isherwood.

And so we come to the end of an era in the history of this centre. Looking back on the way in which the Vedanta Society in Southern California developed and grew, one cannot help but be amazed. Everything that was needed for the work was provided. Swami Prabhavananda once said, "I really feel that I haven't done anything. And I could not have done anything. The Lord is doing everything....I have no dispassion, no devotion, no renunciation. But what grace I have—without rhyme or reason!"

Swami Swahananda

Swami Chetanananda carried on the work capably in the interim until Swami

Swahananda arrived to take charge of the Vedanta Society of Southern California in December of 1976. We were fortunate to have a swami as the new head who had been blessed by a direct disciple of Sri Ramakrishna (Swami Vijnanananda). Swami Swahananda had previously been the head of the Berkeley centre, and before that he was in charge of the centre in New Delhi.

The transition was comparatively smooth and easy for our centre because Swami Swahananda's methods were not unlike those of Swami Prabhavananda. Swami Chetananda stayed on for a while, which gave a feeling of continuity. In 1978 Swami Chetananda left for St. Louis to be with Swami Satprakashananda, and later he became the head of that centre.

Swami Swahananda contributed several innovations which filled the needs of the time. He initiated two retreat days a year at the Hollywood centre. On one of the retreat days *The Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna* is read in its entirety, with each retreatant silently reading a different portion. On the other retreat day *The Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda* are read in the same manner. Following the worship and lunch, there is a programme consisting of talks, a religious film or play, or devotional music.

Swami also started the tradition of having lay and monastic devotees perform extra japam during the nine days of the Durga Puja season. He told us that Swami Shivananda had said that 100,000 japam was equal to one Durga Puja.

Swami Swahananda made use of some of the American monks as speakers at the Sunday lectures in Hollywood, Santa Barbara and Trabuco Monastery. He asked some of the nuns to hold classes in Santa Barbara

and Hollywood. This has made it possible to keep up the programmes offered at the different centres.

He published several books in the 1980s, including *Hindu Symbolism and Other Essays*, *Meditation and Other Spiritual Disciplines*, *Service and Spirituality*, and *Monasteries in South India*.

The San Diego Centre

A devotee (Shankari) offered her home near San Diego to be used as a meeting place for the nucleus of devotees living in that area. The house was dedicated on Krishna's birthday in 1977, and a large group of devotees gathered from all of our centres for the worship and talks. Since the dedication there has been an Open House every year in San Diego around the time of Krishna Puja. Classes were held there every week. After three years the centre was moved to Girija's house.

In 1983 the Vedanta Society made use of a legacy to buy a large house in San Diego on Upas Street, where the centre is now located. Because of zoning regulations the house was called the Ramakrishna Monastery. Several American swamis have lived there, and have held regular classes and lectures. Swami Swahananda goes to San Diego every month to hold a class.

Puja is performed daily in the shrine, and most of the special puja days are observed, as well as Christmas and Easter. The devotees in San Diego have given regular donations to help make the centre self-supporting.

Fiftieth Anniversary

In 1979 the golden jubilee celebration commemorating the beginning of the Vedanta Society in Southern California was

observed in Hollywood and Santa Barbara. In Hollywood there was an interfaith service, with nine different traditions represented. In Santa Barbara there was a retreat day with the theme, "Sri Ramakrishna and His Women Disciples". Talks were given by the nuns on some of the women disciples.

In 1979 Swami Aparananda was sent to Hollywood to assist Swami Swahananda. He served here for several years before taking charge of the Vedanta Society of Berkeley.

New Building in Santa Barbara

Eva Hermann, a friend of our architect, built a house on our upper property in 1968. When she passed away in 1978, the house was designated a monastery for the swamis who come to lecture on the week-ends.

In 1977 a small room attached to the garage was converted into a dark room for printing holy pictures. The nun in charge of this work has collected many negatives, and supplies black and white prints for our bookstores and for other centres.

In 1980 the kitchen and dining room were enlarged to accommodate the growing number of people attending special functions at the convent.

For some years the Santa Barbara nuns had been writing dissertations on religious subjects, and reading them in turn to the convent members. This training programme revealed several talented writers, and some of their writings have been published in the *Samvit*, *Prabuddha Bharata* and the *Vedanta Kesari* magazines. Several of the American monks have also contributed articles for these magazines.

One of the nuns edited the book *With the Swamis in America and India*, which included her biographical sketch of Swami Atulananda. The book was published in 1988. Since then she was asked to compile

and edit unpublished works of Swami Vivekananda for one or two new volumes of *The Complete Works*. Many nuns and devotees are helping in this project.

Several of the nuns are putting *The Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda* into a computer, so that any word or phrase can be found quickly. They plan to have it finished for Swamiji's centenary in 1993.

In 1981 Gerda Zinn (Ambika) built a lovely house and garden on the upper acreage of the Vedanta property, on Bella Vista Drive. She offers her house to the convent's overflow guests. Ambika works with stained glass, and has made beautiful yantras, frames for holy pictures, candle holders, etc., which we carry in our bookstores.

An Easter sunrise service has been performed in the Santa Barbara temple since 1978. Along with the worship, there are readings from the Bible, and singing of Easter hymns. Since this is an important service for many people, we started serving a simple breakfast afterwards. There is also an Easter egg hunt for the children during the lecture hour.

On Christmas day we have a Christ worship followed by group carol singing. We invite the congregation of over a hundred people for Christmas dinner. In Hollywood and Santa Barbara, there is a special evening of Christmas music performed by the choirs and guest soloists.

Choirs have been developed by the Hollywood convent and monastery, and by the Santa Barbara convent, with devotees participating. A repertoire of Western style music for Vedanta has been developed by several composers, and is sung at the Sunday morning services. At our temples and monasteries the traditional arati hymns are sung in the evening. Bhajans are sung at Ramnam and other occasions.

Special Programmes and Outreach

In 1986 the 150th anniversary of Sri Ramakrishna's birth was celebrated in Hollywood and Santa Barbara with special programmes. There was an interreligious conference at the Hollywood temple with the subject "Contemporary Spiritual Practices in Community Life." The speakers were Swami Swahananda and representatives from the Buddhist and Catholic traditions. This was followed in the afternoon by lively group discussions on monasticism.

In Santa Barbara the celebration took the form of a retreat day with the theme "Harmony of Religions." A Buddhist monk, a Catholic Father and Swami Swahananda each represented their traditions and insights. An afternoon programme featured religious music from various traditions, and an impressive film on Sufi dancers.

The programme American Service to India, ASTI, was organized by some Hollywood devotees in 1981. ASTI was incorporated as a tax-exempt charity, and currently has nine board members. They give direct help to known Ramakrishna Mission and government institutions by sending money, medical equipment, educational supplies, and help for relief programmes. To date, ASTI has sent nearly a million dollars worth of equipment, supplies and money to India.

In Santa Barbara the nuns have joined a church-sponsored programme that gives homeless people shelter and food. Twice a month several nuns and devotees cook and serve the evening meal to about forty homeless people.

A charity programme for sending letters and free Vedanta books to prisoners was taken up in Hollywood in the 1960s. Many Vedanta books have also been donated to

libraries and hospitals, and to the Prison Ashram Project.

Informally the monastics and devotees look after the close devotees who are sick and dying. One of the nuns in Santa Barbara has joined a programme for counselling recovering cancer patients.

Several monastics in Hollywood have been very active on the Interreligious Council of Los Angeles. In 1985, one of the monks was invited to represent Hinduism at the Interreligious 20th anniversary observance of Vatican II *Nostra Aetate* at the Claretian Retreat Centre. Five major religions were represented.

In 1987, when Pope Paul II was on tour, an interreligious meeting was arranged in Los Angeles. The Pope specifically requested for a Ramakrishna Mission swami to represent Hinduism. Many churches and religions were represented on this televised programme both on the stage and in the audience. Swami Swahananda gave a fine talk bringing out the Hindu ideals of universality.

Many seminars were organized during the 1980s, and held in the Hollywood temple. There was a seminar on Vedanta and the Depth Psychology of Carl Jung, as well as youth seminars, an Earth Day seminar, and seminars on education and science.

Swami Swahananda and several of the American monks have represented Vedanta on radio and television programmes. Swami Swahananda was interviewed on the televised programme "Odyssey" in 1980, a Peace Day programme in 1986 and on "Check-point" in 1989. There was a section on the Vedanta Society in "Faithways," a televised series covering different religions.

The Los Angeles newspapers have written various articles on the Vedanta Society and its participation in the Interreligious

Council. Every year there have been articles on the Ramakrishna Monastery at Trabuco, stressing the serenity of the monastery. In Santa Barbara there have been newspaper and magazine articles on the temple, bookstore and convent, usually remarking on the beauty and peaceful surroundings.

Into the 1990s

Presently at the Hollywood centre, three classes are being offered during the week, besides the Sunday lectures. On Tuesday evenings Swami Swahananda presides over a reading on Vedanta philosophy. On Thursday evenings an American monk gives two classes a month, alternating with two nuns who each give a class on the *Bhagavad Gita*. On Friday evenings there is a reading from Ramakrishna-Vivekananda literature, followed by an open discussion.

In 1991 the Santa Barbara centre held a retreat day which was appreciated by the devotees. The theme was "Spiritual Tools," and short talks were given by Swami Swahananda and three American monks. Religious films were shown in the afternoon.

The monks at the Trabuco monastery joined the Interreligious Council in Orange County several years ago, and one of the monks is now the secretary of the council. In May of 1992, a retreat day was held at

the Ramakrishna Monastery for the members of the council. The subject was "Spiritual Practice."

Swami Swahananda is currently preparing the English translation of the letters of Swami Premeshananda for publication. He met Swami Premeshananda when he was a young boy and was profoundly influenced by him. Swami treasures the inspiring letters he and other swamis have received from him, and has shared them with monastics and devotees, reading them aloud while translating from Bengali into English.

The story of the Vedanta Society of Southern California ends here in May of 1992, but the history will continue to unfold. The story of the future growth and development of the Lord's work in Southern California will be recorded by the generations who follow us.

Bibliography: The unpublished notes of Pravrajika Anandaprana. *Vedanta and the West* magazine, January-February 1950, p. 28; September-October 1951, p. 140-151. *Vedanta in Southern California*, Vedanta Press, revised edition 1960. *Hinduism Comes to America*, published by the Vedanta Society of Chicago, 1933. Unpublished letters of Swami Prabhavananda to Katharine Whitmarsh (Prasanna). Interviews with Pravrajikas Prabhaprana, Bhaktiprana, Sudhira and Prasanna. Initial research done by Pravrajika Bhavaprana.

THE BHAVA-LILAS OF SRI RAMAKRISHNA

(Continued from page 99)

of Peace? Where are the Moods of teacher and student, master and servant? Where is the Mood of friendship? Where is the Mood of parent and child or child and parent? And where is the Mood of the Sweetheart? All our simple concepts of what it is to be human will vanish as we approach the

Luminous Sea of the Blissful Mother. Who is there to know whom? Did the Blissful Mother Herself come to this Earth as the Master, Sri Ramakrishna — "but not in your Vedantic sense"? Did She call Her Own Name thrice, when She left his body to return to Herself?

Unpublished Letters

We are grateful to the Vedanta Society of Southern California and to the Vivekananda Vedanta Society of Chicago for making these letters available for publication from their archives.

—Editor

To the Dewan of Mysore, Madras

CHICAGO
14th Dec. '93

YOUR HIGHNESS,

The gentleman whom I have the pleasure of introducing to you was the chairman of the Parliament of Religions held in Chicago.

He is a holy and noble gentleman. We owe him a deep debt of gratitude ; and as he is going to make a tour through India, I hope your Highness will extend him the same hospitality as he has to us.

Yours with blessings,
VIVEKANANDA

To the Dewan of Limdi, Cathiawad, Bombay

CHICAGO
the 14th Dec. '93

DEAR SIR—

The gentleman I have the pleasure of introducing to you was the chairman of the Chicago Parliament of religions.

All India owes him a deep debt of gratitude. He is now on a tour through our country and I am sure you will help him in seeing your part of the country and oblige.

Yours with blessings,
VIVEKANANDA

To F. Leggett Esq.

54 W. 33
NEW YORK
the 4th May '95

DEAR FRIEND,

Many thanks for your kind present. The cigars are indeed delicious—and a hundred times so, as coming from you.

With everlasting love and regards,

Yours truly,
VIVEKANANDA

To Mr. Francis Leggett

63 St. George's Road
LONDON, S.W.
6th July 1896

DEAR FRANKINCENSE,*

Your kind letter and the £ 40 for the publication duly reached me—and a beautiful letter from Mother.

Mrs. Bull writes to me to make out a power of attorney for you in regards the books which I send herewith...

Yours ever in madness,
VIVEKANANDA

* Swami Vivekananda's nickname for Mr. Frank Leggett. The major portion of this letter has been previously published in the *Complete Works*, VI, p. 365.

To Francis Leggett Esq.

63 St. George's Road
LONDON, S.W.
6th July 1896

DEAR SIR,

Herewith I constitute you as my attorney and representative in regards to all publication pamphlets etc., written or dictated by me, their copyright, sale, etc., in the U.S. of America.

Yours affly,
VIVEKANANDA

To Mrs. Ole Bull

63 St. George's Road
LONDON, S.W.
6th July 1896

DEAR MRS. BULL—

I have sent to Mr. Leggett by last mail the power of attorney. And as you desired, this is to notify you of the fact and absolve you from the responsibilities of the power of attorney which I gave you in America last year.

Yours affly,
VIVEKANANDA

Saradananda and Goodwin have arrived, I am sure, by this time. I have a nice letter from Dr. Janes. I am going to Switzerland for a vacation in a few days. I mean to stay there a month or more. I will return to London in the next fall. I do not know when I [will] go back to India.

Things are growing nicely here.

With love to all,

Yours affly,
VIVEKANANDA

To Mrs. Ole Bull

63 St. George's Road
18th July '96

DEAR MRS. BULL,

I received your last note duly—and you already know my gratitude and love for you and that I perfectly agree with most of your ideas and work.

I did not understand, however, one point you speak of—Sturdy & myself being members. Members of what? I, as you well know, can not become a member of any society.

I am very glad to learn that you have been personally impressed by Saradananda. There is one big mistake you are labouring under. What do you mean of writing to my workers more confidentially & not to you? I seldom write to anyone—I have no time to write. I have no workers. Every one is independent to work as one likes. I don't bother my head about these little things at all. I can give ideas—that is all; let people work them out any way they like, and God-speed to all.

“He who works unattached to persons & giving up the fruits of work is a genuine worker.” Gita.

Yours Ever with love & gratitude,
VIVEKANANDA

To Mrs. Ole Bull

ALMORA
20 June '97

DEAR MRS. BULL,

Herewith I take the liberty of introducing Miss Tremayne of London.

I like nothing so much as being serviceable to young & energetic persons—and

any help given to her in America will greatly oblige.

Yours in the Lord,
VIVEKANANDA

To Mrs. Francis Leggett

ALMORA
20 June '97

DEAR MOTHER—

Herewith I take the liberty to introduce to you Miss Tremayne of London, a particular friend of mine going over to the States.

Any help given to her would greatly oblige.

Yours in the Lord,
VIVEKANANDA

To Josephine MacLeod

DARJEELING
19th April '98

MY DEAR MISS MACLEOD,

Miss Muller is very glad to learn that you intend inviting Miss Noble to join our party to Kashmir.

It has her hearty approval. On her way back Miss Muller will start something for her in Calcutta. She need not come to Darjeeling at all.

Hope you are enjoying the bathing quite a bit. I start this week most probably.

Ever yours in the Lord,
VIVEKANANDA

To Miss Isabelle McKindley

31st August '99

MY DEAR ISABEL—

Many thanks for your kind note. I will be so glad to see you. Miss MacLeod is

going to invite you to stop a day and a night here on your way to the West.

My love to the holy family in Chicago and hope soon to be able to come West & have great fun.

So you are in Greenacre at last. Is this the first year you have been in? How do you like the place? If you see Miss Farmer, of course, kindly convey her my kindest regards & to all the rest of my friends there.

Ever yours affly,
VIVEKANANDA

To Mrs. Ole Bull

1719 Turk Street
SAN FRANCISCO
7th April 1900

MY DEAR DHIRA MATA,*

Possibly this will reach you before you start. Bon voyage. I had a note from Mrs. Leggett. She thinks it would be better for me to go to Paris as soon as possible and learn French. I think so too. But Mother knows. Today's letter from the Math tells me that the raja of Khetri has stopped the stipend. Well, Mother's will. The raja has been very good for years—all blessings on him & his. I am calm and quiet more than ever. I am on my own feet working hard and with pleasure. To work I have the right. Mother knows the rest.

So you see, I will have to stay here more than I want and work. Don't disturb yourself a bit. I will work all my problems out. I am on my feet. I begin to see the light. My success would have led me astray, and I would have lost the reality that I am a sannyasin, that is why Mother is giving me this experience. My boat is nearing the calm harbour from which it is never more to be driven out. Glory, glory unto the Mother.

I have no wish, no ambition now. Bless Mother. I am the Servant of Ramakrishna, I am a machine—I don't know anything else, I don't want to know. Glory, glory unto Sri Guru.

May All love & blessings be yours—

Forever,

Your Son,

VIVEKANANDA

P.S. My health is daily better. Hard work, good sleep, fine health, calm mind and all are mine now.

Glory unto Mother
V.

* Restored Letter, Portions of this letter have been previously published in the *Complete Works*, VIII, p. 513, and addressed "To an American Friend". The entire letter has been reproduced here.

To Miss Josephine MacLeod

Gopal Lal Villa
BENARAS CANT.
14 Feb. 1902.

DEAR JOE—

I received a note yesterday from Mr. Okakura. They have seen Agra on their way to Gwalior. They must be there now.

The wire he sent to Japan was to Mr. Oda to come immediately. There was a work. "Six" in it also.

It is quite cool here even now—and will remain so for this month at least. Is it getting warm in Calcutta?

I hope Mrs. Bull & Nivedita are getting well rested after that tremendous journey.

I am so so.

The boys all send love.

Ever Yours with love & blessings,
VIVEKANANDA

The dwelling place of the infatuated soul, this body, incapable of discriminating between permanence and evanescence, serves only to throw men into the pit of ignorance. The slightest provocation will suffice to fill it with joy or suffuse it with tears. Hence, nothing can be found so contemptible, lamentable and so utterly devoid of good points as the body.

—Sri Rama

Invocation in Lament to Lord Siva

PANDIT SHIVA KAUL

A devotee pours out his heart to his Chosen Ideal (Iṣṭa), Lord Siva. The learned translator, Sri Jankinath Kaul of Jammu, is a longtime contributor of articles to this Journal.

Introduction

This wonderful invocation to Lord Siva contains pathos in lament, humility in harsh exterior, and devotion in dignity, all bespeaking the rare qualities of an earnest devotee whose sincerity wells up in such insolent utterances as are transcribed in the hymn itself. The devotee himself calms down the situation in the ending verse with a still more pathetic utterance—“O Lord! Thou alone canst tolerate these harsh words as does a father those of his arrogant son.” Actually these are the pithy utterances of a devotee who feels that he has failed to please his Lord with long prayers of ritualistic nature. Now he makes complete surrender in which he forgets himself in the intensity of deep devotion. He weeps and cries, perhaps in the hope of immediate union with his beloved Lord of Peace and Bliss. That lends charm to this short hymn of only sixteen Sanskrit verses.

One day, in my boyhood, I found a few folded scraps of paper in my grandmother's room. These were rat-eaten at two folds. On unfolding the paper I saw Sanskrit lines written in black ink with a persian pen. I could not understand Sanskrit then. However, I preserved the papers. After many years the scraps came to my hand again. Had I not seen to preserve them early they would have been forever lost. I could understand Sanskrit now. So I got interested in reading the verses and finding their meaning. Attempt seemed to have been made in composing verses on the few white

scraps; then faired out on a folder of Badami paper. I read the colophone: “*Iti Śivakaula kṛta Śivastutiḥ*—Thus ends the hymn to Śiva composed by Shiva Kaul.” My curiosity to understand the verses, composed by my grandfather, increased.

Since the paper was rat-eaten, some words were missing which created difficulty in reading two verses. However, I tried to fill the missing places with appropriate words according to the context, and translated the verses into Hindi. Then, one Sunday, I sought an opportunity to read out the hymn to my Master in our usual *Satsaṅga* (meeting with saintly persons) at Ishber (Nishat in Kashmir). “Extraordinary hymn!” exclaimed the Master. “Who has made this prayer in such a pathos to Lord Śiva?” On my giving him all the details I knew, he expressed joy. This led me to include the hymn later in the second enlarged edition of ‘*Mukundamala Evam Anya Stotra*’ in Hindi, published under the auspices of Sri Ramakrishna Ashrama, Srinagar (Kashmir). This was edited and annotated by me along with other inspiring hymns in the year 1977. I take this opportunity of presenting them here translated into English just to share the agony and ecstasy of a pure soul pining for union with the Lord.

Pandit Shiva Kaul

Growing up in a noble but poor Kashmiri Pandit family, young Shiva had only the

preliminary introduction to Persian texts like *Karima*, *Gulistan*, and *Bostan* then taught by virtuous men to those boys who were inclined to get some knowledge. Side by side with these Shiva must have got through the beginner's course of the three R's at home. In his early age his father, a private *munshi* (accountant) of a merchant, himself managed the employment of the boy in a similar type of work with another wholesale dealer registered in dealing certain items of drapery and groceries. Later Shiva's younger brother also was persuaded to take a similar employment. The family improved economically with this arrangement. Later Shiva Kaul, his two brothers and one sister were married at intervals and the family got established with good traditions.

As time passed Shiva Kaul developed a friend-circle of noble persons in the city of Srinagar. Every night they assembled at *Satsaṅga* after each one was free from his respective job. Some close friends appreciated the intellect of Shiva Kaul and they benefited from his wisdom. Pandit Anand Hakim, Pandit Gwasha Lal Kaul (Residency), Pandit Dina Nath (Remington) were the few.

Himself the stalwart man of full grown body, Shiva Kaul took to yoga practices under close instructions of a spiritual teacher whom he had accepted as his preceptor. Swami Tej Nath of *Patañjali* Ashrama, Bhimgoda, Hardwar, had come to Srinagar at the request of his admirer (or disciple), Sir Pratap Singh, the then ruler of Jammu & Kashmir, Tibet, etc. The Swami is reported to have chosen to live in the premises of a common temple at Bohrikadal, where his disciples, mostly Kashmiri Pandits, served him and got spiritual benefit. From his book, '*Ātmokṣaṇapramāṇārka*', published under the patronage of the Maharaja

(Sir Pratap Singh), it appeared that the Swami had been well-versed in *Pātañjali Yoga* and *Vāsiṣṭha Yoga*. Out of a number of disciples he had recommended Shiva Kaul to undertake the study of the Vedānta texts from a learned and well-versed Pandit, named Sona Kak Razdan. Shiva Kaul carved out time in his busy schedule of work to serve the purpose. Finishing his yoga practices and daily ablution in the early morning, he took his lunch at 8:30 a.m. and reported for his duty punctually. He availed of his usual lunch hour for the study of spiritual books with the Pandit. With his sharp intellect he had full grasp of the texts in a short time. Even after the departure of the Swami to Hardwar, he studied the *Upaniṣads*, the *Yoga Vāsiṣṭha* and similar important texts like *Vedānta-Siddhānta-Muktāvalī*, and *Ātmapurāṇa*. Since books were scarce in Kashmir during those days, Shiva Kaul had to scribe some of them for himself.

With an increase in the members of the family, their needs also multiplied. They had also become well-off and built a new house. Enjoying the merits of a joint family they lived in good cheer for some time. The religious-minded elder members of the Kaul family performed occasional *yajñas*, followed religious observances, gave in charity and participated in socio-religious functions with zeal and joy. In restraint and discipline, cordial and even homely associations were maintained with Muslim brothers. There was no noticeable indication of difference between the two communities in their social and living conditions. Each party adhered to its religious tenets which elicited due respect for each others' faith. Some religious places are still common to both the communities in Srinagar. Practice of moral values was given preference by old and young alike. They practically attended each others'

social observances, of course, with strict adherence to their respective faiths.

However, Shiva Kaul continued with his spiritual practices and *prāṇāyāma* exercises, come what may. In his separate house he had better chances to attend to his noble pursuits. Finally, in preparation of taking up Sannyāsa, he performed *yajña*, in which he distributed freely his treasure of books among the Pandits who had conducted the function.

Pandit Shiva Kaul, designated by his friends as '*Vedānta Math*—a veritable Repository of the Vedānta Doctrine'—had now planned to take up Sannyāsa and go near his Guru for further guidance in *prāṇāyāma*, towards getting established in the attainment of final Beatitude of Peace and Bliss. But people at home especially his mother, dissuaded him. This was a sad obstacle that he had to face. However, he did not lose courage. He continued with his household life and also followed his yoga practice till his death.

THE ĀKRANDAMĀNAGIRAYĀ ŚIVA STUTHI

By Pandit Shiva Kaul

1. *Re citta bhīta capala
vipulām vihāya
cintām samāśraya
padadvayamārtabandhoḥ
ākraṇḍamānagirayā
parayā ca bhaktyā
janmādidukhaśamanam-
abhiprārthayasva.*

O fear-stricken and restless mind! Leave off this sorrow; seek refuge in the Feet of the Friend of the Distressed. Pray with intense devotion to the Lord; request Him to put an end to this agony caused by the circle of births.

2. *Kim tvam mudhā kathaya
saṃsaraṇākhyā ghorān-*

*gāreṣu kātaratayā-
bhipacan sthito'si;
dainyaṃ vihāya bhava duḥkha-
vimuktaye tvam
ārādhanaṃ kuru śivasya
tathā'tra vakṣye.*

Tell me why you are sitting vainly roasting yourself on the terrific live coal spread over this revolving path of worldly enjoyments! Leave off this sorrow and entertain Śiva for granting release from this distress of limited existence. How you will do so, just listen to me.

3. *Hā kim na paśyasi
dṛdhairapi pāśajālai-
rmām hantumicchasi
paśumiṃvā kāla vyādhah
kālantakāraka! maheśvara!
kvāsi kvāsi
bhītam na pālayasi kim
jagatām nivāsin.*

(The method of invocation taught to the mind) O Lord of Death! Alas, Thou dost not see even how death, like a hunter wants to kill me by enmeshing into its strong trap. O Great Lord! Where art Thou hiding Thyself? O Lord of the universe! Why don't you protect me, fear-stricken as I am?

4. *Āḥ kim na uddharasi
nātha nimajjamānaṃ
mohārnave'ti gahane
bhavabhāraḥkṣinaṃ;
mā paśya matkukṛti-
mapyatigarhitam ca
vīkṣasva svām mahā-
danugrahaśaktiveva.*

Declining with the load of worldliness, I am being drowned in this unfathomable ocean of ignorance. O my Lord! Why don't you pull me up? Do not consider (in this hour of utter need) even my abusive evil deeds. Only be conscious of your great power of Grace.

5. *Kaṣṭam karāladaśano
hyapi kālavyālo
daṣṭum mahattarajavena
pradhāvati mām;
naṣṭum kimasya tava
śaktirapohitaiva
yenāturam hi uragāya
hyupekṣase mām.*

How painful! The snake of Death moves in its full vigour to bite me with its fierce teeth. Have you lost your power to destroy it, that you neglect me, the afflicted one, to keep your snake safe?

6. *Dagdhum kukarmapavanena
ca dīpyamānāḥ
kālānalo'yamabhito
hyacirāt prayāti;
bhasmīkarotyahaha mām
jhaṭiti pinākin!
śāntim nayasva
sukṛpāmṛtavaraṣanena.*

The fire of death, fanned with the wind of my evil deeds quickly spreads bright, to burn me, O Wielder of *Pināka*!* Soon, before the fire burns me to ashes, extinguish it, by showering the nectar of your unlimited compassion.

7. *Rugnaḥ luṭhāmyavani
bhagnakaṭīva sarpah
kandarpadarpahara! me
harasi na duḥkham
ko vā parah tvadaparah
varaṇārha brūhi
yam tvām vihāya kṛpaṇaḥ
śaraṇam gamiṣye.*

O Remover of the insolence of Cupid! Shattered with disease, I am wallowing on earth like a serpent with broken back. If you do not remove my grief, tell me who else is there worthy of soliciting, whose refuge I may seek after leaving your support! (None, indeed!)

* Śiva's bow.

8. *Āto'smyaḥ hi
vilapāmi tvadaṅghrilagnaḥ
tvam tu suvismṛtipradau-
ṣadhipāna magnaḥ;
etat caritramubhayo-
ravalokamānaḥ
tvam śīghratośita! katham
jagati stuvanti.*

Afflicted am I and wailing, I stick to Thy Feet, on one hand; On the other, Thou art drunk deep with the herbal juice of forgetfulness. Beholding these contradictory characters of ours, how do people praise you, O Śiva, Who (they say) art easily pleased!

9. *Śaknosi tvam yadi na
saṁsṛti duḥkhametat
hartum samarthayasi
nārthinamuttaraṅca;
nārhāmi cet tava kṛpā-
lavaleśamīśa
śīghram bahiṣkuru tathāpi
prapañcakośāt.*

When you can neither dissolve all my pains of worldliness nor answer my earnest seeking, which shows that I am not fit, even for a small bit of your compassion, then why not remove me, at once, from this covering of diversity.

10. *Yāce na vaiśravaṇa-
kośasamādhikāram
no vā'marendrasamatām
na divi vihāram.
bhogecchayā'pi bhagavan!
na ca sārvaḥaumanam
yaccintayā tava manah
nanu khedamāyāt.*

O Lord! I do not ask for the wealth of Kubera, nor desire to be equal with Indra, king of gods. Furthermore, I do not want to live in heaven, nor have desire to sate myself with enjoyments that may cause distress to Thee.

11. *Dīno'smi karmagatinā
saraṇau nikṣiptaḥ
janmajarāmarāṇavyādhi-
śataiśca taptah ;
tvāmarthayāmi girijāvara!
etadeva
māmuddharāśu kṛpayā
nanu ko'atra khedaḥ.*

Distressed am I, thrown on this path (of *samsāra*), with the effects of my own previous actions ; afflicted also with numerous diseases, birth, old age and fear of death. O Lord of *Girija*! I request you only to lift me up quickly. To what harm does that bring you, if you do ?

12. *Tvaṃ cenna uddharasi mām
harasi na tāpaṃ
papasya svasya phalameva
tu tadvijāne ;
kiñca janāstavaguṇānusmṛiṇe
vaderan
naivārtatrānakūśalo
jātilo kapālī.*

If you do not lift me up and deliver me from pain, I am convinced that it is the fruit of my own sins. But, just mind, while remembering your good qualities, people may remark that 'the God with matted locks, carrying a skull in hand, (i.e. Lord Siva), is not proficient in protecting the distressed'.

13. *Yacca tvayā tripura-
dānavadvāṃsakāle
yaccāntakāntakarāṇe
dahane smarasya ;
divyaṃ balamatulamīśa!
pradarśitam tat
dīnasya trāṇakaraṇāvasare
kva yātam ?*

O Lord! The power that you displayed, destroying the demon *Tripurāsura* (to free the gods from distress caused by him), and when Cupid was burnt to ashes (when he

disturbed you during meditation)—Where has that gone at this time when I am in distress and need your protection ?

14. *Tvaṃ nirbalosyapyathvā
balavattaro'si,
karttuṃ kṛpāṃ tvamakṣamo-
syathavā kṣamo'si ;
svāmin! mamāsi
bhavadanghriyugaṃ kathañcit
prāpto'smi nātha! śaraṇaṃ
na tu tvaṃ vimuñce.*

You may possess no power or be full of it ; You may be tender or may not at all be so ; But O Lord! Thou art mine. I have somehow found refuge at Thy feet, O Great Lord! I shall not again loosen my hold on them.

15. *Svāmin! vinā'pi vinayena
yadi tvadagre,
tikṣṇaiḥ padaiḥ prakāṣayāmi
ca svābhisandhim ;
lajjohitatvamapi tat
bhagavan! kṣamo'si
soḍhum bhavān piturivār-
bhakadurvacāmsi.*

O Lord! If I am expressing the implied sense to you in these harsh words, shamelessly, bereft of humility, O God, Thou alone art capable of tolerating this, like a father who tolerates the abuses of his (worthless) son.

16. *Ākrandamānastutiriyam
śivasannidhāne
bhaktyā tu dīnamanasā
pathati pumān yaḥ ;
tasya nagendratānujā-
patirāśutoṣaḥ
durvāra duḥkhaśamanam
dayayā karoti.*

He who recites this invocation in lament to Siva with devotion and humbled mind, the easily pleasurable spouse of the daughter of Himalaya will out of compassion deliver him from the irresistible pains of the world.

Divine Dance

V. GOPINATH

Flute in hand and a smile on lips,
A peacock feather in the matted locks,
A benign glance in the beaming eyes,
Lord Krishna stands poised to dance.
His beautiful form bent three-fold
Is a sight to see when in sweat ;
Pearl drops form on the skin delicate
As if to proclaim HIS DIVINE SELF.
Hark! Listen to the music coming from flute!
All birds and beasts, all trees and PLANTS
All are rapt in Divine Melody:
It sends away 'BLUES' from the minds of all
A gentle wind blows sending scent around,
The chirping birds sing in tune and glee,
The peacocks strut in a fervent frenzy,
Lo! The Lord has begun His rhythmic dance.
Flowers come down from mighty heavens,
Holy sages stand in line to see,
The wind stands still expectantly,
Lord Siva is rapt in divine frenzy.
 Loosed are His locks of hair,
 Krishna's face is full of sweat,
 The yellow garb is dropping down,
 Gone is His brow's reddish mark.
Oh! The boy of Vrindavan is getting tired
By the strain of Dance covering the frame:
Lo! He gasps and sends a mournful glance
As if to say, "Please come to my help."
Behold Mādhava dancing and dancing
Causing delight to one and all:
Vrindavan is the earth's 'VAIKUNTHA',
Look! All earth is turned into 'MILKY OCEAN'!

REVIEWS & NOTICES

TIME AND ETERNAL CHANGE, by J. McKim Malville. Published by Indira Gandhi National Centre for the Arts, New Delhi; Sterling Publishers Pvt. Ltd. L-10 Green Park Extension, New Delhi 110-016; 1990, Rs. 150/-.

Dr. Malville, Professor of Astrophysics at the University of Colorado, internationally recognised for his work in the field of solar astronomy, archaeo-astronomy and geophysics, takes up the theme of comprehension of the fermenting universe in its process of eternal change. He presents the picture of the restless universe right from the beginning from the point of view of modern physics and astronomy and takes his standpoint from the perspective of the ancient mythologies.

The book has twelve chapters, every one revealing the phenomenon and process of change. The author discusses about relativity, incompatibility between physics of Newton and Einstein, expansion of the universe, black-holes, supernovae, cosmology, history of time, the nature of matter, consciousness, human evolution, and so on. He explains tough principles of physics in a very simple, clear manner, creates a particular picture and juxtaposes it with the ancient metaphor to demonstrate how many ancient intuitions about the nature of time have found expression in modern physics and astronomy.

The author's intention of throwing up a bridge of communication between science and ancient wisdom is interesting and illuminating. His book is a praiseworthy publication. Printing and get-up are excellent.

Dr. Chetana Mandavia
Rajkot

WHAT ARE PEOPLE FOR ? Essays by Wendell Berry. London: Rider Books, 1991. 210 pages; £ 9.99.

In today's highly industrialised economies (America being the prime example here),

man's role as a socially relevant and responsible being is being progressively minimised. When machines take over, what are people for? Wendell Berry in these essays makes a passionate claim for the restructuring of such soulless society on more humane lines. In a style that is forthright and cutting, Berry chastises those who would seek to systematically destroy the values of justice, mercy, honesty and compassion through the 'Present structures' of their intellectual life. *What Are People For*, written by a prominent social and cultural critic, is presented in three parts.

Part I entitled 'Damage and Healing' consists of a series of pithy statements that stress the damage done to the communal and ecological environment due to indiscriminate mechanization. Without commitment to one's culture, and a knowledge of its needs, "...a man with a machine and inadequate culture...is a pestilence." (page 8). Berry, a keen environmentalist, was appalled at man's alarming capacity to ravage for 'profit' the very nature which sustained him. A misdirected economic policy, motivated as it was by intellectual arrogance, greed and callousness towards that which did not 'profitably' aid its ventures was the base/bane of today's 'developed' nations.

In Part II the essays are concerned with the importance of *character* in the development of a humane society. Basic human values such as commitment to one's community and culture, honesty in one's business transactions, and love for one's land have become redundant. True education, or the desire to learn with all humility, is almost extinct. As Berry so rightly observes, "The teachers are everywhere. What is wanted is a learner." (page 13). Character is not the bye-product of a University education. Berry's ironic comment is "what a trial it ought to be for us, whose public falsehoods, betrayals of trust, aggressions, injustices, and imminent catastrophes are now almost exclusively the work of the college bred." (page 26).

In the remarkable essay on '*Writer and Region*', Berry analyses Mark Twain's '*Huckleberry Finn*' in terms of the peculiar malaise—that of deliberate uninvolvedness—which has gripped the consciousness of the modern man. One wishes to be free, to have power, and yet one is unwilling to take on any kind of responsibility. Some of the 'Territories' into which one retreats are the 'Territories' of 'self-righteousness', of 'historical self-righteousness', of 'despair', and of 'abstraction—a regionalism of the mind'. These isolating tendencies serve only to disintegrate a community which should be based on... "common experience and common effort on a common ground to which one willingly belongs." (page 85).

Part III deals with the protection of the environment, and the devastating effects of the American industrial policy. Berry's contention throughout is that the goal of every human endeavour should be the establishment of ... "a harmony between the human economy and nature that will preserve both nature and humanity." (page 107). The destruction of nature in the past had been the result of ignorance or weakness. But ... "It is our present principle i.e. deliberate and elaborately rationalized rape and plunder of the natural world that is a new thing under the sun." (page 108). America's industrial policy has resulted in an economy that ... "is wasteful from top to bottom—a symbiosis of an unlimited greed at the top and a lazy, passive and self-indulgent consumptiveness at the bottom." (page 127).

The essence of Berry's book (and solution to the problem) is that one will have to return to nature to discover and utilize those qualities that are so essential to the development of a well-integrated society. The requirements are the decentralization of the economy, the revival of the rural towns and small farms, the protection of the forests, and the involvement of every member in the basic activities of the community. What are people for? They are there to restore trust, hope, and commitment to one's people and one's land. A nation that is founded on a respect for human values, and nature-based values, can look forward to a harmonious development of its people, nature, and ecology.

The remedies expounded in Berry's book have a universal appeal. They serve as a timely warning to the intellectually obtuse who continue to run after the mirage of mere industrial development.

Dr. Rama Nair
Secunderabad.

VISHWAMATA KRISHNABAI (SOME GLIMPSES), by Swami Satchidananda. Published by Anandashram, Via Kanhangad, 671-531 Kerala. Pp. 135 ; Rs. 12/-.

This book presents a few facets of the life of late Krishna Bai Mataji, the foremost disciple of the Swami Ramdas, of Anandashram in Kerala. Her life was a living demonstration of how true gurubhakti could lead to a high state of spiritual experience. She saw the whole universe as the manifestation of her guru and of her own Self, and loved all beings with no distinction.

She laid stress on the importance of chanting the Name, and taught that service to fellow beings is service to God. She maintained that mental renunciation was more important than taking the formal vows of sannyasa and that the aim of human life is God-realisation. Her frequent reference to the teachings of Sri Ramakrishna shows the esteem in which she held him.

The author of the book had the privilege to serve and be closely associated with Swami Ramdas as well as the Mataji. The book carries a Foreword by the revered Swami Chidanandaji of Rishikesh.

Dr. Kamala Jaya Rao
Hyderabad

THE PRAYER OF THE FROG, Vol. 1 & 2 ; and **ONE MINUTE WISDOM**, by Anthony de Mellow. Published by Gujarat Sahitya Prakash Anand, 388-001, Gujarat. Vol. 1, Pp. 276 ; Rs. 44/- ; Vol. 2, Pp. 256 ; Rs. 38/-. The third book: Pp. 232 ; Rs. 35/-.

The above three books by the late Anthony de Mellow are collections of interesting and illuminating stories garnered from different countries, cultures and reli-

gions. But the central theme that runs through them all is spiritual. Stories have irresistible appeal to all; they unfold the abstruse concepts in familiar images and sometimes have a humorous vein too. The charm of a story is that it never fails to achieve its goal. Great truths are made easily comprehensible when expressed through a simple figure or similitude. Tales and parables therefore have occupied an important place in the religious instructions of sages and seers down the ages. They are not corroded by the ravages of time. Man is essentially the same everywhere in the world. Therefore they rise above cultural and religious barriers.

The above three books have seen several editions; it is an ample proof of their appeal and popularity. We heartily recommend these charming collections, which are reasonably priced and elegantly brought out.

S.M.

THE WORLD SPEAKS TO THE FAUSTIAN MAN by Som Raj Gupta. Delhi 7: Motilal Banarsidass; Pp. 455, Rs. 500/-.

It has always been the tradition in our country that revelatory writings or extensions from such originals are outside the scope of the logical mind. The intellect fails to fully grasp their import on its own. It needs to summon the aid of a higher power like intuition to understand the truth or truths embedded in these utterances. The right and recognised mode to approach the Sruti—and extensions of its formulations—is to silence the mind for awhile and let the message sink into the being. The author

of the present work on Acharya Shankara's writings feels deeply that the present-day scholarship has missed the core of the Acharya's exegesis in their approach to him as a pure philosopher. Shankara was first a *Veda-vit*, a knower of Brahman, and then a communicator of the high Knowledge in terms of the intellect to the rational mind. Dr. Gupta is at work on a ten-volume project in order to bring out the real contribution of the Acharya to the Indian heritage. He means to present in his English translation Shankara's commentaries on the *Prasthanatraya*: the *Upanishads*, the *Gita*, and the *Brahma Sutras*, with an elaborate explanatory commentary of his own on the texts.

Dr. Gupta is convinced that Western literature is closer in spirit to the Indian tradition than Western philosophy and has taken pains to quote widely from their poets, writers, psychologists, etc. to bring home the point in his explanations. The Texts covered in this first volume are the *Isha*, *Kena*, *Katha* and *Prashna Upanishads*. Each verse is given first in transliteration, followed by the author's concise translation; then follows his English translation of Shankara's Commentary. The overall effect of quotations from writers like Sartre, Blake, Wordsworth, Milton, Greek and German thinkers and poets, however, is one of overcrowding, with thought currents that have a totally different origin. Of course, the writer draws upon some of the Indian systems too, *Darshanas*, and is informative. His translations are helpful for understanding many of the terse passages in the texts.

M. P. Pandit
Pondicherry.