

MA ANANDAMAYEE AMRIT VARTA

A quarterly journal dealing mainly
with the divine life and sayings of
Shree Anandamayee Ma

VOL.-17

APRIL, 2013

No. 2

BOARD OF EDITORS

Dr. Krishna Banerjee

Dr. Debaprasad Mukhopadhyay

Br. Dr. Gunceta

Km. Archana Ghosh

*

Managing Editor

Br. Dr. Geeta Banerjee (In-charge)

*

ANNUAL SUBSCRIPTION (POSTAGE FREE)

INLAND-RS.100/-

FOREIGN-US \$ 15/- OR RS. 750/-

SINGLE COPY-RS. 30/-

CONTENTS

1.	Matri Vani	...	...	1
2.	Ma Anandamayec Prasang <i>—Prof. A.K. Dutta Gupta</i>	...	...	3
3.	Mother and Her Playful Role <i>—Bhaiji</i>	...	...	7
4.	From the Diary of Chitra Bandhu	...	...	9
5.	O Magician's Daughter	...	...	12
6.	Ma's Technique of Bestowing Divine Love and Grace on One and All	...	...	13
7.	Contemporary Saints : Swami Ramdas <i>—Vijayananda</i>	...	...	15
8.	The Universal Mother <i>—Shuddha Satta Chakravarty</i>	...	...	17
9.	Care for Your Puja Thakurs <i>—Ajay Sopory</i>	...	...	19
10.	An Extract from Manishi ki Lok Yatra <i>—M.M. Pt. Gopinath Kaviraj</i>	...	...	20
11.	Atirudra Mahayajna	...	...	22
12.	Raipur Ashram <i>—Br. Geeta</i>	...	...	24
13.	Pilgrimage to Kailas <i>—Gurupriya Devi</i>	...	...	27
14.	The Unique Mother <i>—Br. Niranjani</i>	...	...	31
15.	Great Sādhus And Bhaktas <i>—Late Sri Hari Ram Joshi</i>	...	...	34
16.	Ashram News	...	...	37
17.	Obituary	...	...	42



MATRI - VANI

God's Grace is streaming down at all times like torrential rain. If you keep your vessel turned upside down, the Grace will flow down the sides. Keep your vessel straight up and open; it will be filled.

*

*

*

In the morning, as soon as you wake up, pray : "Lord, accept as Thy service every thing that I shall do today. At night again, before falling asleep pray : "In self surrender I bow to Thee placing my head at Thy holy Feet." Try to spend the whole day in this spirit.

*

*

*

Keeping the body as bare as is practicable, gaze to your heart's content at the mountains or on the wide ocean and your shackles will be broken, and you will find yourself becoming free.

It is the good and beautiful which are true and living, whereas the bad and ugly are only the shadow of what really is. Nobody ever wishes to be bad. When you seek the company of others, remember you are out to find the good and beautiful.

*

*

*

To laugh superficially is not enough : your whole being must be united in laughter, both outwardly and inwardly.

*

*

*

Each of the five fingers of the hand has its own peculiarity; each part of the body has its own functions, high or low; the teeth may at times well bite the tongue, but since the whole of it is your own body, you accept all its ways and take great pains to look after every part of it. In the same manner, try to regard as your own every person you contact. By making this habit you will in due course come to feel that everyone in the universe is part of you. To abolish the distinction between 'I' and 'you' is the sole purpose of all spiritual endeavour.

*

*

*

Real worship is of the heart. Outer rites and ceremonies are only a small part of it. As a mother fondles her ailing baby in her lap, so have we in the initial stage of *sadhana* to hug the Divine close to our breast as we would do with a sick infant.

* * *

Man is the image of God, To be born in a human body is the highest type of birth, nowhere in the world can be found such a wealth of hidden treasures as in the domain of the human precious jewels.

* * *

In the whole universe, in all states of being, in all forms is He. All Names are His names, all shapes His shapes; all qualities and all modes of existence are truly His.

* * *

Question : God has given us the sense of "I", He will remove it again. What need is there for self surrender ?

Answer : Why do you ask ? Just keep still and do nothing.

Question : How can one possibly keep still ?

Answer : This is why self surrender is necessary.

* * *

Man's duty - especially for those who have made the Supreme Quest their one and only aim - is to work joyfully for the uplift of the world, with the conviction that all service is His service. Work done in such a spirit helps to purify the mind and the heart.

*

SHREE SHREE MA ANANDAMAYEE PRASANG

Vol. 5

—Late Amulya Kumar Dutta Gupta

Translation - Sanjay Ghosh

(Continued)

At this moment a lady said - "Ma, my husband has got a Narayana statue made and he does its *puja*. Now if we keep this statue and would like to do *puja* of it then can we ourselves do the *puja* or would we have to keep a brahmin to do its *puja*?"

Ma "Ask a pandit about this."

The lady - "No Ma, we want your orders."

Ma said "I asked you to consult a pandit. (laughing) Only a command would not suffice; it has got to conform to the desire of the person to whom the command is being made." (laughter)

Krish Babu, "Ma, should one pray to God for wealth, fame, promotion etc. or is it wrong to do so?" Ma replied, "I say if you desire to get anything ask it from God. You present yourself before God with all your belongings. God is gracious, 'Kalpataru' (a tree fulfilling wishes and desires at the very thought). People get from Him whatever they want and pray for. A story runs as follows, which of course you know it.

"A traveller while strolling casually took refuge under a *kalpataru* — (a wish-tree). He was ignorant of the fact that it was a *kalpataru*. He was very tired while walking and hence thought, 'Oh, if I could get some cool breeze right now, that would save my life.' At the very thought a cool breeze started blowing. He was relieved of his tiredness. He now craved for a bath and a meal. Immediately as desired, water was provided for his bath and meal was ready. He failed to understand how he was procuring all the desired things at the very thought of them. After the bath and meal he wished for a suitable bed to rest on and he was provided with a suitable bed. He lay on the bed cheerfully. On lying down he appreciated the bed and thought how fine it would be if a maid would massage his hands and feet. Immediately a maid arrived and started to massage his tired hands and feet. The traveller appreciated the entire course of event and was very excited that all his desires were translated into

reality. However, he feared that it would be a great disaster if a dacoit came, beat him up and took away all the merriments and objects of enjoyment violently. Immediately, at the very thought a dacoit arrived from nowhere and after mercilessly assaulting the traveller took away all the belongings obtained as a product of his wishes. That is the reason why if you desire for something pray to God for His own sake. Because if you realize God you will get everything.

“Suppose you desire for a son and pray to God for the same and subsequently realize God, then you will begin to feel that everybody’s son is your own son. Hence there will be no difference between your own son and the sons of others. The same thing happens with regard to wealth, fame and promotion; because all these are present in God Himself. Everything is obtained only by winning over God. If you desire objects of enjoyment you will get the same. But an object of enjoyment is poison (*zakar*) and pain is accompanied by it. This is also God’s grace as He makes people turn towards Himself by this shock of sorrow. Otherwise man would never pay attention to God. And if God is associated with sorrow and want then it never leads to unhappiness. If you are prepared to accept God in all forms, if you are able to think, ‘O God, the suffering which I am undergoing is also a gift of Yours; in both the forms of affluence and want, it is You alone who come to me’, then you will realize that nothing in this mortal world can produce dissatisfaction for you. By realizing God, you will attain to supreme Peace and supreme Joy.

“It is only the craving for sense-objects that binds a creature. Being bound is the same as being rotten. Microbes take birth in stagnant water. That is why stagnant water is unpotable. But the same water when filtered becomes fit for drinking. All the toxicity of stagnant water is then removed. No doubt stagnant water is also basically water itself and once purified it acquires all the good properties of drinking water. The nexus between *jivatma* and *Paramatma* is similar in nature. *Paramatma* when confined becomes *jivatma*. Once the outer shell is removed there lies no difference between *jivatma* and *Paramatma*.

One devotee asked, “Can nonvegetarian items be offered to God?” Ma laughed and said, “All may be offered to God. There was one person whose name I would not like to state. He had a habit of consuming chicken. He was such an avid lover of chicken that he could not dispense with it nor could offer it to this body before partaking of his daily meals. On visit to his house one day I saw that he was sitting with his eyes closed with a half boiled egg on the dining table. Later he developed such a disease that the doctor debarred him from taking any egg or chicken.

"Although I said that every thing can be offered to God yet you should only offer pure things to God. Don't People talk about *sāttvik* meal ? Only those food items ought to be consumed which do not excite one's mind. If you want to promote religious feelings then you must opt for *sāttvik* meals.

With these words Shree Shree Ma left Panchavati. It was time for the journey. Soon after Shree Shree Ma sat on the bus scheduled for the journey. The buses took start and we came back.

Arrangements were made for two buses which would go upto Narayanganj (now in Bagladesh). Who knew that this was the last time that Shree Shree Ma had set foot in Dhaka?

CHAPTER - II

Arrival at Kashidham near Shree Shree Ma 23 April, 1960

Since 22nd April 1946, I never had *darshan* of Shree Shree Ma for a long time. In the meantime there has been a sea-change in the fate line of India. The seed of communal hatred against the Hindus, already implanted among the Muslim community by the British, has by now assumed an alarming proportion under Jinnah's leadership as a gigantic tree spreading its branches and foliage in the sky over India. As a result, human beings have fallen far below the level of animals. Homicide, arson, rape, abduction of women and loot of the property of the Hindus have become a daily affair and such incidents are not confined to any particular geographic area but have engulfed the entire country. The occurrence of violence at Kolkata, Noakhali and Bihar indicate that perhaps India would lose all her cultural heritage and her characteristics like the doctrine of universal brotherhood and tolerance as a result of this communal feud. The shrewd British rulers realizing that they will no longer be able to keep India under their subjugation decided to partition India into two nations in order to prevent India from becoming a strong cognizable opponent force to the British in Asia.

Mahatma Gandhi along with other top leaders accepted the partition of India as inevitable in order to stop further bloodshed. However, despite the decision of the leaders to accede to partition the bloodshed neither stopped nor remained suspended for a while but on the contrary assumed an alarming proportion at many places in India especially in Punjab. State sponsored persecution of the Hindus continued unabated. Pakistan became an epicentre of carnage of the members of the Hindu

community and realizing that there is no hope of safety of life and property lakhs and lakhs of people started migrating towards the Indian Union abandoning their several generations old native and ancestral home and homestead land. Many millionaires overnight turned paupers and many happy families were ruined. The effect is observed even till date, we cannot ascertain and assess any limit to this unending poverty and suffering of human beings affected by partition.

(to be continued)

*

Man is born in order to experience the happiness and sorrow of this world. Those who have the good sense of wanting to go beyond happiness and pain must take their sole refuge in Him.

—Shree Shree Ma.

MOTHER AND HER PLAYFUL ROLE

—Bhaiji

I have given above some instances of Mother's extraordinarily meagre diet. A few examples may also be cited showing how at times She took abnormally large quantities of food.

After She had for about eight or nine months eaten daily one *chattack* (two ounces) of rice mixed with *dal*, boiled in a small bowl over sacrificial fire, it was settled one day that She should have a normal quantity of food. But everybody pressed Her to eat more and She asked them to bring all the food prepared, sufficient for eight or nine persons. She ate it all up. On another occasion She smilingly took sixty to seventy *puris* and a corresponding quantity of *dal* and vegetables, followed by a large bowl of rice boiled in thick milk. There was an instance when She ate up rice pudding prepared from half a maund of milk (about 20 Kg) and when the whole of it was exhausted She exclaimed, "I want to eat more, please give me more *kheer*!" According to folk-prejudice, a few drops of the sweet dish were sprinkled on the *sari* covering Her head, lest the influence of the evil eye of the people witnessing the event cause any illness to Mother. It was found later that the spots where the drops fell looked as if scorched by fire.

A few minutes after She took food in abnormally large quantities, there was an extraordinary expression on Her face. She used to say on such occasions :- "At the time of eating I did not know that I was swallowing so much food. It was from you that I first came to learn about it. At that time, whatever things you would offer, good or bad, even grass and leaves, would have been all eaten up." But there was no physical disorder to be noticed after such eating. Furthermore She would often perform many strange feats that came into Her head, but however abnormal, they did not result in any adverse consequences.

Just as offerings to God sanctified by mantras, flowers, sandal paste etc. and dedicated with earnestness fill the mind with a serene pleasure, so also presents to Mother, if offered with whole hearted devotion, bring immense satisfaction and joy to the devotee. We have seen that such common place and trifling things as fried rice or fried paddy and quite ordinary fruits were accepted by Her like a treasure. Ordinary vegetable curry without salt, *kheer* without sugar were eaten up by Her with great avidity, and out of the fullness of Her heart, She would even invite others present to partake of the pleasure of eating. On the other hand, in many cases, when very rare and valuable foodstuff procured with much difficulty was brought to Her lips, Her mouth closed up at the first touch.

Late Sri Tarak Bandhu Chakravarty, retired Dy. Inspector of Schools, who lived in Ganderia, Dhaka, came walking about five miles with some pure *sandesh*¹ prepared at his house from his own cow's milk. It was not yet dawn when he arrived. Mother was still in bed. Like an impatient child the old man called out, "Ma, Ma, I have brought you some sweets (*sandesh*), prepared with special care; won't you eat them?"

Mother sat up on Her bed and without having washed Her face, mouth or hands, She at once began to eat the sweets from the hands of the old man. She clapped Her hands with joy; tears of gratitude for Mother's childlike love and affection rolled down Tarak Babu's cheeks.

Another day *Babydi*² was coming to Mother with some sweets prepared by herself. When she was nearly half a mile away, Mother suddenly laughed loudly and said, — "Sweets are arriving for me." She sat up like a child eager to eat them. There were occasions, when on someone's arrival She would exclaim,—"Bring out what you have brought for me"; She expressed Her delight at the presents with many merry, playful jokes. On the other hand incidents are not rare when people had to wait for a long time with their offerings, but Mother would not even care to look at them.

At one time I was bed-ridden with a serious disease. Quite unexpectedly a desire flashed across my mind to send some *kheer*³ to Mother. When it was got ready I tasted a few drops of it to test if it had been prepared properly. My eldest sister⁴ was present and said, —"We cannot send this *kheer* to Mother, things tasted beforehand by men cannot be offered to a God." I replied, "Please send it" I came to learn afterwards that Mother ate all of it Herself.

On another occasion I said to my wife, "Please prepare some *sati food* for Mother." It was done reluctantly and sent to Mother. We came to learn afterwards that She did not touch a particle of it.

It has been frequently found that some people who with great devotion and love for Mother waited at a distance and silently offered all their best sentiments to Her felt Mother's blessings in the inmost depth of their souls. Whereas, there were others who brought heaps of offerings, prayed and shed tears to obtain Her grace, but neither received Her instructions nor blessings. Everybody gets a response from Her according to the sincerity and intensity of his devotion; Her blessings do not depend upon the nature of any material thing offered to Her.

(An excerpt from *Mother as Revealed to Me*)

*

1. *Sandesh* — a special type of Bengali sweet.
2. Sm. Sailabala Basu, wife of N.K. Basu of Dhaka.
3. Milk boiled to consistency.
4. Late Rasamoyi Devi.

FROM THE DIARY OF CHITRA BANDHU

Jhoolau Janmashtami festival and Gopalji's Tula Yajna in Kashi

16.8.1956, Friday, Jhoolan Festival :

Ma's *Leela* on Jhoolan — Jhoolan Utsav was going on in the Kanyapeeth hall on the night of Saturday. The theme was Chaitanya Leela. Suddenly Ma called Buni di and in a soft tone talked to her for sometime then walked towards the stage and called Shaktida's mother and made her sit on a chair on the stage behind the curtains, covered her with a white cloth all over and told those on the stage through gestures not to talk. Then She told Bithudi to announce to the audience—pointing towards the covered figure—"This is our Ma sitting here; fold your hands and bow to her." The curtain of course was pulled back. Ma was standing near the window and was visible—She later laughingly commented when pointed out that She did not have the *kheyala* to move away. Again the curtain was drawn; then Ma exchanged the position on the chair; subsequently the curtain was removed. Just as the "wise audience" pronounced, "This is not Ma", "Ma removed the cloth from Her face and laughed heartily and said, "Then who is sitting?" She had warned those in the back stage not to reveal Her identity. All burst out laughing. That was a memorable moment. Without actually experiencing it, it is difficult to understand.

17.8.1956 Saturday :

Leela in the Perspective of Spiritual Practice staged according to Ma's Kheyala

One day while walking on the terrace overlooking Ganga. Ma said, "It will be interesting from the worldly point to view to find out who acts in which manner." So Sri Ma organised a programme to imitate the mannerisms and habits of some inmates like Shobhadi while washing clothes, Maharatanji baking rotis on the fire and so on. Ma said, "This was from the worldly point of view; similarly from the spiritual point of view also people's mannerisms can be interpreted, for example Buha sits like Buddha, Baby meditates, Chitra bandhu would be doing Puja, Sati would be a Yogini, Pushpa would be crying out loudly in separation from the Lord—Ha Krishna, Ha Krishna." Taking Ma's hint from this Bithika Mukerji organised a skit. The scene was like this : pedestrians on the road ask each other, "Who are these people ?" The reply is "This is Ananda Ashram. Look, this is Krishna Priya Chitra Lokha (the author)." Such talk was going on. Suddenly Shree Ma got up, went on the stage and

put sandal paste on each participant's forehead and garlanded them. The atmosphere was highly charged; the actors felt the Lord had Himself come and given His Touch, His Blessings. Some went into deep meditation. Then Ma showered flower petals on all present, came and sat down and started singing "Ha Krishna, He Krishna, Pran Krishna" continuously for one or two hours. At that moment the hall was transformed into Ananda Ashram. During the midnight of this Shravan month everyone's soul was immersed in an indescribable ocean of Ananda.

18.8.1956 Sunday :

The next evening again a skit was enacted. Seven girls were placed on the stage each wearing coloured clothes. Ma stood in the wing. The cover from each one's face was lifted and the face shown but none turned out to be Ma, so all were disappointed. Then Ma with her hair untied and flowing appeared on the stage laughing heartily and everyone was uplifted into an elated state of Ananda.

The day after Jhoolan Ma sat on the Jhoola and distributed the fruits used for decoration representing scenes of Vrindavanam.

21.9.1956 Wednesday, Janmashtami in Kashi

At 7 a.m. Gopalji was to be brought in a palanquin to Matri Mandap. Ma went to Gopalji wearing a silk saree with half inch red border. After placing Gopalji in the arms of Mamaji (Ma's brother Makhan uncle) She came down the stairs from the veranda adjacent to Her room on the first floor. Other statues of Krishna belonging to Chhabi di, myself and others were also placed in the palanquin, side by side with Gopalji, according to Ma's wish. With the blowing of conch shell and *Hari nama sankirtan* the flower bedecked palanquin was sent. It arrived in Matri Mandap i.e. an underground hall below Mamaji's house. He was respectfully placed on a *chowki* in front of the marble platform. Ma had spent two previous nights in decorating and preparing the *vedi* (platform) for *Tuladan* of Gopalji, with Narayan Swami. Sri Ma told everyone that whoever wished could touch and fondle baby Gopal now. Ma cheerfully watched. Then He with all other Thakurs i.e. Krishna statues was placed on the marble platform. Ma herself took active participation in this. Dr. Pannalal queried Ma as to why She, who always sat quietly when *pujas* took place, now became so busy. Ma said, "Is Gopal only the *ishtha* of you all? Is He not this body's *ishtha*? I give affection to you all then why should I not give Him?"

The bathing ceremony began with *panchamrit* i.e. milk, curd, purified butter, honey and sugar. Then Ma took special interest in wiping Gopalji's body especially nostrils and his ears with Her own saree very gently and affectionately like a mother; later he was dressed up with silk clothings and ornaments and then placed upon *asan*.

Just then Pandit Gopinath Kaviraj ji happened to come. Ma quickly asked him to change into fresh clothes provided by Her and asked him to hold Gopalji while *Tula dan* was on as He might become unsteady, also since he was the right person ordained for this work as his name is Gopi.

Then Tula Yajna began. Gopalji was weighed against several objects, first of all with three basketfuls of *Tulsi* (Basil) leaves. Later Ma said, "Gopal is a *jagrat* (live) deity. Can He be measured just by weighing?" therefore all articles were brought in larger quantities, even then He could not be weighed exactly. At the time of weighing Gopalji against *vastra* (cloth), it was short of the exact weight even with repeated supply of more quantities of cloth. Ma humorously commented that Gopalji once did the *Leela of Vastra Haran* and the same nature of His was now manifested!

Then Ma asked Bunidi to fetch more *vastra*. When She saw that even then the weight remained uneven, then She asked for some *ghee* to be added to the weight. The *ghee* being too hot, Ma asked for the *ghee* which had been specially offered to Ma by a devotee from Darjeeling. Gopalji could at last be weighed evenly with the additional supply of that *ghee*. The ritual of *Tulādāna* continued with other items like silver and so on

(To be continued).

*

At all times to be vowed to the search after Truth and consequently to be completely truthful in every respect in man's duty. God's grace streams forth at all times.

—Shree Shree Ma

O MAGICIAN'S DAUGHTER

An old brahmin in Tarapeeth sang many *bhajans* and also composed some. He lived elsewhere but came to Tarapeeth and stayed there sometimes for Ma's *darshan*. One day he came to Ma and said, "Ma I have composed a song for you," and started singing:—

O Magician's daughter :

Everything about you is mysterious.

What is true and what is false,

Explain the magic in the uproarious chaos.

You have made the Moon, the Sun, the planets
and the stars.

And this earth, circular.

In your infinite circle you have put magic

And rendered this old man crazy.

Ma, in the light of your brilliant smile
Is manifest the pleasure house of desires.

Again, in the same light arise

The weeping wails of the cremation grounds.

On the path where you make wedding trumpets
and drums resound;

On the same path, Ma, do we hear the strains
of 'Haribol' of the last journey.

O dear Magician's daughter !

pleadingly says Radha,

"O Ma, I am overwhelmed by the fear of your magic,

The desire to watch your magic is gone, Ma,

Now give, me, Ma, your peaceful lap!"

This *bhajan* made me feel delighted and therefore I have written it out.

(Taken from Gurupriya didi's Diary :
Shree Shree Ma Anandamayee, Vol. V)

MA'S TECHNIQUE OF BESTOWING DIVINE LOVE AND GRACE ON ONE AND ALL

(Taken from *Svakriya Svarasamrita*, Vol-2)

All loved Ma right from Her very childhood. When Ma visited Her maternal uncle's house, eight or ten girls of the same age-group from the neighbourhood would play taking Ma in their company. They were aware of the fact that if anyone enquired of Ma about any matter, Ma would openly disclose everything. For this reason, if there was anything secret between them concerning the game, they would not divulge it to Ma and remain careful while talking too about anything to Her. On many an occasion they would make Ma 'Raja', 'Budi'* , in the play and seat Her on one side. Sometimes they formed a group and collectively tried to defeat Ma (in some other game). But in the course of events they themselves were beaten and found that they had made fools of themselves. On the other hand, leaving them always to their deliberations, Ma remained aloof in Herself without being in the least interested in winning or losing.

At Kheora, once a boy died in a certain house. That house was in the Eastern region and located at the farthest end of the village. The residents of the house were a class of people called Acharya Brahmins, who used to make in clay the images etc. of gods worshipped in the village. With a *kheyala* known only to Ma, She went alone at that moment during the morning hours and appeared at a house adjoining theirs. There was loud and bitter weeping in that house, and standing in this (the neighbour's) house. Ma was observing intently the condition of that boy after death. Next day Ma went to that house (of the deceased). Of her own accord, the bereaved mother kept on speaking out from her heart about this bereavement to Ma, although Ma was of such a small age. Standing there, in what mood was Ma hearing, while looking at their faces, She only knew. But it was noticed that the intensity of their grief became

* An Indian game played by children. First of all they select one from among themselves to act as 'Raja' (King) or 'Budi' (old woman), and give that person a seat at a fixed place. The children, then, divide themselves into two rival groups. One of these is given the role of defence and the other, that of offence. The job of the latter is to manage to infiltrate through the defence and touch the *Raja/Budi*. If any one of this group succeeds in reaching the *Raja/Budi* without being touched by any member of the other group, then the former is declared winner. If, however, in the attempt to infiltrate, even one child is touched by any member of the defensive group, then the former loses the game.

as if somewhat alleviated. They repeatedly entreated Ma to come again. Due to this incident only, intimacy of Ma with this family grew a little.

Trees too in Ma's Endearing Circle—While moving in a body with Her companions, specially at Sultanpur, Ma sometimes conversed with trees in the manner of talking to a human being—moving the mouth and shaking the head with a smiling face. Noticing this strange action of Ma, they were struck with amazement and sometimes possibly became frightened too. The reason for fright was that they noticed that when Ma conversed with trees, the trees too, then, appeared to shake a little. And the companions could not understand anything. It is heard that *Mahapurushas* (great saints) possibly live in the form of trees, but none knows what it was in the present case. Again, occasionally, to make fun, they would entreat Ma: "Would you please show your queer manners once more just now?" Exactly as they feared Ma, so also they had a special liking too for Ma and loved Her as well. Without Ma's company in any activity, they felt cheerless and could hardly do without Her.

The father-in-law of that grandmother in whose hand Ma had slipped on the bangles of shell was the uncle of Ma's *Thakurma* (grandmother). Their house and that of Shriyukt Bipin Bihari Bhattacharya (Ma's father)—only these two houses—were in one place in the Western sector. Just near their houses, there was an old mango tree. On one side of the tree, its branches were dry without any leaves etc. Some other sides were green to some extent and bore some mangoes too in the mango season. They had a big mango garden there which gave them plenty of mangoes to their entire satisfaction. If any mangoes dropped and remained there till even putrefied at the foot of this lone old tree, nobody cared to take any particular notice of it. But occasionally that tree would perhaps attract Ma to its foot, and if during the mango season, Ma found mangoes lying at its foot, She would bring and give them to Mokshada Sundari Devi. If old Thakurma found mangoes there, She too picked them up and preserved them in the house. When they were ripe, then, at the right time, She fed Ma too with them. We have heard from Ma's mouth that the mangoes of that tree had such a nice fragrance and were so sweet to taste that such variety was hardly ever seen at all. But the owners of the house had not even the least appreciation of this.

In the context of the subject mentioned above, Ma incidentally said, "Look, surely they are in numerous forms and keep in mind that they fulfil their final birth in the form of trees too." (Now) who was that great one, who, escaping the sight of all, had remained all alone on one side in the form of this dry tree? Did he fulfil his final birth with his successful *seva* of Ma by offering Her fragrant and sweet fruits?

(an excerpt)

CONTEMPORARY SAINTS SWAMI RAMDAS

(Continued from the previous issue)

—Vijayananda

But even more generous and appetising than the food for the body was the nourishment provided for the spirit. Every evening in the great hall of the ashram the members and the visitors met for *kirtans*—religious songs. The public sat on matting on the ground and Ramdas on a raised platform. "Papa's" face as he looked around him on such occasions seemed to radiate an atmosphere of calm and reassuring love bringing peace and comfort. The songs, the instrumental music, the attitude of those present, all reflected the same ambience. The ambience in which a sage moves is always more expressive of the path he points out than is his verbal teaching. That which bathed Ramdas as in an aura of light was certainly the ambience of *bhakti* (the path of love) and as such drew upon religious feeling. But the range of feeling was very different from that which one encounters, for example, in Bengal. The Bengali *kirtan* often strikes notes of acute emotion and occasionally induces nervous tensions that find expression in outbursts of tears and even, in less balanced subjects, in uncontrolled behaviour such as dancing, excited shouts, and weeping.

I never witnessed anything of such a nature in the presence of Ramdas. Here the *bhāvas* (religious emotions) were beneficent, soothing to the mind and inducing it to lose itself in this haven of peace and joy.

Like most great sages Ramdas gave no formal instruction such as a schoolmaster or university professor might offer. What a Hindu or any other spiritual seeker goes to a sage for, is, above all, the *sat-sanga*. The literal meaning of this term is "the company of Truth". To the average Hindu this is a familiar concept and he knows perfectly well the nature of the blessing to be derived from *satsang*. But for most western people, accustomed to a teaching that is transmitted through speech or through books, the term calls for explanation. Simply to live in the company of a great teacher, even without receiving oral instruction, can result in considerable spiritual progress. Despite the fact that there is no active intervention on the part of the sage, some kind of osmosis of spiritual power seems spontaneously to take place. Even ordinary people when they have been living together for some time, or have had no more than a fairly extended conversation find that there has been some exchange of ideas, of mental outlook, of qualities and failings in a degree that varies from individual to individual. This is no theory but a fact based on observation. Married couples too who have

lived together harmoniously over a long period come to share similar tastes and ideas and sometimes this can be reflected in a similarity of appearance as though some kind of osmosis had come about.

A sage who has attained perfection sees in all beings the perfection that is their essence and the look of love which he casts upon those who approach him makes them divine. We are constantly being influenced by mental suggestions, good or bad, from our surroundings. In the presence of those who think poorly of us we contract and shrivel up, even if they may speak to us quite civilly. By contrast, in the company of those who respect and love us, we expand and feel at ease. Now the suggestions of divinisation from a sage emanate from a powerful and concentrated mind and must necessarily make themselves felt. In addition to playing this passively beneficent role, the "Great Beings" sometimes intervene deliberately and actively. This is what one calls the *shakti-dāna*, the conferring of spiritual power and it may come about in very different degrees. Most frequently it is no more than a momentary recharging of physical and mental energy which results in an intensification of all one's faculties. Consequently the ardour of religious feeling, the yearning for the divine, good resolutions and other similar feelings are all strengthened considerably for it is in a religious state of mind that one goes to see a sage. This feeling of increased intensity of experience does not generally last very long but if the *sādhaka* knows how to exploit it, it may serve him as a springboard to considerable spiritual advance.

In other and more rare cases the *shakti-dāna* takes the form of a veritable initiation by putting the machine into gear, as it were, and awakening the inner power. In such cases the result is a "second birth", for the behaviour of the individual undergoes a total change and a new life begins for him.

Finally the sage may confront a person with a whole chain of circumstances that will enable him finally to cure a vice or some serious problem. I knew a confirmed smoker who after visiting a sage was cured overnight.

The majority of the great sages, however, except those who observe absolute silence, do also provide oral instruction and their words are precious because they are the expression—conveyed to us on an intellectual level—of a direct experience of Truth.

During the three weeks I passed in the company of Ramdas I was specially favoured in this particularly. Almost every afternoon I had half-an-hour, an hour and sometimes even more, of private conversation with the great Master. I had the opportunity of asking any question that came to my mind: we talked about my personal difficulties and general problems and Ramdas recounted some of his own experiences in his characteristic spicy, humorous style. What a pity that I neglected to make daily notes of these conversations, for most of the precious verbal teaching of the sage has slipped out of my mind.

(to be contd.)

THE UNIVERSAL MOTHER - MA ANANDAMAYEE

—Shuddha Satta Chakravarty

Shree Shree Ma says, "It is only by removing the 'I' that 'You' is immediately attained. Verily, the aim of *sāadhan-bhajān*, spiritual discipline is to smash up the ego."

Very often Mataji, with Her magnanimous outlook, has said that it is true that a man through his limited action cannot reach up to God but that it is also true that no effort, however insignificant, goes in vain, if it is sincere. Every genuine effort, however imperceptible in its littleness, has a value of its own as a means to the End; and when rightly put forth, this End is bound to be realized in its own time. But the Supreme End is above all means. We have to move along the path forward and utilize the resources accessible to us. For who knows at what Great Moment The Supreme Reality will reveal Itself in all its resplendent glory? When once the vision dawns upon the soul the defilement and impurities clinging to it from the immemorial past and accumulated through the ages will vanish in a single instant like mists at dawn before the rays of the rising sun! The finite assumes the role of the Infinite when the Infinite smiles upon it and being freed from all limitations and disabilities of mundane life, it begins to live, move and have its being within the Infinite.

One has naturally to start with a definite plan of self-discipline suited to one's taste and capacities and arranged in a certain order of temporal and logical sequence, but when once His Grace shows itself, the stiff formalities of rigid conventions sink into insignificance.

Such words of Ma are verily a lustrous string of precious pearls fit to be always worn round the neck by every devoted child of Hers.

Equally worth remembering at every moment are the following pieces of Ma's advice :

1. Without the repetition of the Name and the remembrance of God, there is no hope of peace on earth!
2. In Rāma, who is the dispeller of all sorrows, there is *ārāma*-rest and ease; where Rāma is not, there is "*vyārāma*"-discomfort and disease.
3. When the mind centres on what gives peace and one's gaze dwells on what

promotes it, when one's ears listen to what fills the heart with peace and at all times there is response from Him Who is Peace Itself, then only can there be promise of peace.

4. Your body, which is part of and depending on this illusory world, is on the other hand the expression of a hidden inner process. You are yourself the many, appearing in various aspects, forms and modes. Each one of them exists in fact to fulfil a particular need. Yours is the give and take of the universe, yours the need, and yet you yourself are the fulfilment : that hidden inner process is generated by you.

JAI MA

*

Pilgrims on the road towards God very often encounter obstacles and stumbling-blocks which are due to their own former actions. In such cases one should pray, "Lord, gird me with patience and the power of endurance that I may be able to continue undaunted my pilgrimage on the path that leads to Thee." Keep your spirits high by reflecting that those hindrances and difficulties are breaking up your bad *karma*. Bear in mind that God is thus cleansing and purifying you in order to take you unto Himself.

—Shree Shree Ma

“CARE FOR YOUR PUJA THAKURS”

**(An Episode on Elaya Raja’s Puja Padmanabha Thakur
as told by Him to Ajay Sopory)**

It was about late 1975 at Mumbai that Shri. B.K. Shah President of the Anandamayee Sangh asked me to go to Trivandrum to assist Elaya Raja Marthanda Varma, younger brother of the ruling Raja of Trivandrum, the erstwhile Travancore state. The Elaya Raja is a devotee of our revered Shree Shree Ma.

Attending to the problems of his and Rani Sahiba’s Hotel Tara I stayed in Trivandrum a few days. I was loaned a silk *dhoti* and *angwastram* and given a car and driver to go to have *darshan* of their ancestral temple of about 12 feet long black stone statue of reclining Lord Padmanabha (Vishnuji). Later Elaya Raja recounted to me a story of his small silver replica of the Padmanabha idol which he used to take everywhere with him as his *Puja*.

On one occasion at Mumbai he was staying in one of the upper floor rooms in Shri. B.K. Shah’s Vile Parle Bungalow ‘Sunayana’ where Mataji was also staying in Her cottage in the garden. Mataji would come and sit in the Bungalow Verandah for *Satsang* in the evening. So Elaya Raja finished his Sandhya in a hurry and went down to join the *Satsang*.

In a while Mataji shivered and said She was cold. So ‘Ba’, as Mrs. Shah was affectionately called, went and fetched a shawl and draped it on Ma. Yet Ma stated She was still cold. So a blanket was brought and put around Mataji. But to no avail. Mataji declared She was still cold. In great perplexity Ma was taken to Her cottage so that She could be covered with a *razai* (quilt) also. The *Satsang* dispersed. Elaya Raja went up to his room and to his shock found in his haste he had forgotten to close his *Puja*, leaving Lord Padmanabha uncovered. At the earliest he went and made his apology to Mataji. She directed him to give the Padmanabha Thakur to Swami Bhaskaranandaji’s care. This was in Swamiji’s care for some time till his travels made him select Dehra Dun Ashram as care-taker of the Padmanabha Thakur.

*

AN EXTRACT FROM *MANISHI KI LOK YATRA* (THE SAVANT'S JOURNEY IN THE WORLD)

—M.M. Pt. Gopinath Kaviraj, Padmavibhushan

(Translated from Hindi)

Ram Thakur* —

I had the good fortune to meet this Mahapurush (great being) initially on 9th February 1923 in Kashi (Varanasi). Before this I had heard of him from a friend of mine named Mahimbabu. Then from Bhavadēvbabu an old gentleman I had heard several stories about his highly spiritual *sadhana* and extraordinary *siddhis* (powers). This was during the conversations which took place every evening (at *sandhya* time) at Dashbhashwamedh ghat. After hearing about him initially in this way I came to meet Dr. Prabhat Chandra Chakravarty of the Calcutta University. I became very close to him after sometime; he used to treat me like an elder brother. Dr. Chakravarty was a disciple of Shri Ram Thakur. I came to know about a lot of incidents which took place (about Shri Ram Thakur). These were considered extraordinary by people.

I have to say something about this. During 1911-1912, when I was studying M.A. in Queen's College,** I stayed in Bengali Tola. At that time I used to go to a library called "Banga Sahitya Samaj". Actually this was an old Branch of "Bangiya Sahitya Parishad", but in reality, it was even older than that. I managed to get Navin Sen's autobiography "*Amār Jeevan*". He was the author of the book "*Palāsi Yuddha*" as well. This book *Amār Jeevan* was very beautiful. In the fourth part, while writing about his life Shri Sen had given a description of Ram Thakur. A separate chapter called "Pracharak nā Pravartak" was devoted to a description of him. Ram Thakur was, at that time, working at a particular place as a "Pāchak Brahmin" In Bengali it is only a Pachak Brahmin (a Brahmin cook), who is called 'Thakur'. This title has been added to his real name-Ramchandra Chakravarty. Sri Sen has described several transcendental phenomena pertaining to him. One of them was - once just on his remembering him, he appeared physically before him suddenly; at another time, his body levitated in the air while seated in an *asan*. Regarding an incident in his own life and on relating it in the book, Navinbabu had written that when he was a deputy magistrate he was seated one day on sofa facing the verandah, after washing his face and hands; he saw that Shri Ram Thakur was standing before him with his head lowered. It was as if he had descended straight from the sky. He had not come from anywhere, otherwise he would have been noticed. There was no other way to enter

*. Shri Ram Thakur met Fujya Shri Shri Ma and always held Her in high respect as the Divine manifested on earth

** in Varanasi.

the room, nor was he seen to be entering it. Navinbabu did not ask him anything about this at this time. Later someone asked him a question in Navinbabu's presence, "Is it possible for someone to travel by the *Shunya Mārg*" ? Thakur Mahashaya said, "Yes man can travel together with all sorts of things by the same path (*mārg*) by which lightning travels. Not only that, it is also possible to be at several different places at the same time." Navinbabu had mentioned several other astonishing things in this vein. After the first *darshan* till 1940, when I was closely connected with Shri Ram Thakur I had seen several incidents of this sort.

I usually had his *darshan* in Kashi. After visiting several places he used to come to Kashi. At times he used to stay at Narad Ghat, sometimes in Mansarovar, Chintamani Ganesh or sometimes in the Harasundari Dharamshala - He used to put up at several other places according to his convenience. Once on my entreaty he had stayed with me. At this time he was eating very little. He barely used to eat fruits etc.

Shri Ram Thakur's nature was very humble and respectful. He wore a *tulsimala* around his neck and shawl of Harināma. His face always conveyed compassion and contentment; it would fill the hearts of people with a spiritual effulgence. He was not very educated; there was not much ability to recognize alphabets; somehow or the other he could read very simple Bengali books and write letters. He was so humble that even before a visitor could raise his hands he would do *pranam* to him, he would not give the visitor time to greet him. In spite of being so very humble and not particularly educated his knowledge was limitless and his special gains in the path of *sadhana* were unique. I used to meet him whenever he was in Kashi. Sometimes he used to suddenly disappear from the house. On inquiring from his *shishyas* (disciples) they said that he had gone out on his Guru's orders.

Thakur Mahashay's Gurudev was a divine being, not in earthly form. Nobody was able to say anything about his state of being. According to the intimate *shishyas* his name was Anangadeva. Together with his band of devotees, he used to move about in the "*Ākāsh Mandal*" (firmament). Sometimes due to some special reason, he used to come to meet Ram Thakur, with his devotees. As far as I have heard, this special reason was to give *diksha* (initiation) to some devotee. According to their tradition of Gurus, the word *diksha* has a somewhat different meaning. Usually to progress in the path of *sadhana*, they are told to do only "Nāma". *Diksha* is given to very few. Amongst thousands of devotees not more than 3-4 people get *diksha*. I had heard that with them, there was a change in the body, at the instant of receiving *diksha*. Not only that, the *shishya* was able to join the company of his Guru's liberated *shishyas*, with this new body. Anangadev himself did not give *diksha*. At his command Thakur Mahashaya had to disappear from amongst his company of *shishyas*, but his leaving and returning was not seen by anybody.

(to be continued)

**FROM SWAMINI PURNANANDAJI'S BOOK
ATIRUDRA MAHAYAJNA, KANKHAL 1981,
CHAPTER VI—MA'S GUIDANCE**

Just before the Yajna when Ma was in Varanasi, the following words came forth from Her spontaneously—"Makhakarini shikho riti. Pathakarini shikho riti" She asked the Kanyapeeth students to explain what the words might mean but could not get a satisfactory reply. Then She herself gave the correct meaning. The words meant, "Learn the way to perform a Yajna. Learn the way to walk the Path."

Once during a question and answer session with Ma, someone asked, "What is the fruit of the Yajna that is taking place here? And who will get the fruit?"

Ma replied, "When you talk of the *Sankalpa* taken in this Yajna-human beings, animals, birds, trees, creepers, plants, whoever are of this universe, their *ishtadeva*, i.e. the one who does not do '*anishtha*' for anyone - it is for (obtaining) the Love of that (*ishtha deva*)". (The word '*ishtha*' means that which one desires, and '*anishtha*' means that which is not desirable). In such a situation, who will get the fruit you only say. It is not as if it (the Yajna) is taking place for any small reason."

Explaining further, Ma said, "What do the clouds that gather in the sky give? Rain. Who gets it? Everyone. The desire to make Bhagavan happy-just as if there is a knot-to go to open it is also bondage-it is just like that -the desire that leads to the extinction of desires. Why do you meditate? Why do you try to abide in the *svarupa*? Why does this desire arise? For the realisation of Bhagavan.

"The desire that gets one deeper into bondage that is not worth achieving. If you want to remove that *vrutti*, then what must you adopt? "That".

In any Yajna, its organisers have to be watchful against the spread of fire. This is especially true if the yajna is being conducted in a temporary *yajnasālā*, where the roof is made of inflammable material; this being the case here too Ma asked for fire extinguishers, in the form of buckets of milk mixed with water, to be prepared everyday. In addition a number of *pichkaris* (water-squirts) were also kept ready.

One day while the yajna preparations were in progress, Ma told Brni. Purnananda that She saw fire. It was an indication that there might be trouble. She told Brni Purnananda to ask the girls to see what they could do to prevent it. As a result, security arrangements were made in the Ashram and near the *Yajnasālā*. The fire brigade was also asked to be on alert. Soon after this, when someone was doing an *arati* of Ma in Her room, a lighted wick fell on the carpet and burnt a part of it. Those

present at the time felt that the danger from the fire had been averted due to Ma's grace.

A little before the yajna started, Ma called the women members of the Ashram and instructed them to work to the best of their ability, for the Yajna. She said that even one person's mistake would be considered everyone's mistake. Thus it was not only brahmanacharinis, but also all members of the Ashram, and other devotees who single mindedly followed Ma's instructions in the days before and during the Yajna. If Ma said that something had to be done, then no matter how difficult it was, it was done.

For those who were not directly involved in the work of the Yajna, Ma said it was their duty to have *darshan* of the Yajna. They were to try to imbibe the sense of everything they saw and heard during those days. Moreover, everyone had to undertake at least one *parikrama* (circumambulation) of the *yajnasālā*. She told everyone to take as many photographs and sound and video recordings of the Yajna as possible. She also said that the *bhasma* (ashes collected from the *kundas* after *havan*) and *nirmālya* (flowers removed from the idols and *vedis* etc. after *pūja*) were invaluable. "It will not be possible to get something like it later," She said. Many people took the *bhasma* as *prasād*. Many have reported to be cured of diseases by using it.

*

THE DISTINCT CHARACTER OF SHREE MA'S ASHRAM AT RAIPUR, DEHRA DUN

—Br. Geeta

Advent of Shree Shree Ma at Raipur :

Raipur is a small village situated in Uttarakhand. Surrounded by verdant hills and orchards besides a seasonal river was an ancient Shiva temple. On June 8, 1932 Shree Shree Ma along with Bholanath and Bhaiji set Her pious feet in Raipur for the first time. A long time ago Ma had a vision of this Kaumudeshwar Shiva Temple.

Ma's comments about the Raipur Ashram

Once a devotee of Ma asked Her about this place which was located in nature's lap in a very green and solitary peaceful environment.

Shree Ma came to Raipur directly from Dhaka. Later She visited Raipur frequently. So is Raipur Ashram of special importance?

In reply Ma said, "While going to Sahasradhara I saw an old Shiva temple on the way. Then while leaving Dhaka to come here suddenly a picture of Shiva temple flashed into my mind (*Kheyal*). Coming here I found exactly the same Shiva temple. So there must be some speciality. It was a place of saints. So many times such places come into existence and then get lost. Such play is going on."

From the comments of Ma it becomes clear that this Ashram at Raipur also has a special quality like the other ashrams of Ma.

The first stay of Shree Shree Ma at Raipur :

A very beautiful description of Shree Shree Ma's first stay at Raipur has been given by Shree Ma Herself. Shree Shree Ma along with Bholanathji and Bhaiji were residing in that ruined Shiva temple. It was situated amidst peaceful surroundings of a dense forest. At that time there was an undeveloped path leading to the river. Bholanathji used to remain seated in front of the Shiva temple for nearly the whole day in meditation. Ma used to live in a nearby mud house. The local people thought that Bholanathji was a saint who had renounced the world and had engaged himself in 'Tapa' and that his wife against his wishes was staying near him with a servant i.e. Bhaiji. Bhaiji used to put on a dress reaching his knees. He did not put on any foot wear. All services like cooking food, cleaning the utensils were done by Bhaiji. It was later when letters from Government began to come addressing him that the villagers understood that he was a highly placed government officer.

During those days Shree Shree Ma did not use any bed or bedding. A rough cloth was spread on the ground, half of it was used to cover Herself. She never combed Her hair. Her hair had become matted. Once Ma had fever. A barber was called to cut the matted hair (*jatā*). The barber cut the hair carefully and was successful in his first attempt itself. The barber had the desire to sell Ma's *jatā* to a Ramlila drama group. But his desire remained unfulfilled, so he went away disappointed. In the whole day Ma took a little boiled vegetables or one *chapāti*.

Dedicating the Raipur Ashram Land at Ma's Feet :

In October 1940, in Shree Shree Ma's presence, the ancient Shiva temple and the land surrounding was offered to Shree Ma and sequestered in Shree Shree Ma's name by the *pūjāris* of the temple. The temple and the surrounding land was dedicated since ancient times to the gods.

The construction of the Ashram building :

The renovation of the temple and the construction of the Ashram building was done in 1941. In April, the same year on the occasion of Shree Ma's arrival, a Nāma Yajna i.e. continuous singing of God's name, was religiously performed in the newly built temple. The whole Raipur village participated in this celebration and the devotees acclaimed Ma's name. The whole environment reverberated with —

“Jai Shree Shree Anandamayee Ma ki Jay” “Jai Jungle Mein Mangal Karnewali ki Jay” — meaning “Praise be to Her who made this dark forested into an auspicious place.”

All the directions resounded with this. In fact due to Ma's unlimited kindness and divine Grace Raipur Ashram looked beautiful amidst dense forest on the hills.

Service Rendered by Bhaiji to Ma at Raipur :

Once Ma was in Raipur Ashram. Rising early She went towards the new room which was being built for Her. Ma had an old connection with these rooms. When Shree Ma first came to Raipur then She stayed in one of these rooms. Now these rooms had become dilapidated. Therefore they were being renovated. Looking at these rooms Ma said, “Bhaiji only boiled the milk. This body used to sit and watch. He used to use one whole match box at a time. He had no practice. He had never done this type of work. He used to scrub vessels burnt in fire wood. Sitting on a hillock he used to keep scrubbing but the blackened marks never went away completely. This body did not have the ‘Kheyal’ to instruct him to apply mud and then put the vessel on fire, then it would not be blackened. Finally one day this body said, “Scrub the utensils with stones, then the marks will be removed quickly.”

Ma further said, "At that time there was no arrangement for a bathroom for this body. That tank which is there for you all, just behind it bath was taken with a bucket full of water."

Saving Paramananda Swamiji from Snakebite :

Ma said one day She saw a dead body in *sukshma* (subtle) form : She said; 'Let us go from Raipur' but people did not want to leave, so Ma also did not insist. At night Ma was lying down in the old room. Bholanath and Paramananda Swamiji were sleeping in another room. There was a snake in the roof. It was sometimes hanging downwards and sometimes hiding. This happened several times. Suddenly Paramananda swamiji screamed, "Snake is biting" Actually he was dreaming. Swamiji dreamt of snake bite. Thus the worst was averted in this way by Shree Ma's Grace. Immediately afterwards the snake fell from the roof and everyone beat it to death.

Supernatural Vision of Shree Ma in Raipur Ashram :

This incident happened on 18th September 1963. Pandit Srinath Shashtri - the renowned orator from Vrindavan was explaining Bhagwat at Raipur Ashram. Shree Shree Ma was seated on Her *asan*. At the time of *arati* a cobra was seen outside the window, raising its hood and looking with a fixed gaze. All went to kill it. Looking in that direction Ma said, "Who knows who has come in what form? Do not kill." The snake went away after *arati*. Ma told Srinathji while looking at the lovely hilly region "Shri Sukdevji preached Bhagwat sitting in forest area only."

While in Raipur Ma saw Loknath Brahmachari in a vision.

Ganeshji with Ma

Siddhidata Ganeshji visited Ma at this very ashram at Raipur. One night Shree Shree Ma was taking rest at night. Gurupriya didi, Paramananda Swami and Abhayda were seated near Shree Shree Ma. All of a sudden Ma saw Ganeshji had come. For sometime he stood near Ma with folded hands, later he sat on the threshold of the room. Ma told everyone to do *pranām* (bow their heads) to Ganeshji. After sometime Ganeshji did *pranām* to Ma and left.

*

PILGRIMAGE TO KAILAS

—Gurupriya Devi

(Continued)

Thursday, June 20

Early in the morning we left Thala. The day was already warm, though we had to wrap ourselves in blankets at night. The water is also getting cooler and for the last two days we have had very cold water. We proceeded ten miles further and reached Didihat in the afternoon where we halted for rest. On the way we met the Raja of Askote. He and his people had also heard of Ma's trip to Kailas from the Raja of Dinajpur who was going to Kailas with Swami Jnanananda and others. They declared that they had been looking out for Ma all along the way. After paying obeisance at Ma's feet the Raja gave us a letter addressed to Askote, so that Ma would suffer no inconvenience after she reached there.

After eating our meal we set out for Askote which is seven miles away. We had heard that Askote had a good *dharmashala* and we had decided to stay there. This morning we had got thoroughly drenched in the rain. The Raja of Askote is said to be related to the Raja of Tehri. These hill tribe kings are very rigid in observing rules. Though the Raja of Tehri had been abroad, he had to maintain Hindu disciplines strictly with regard to diet and other matters, when he was in his home land. The Raja of Askote is also very staunch in observing Hindu rules and regulations. Whenever he goes abroad he takes a brahmin cook from his place. He also reads the scriptures and performs the *pūja* regularly. I have also observed this about the Raja of Solan, who eats only with purified apparel on. His expression also reveals an inner purity.

By evening we reached Askote and put up at the *dharmashala*. On reading the Raja's letter all the people around began filing in, enquiring about our requirements. They had fixed a meal for us. In a short while the Raja's sister, brother, sister-in-law and other ladies arrived for Ma's *darshan*. We were all feeling braced by the mountain air; Swamiji's *dandi* had been taken for repairs. Another *dandi* could not be obtained on the route and the coolies were very tired. It was beginning to seem difficult to reach Garbiyan. These coolies cannot lift more than twenty five or thirty seers each and their wages are one rupee per day per head.

Friday, June 21

We decided to halt at Askote for our meal. I observed that many people have got news of Ma's journey and have been awaiting her arrival. I jokingly remarked, "Ma, when you have so many children here, why would you sit out in Bengal! May be this is the reason you have been pulled hither." The Raja's courtier's wife and many other ladies arrived with flowers and fruits for Ma's darshan. At ten a.m. the Rani sent men to escort Ma to the palace. There she offered a big variety of dishes to Ma as *bhoga*. I heard that the Raja's brother, who lived at Almora, had written to say that Ma should be welcomed with reverence.

On the request of the Raja and his brother, we had our meal at Askote. All the food came from the palace. After lunch we set out for Balvakot which is ten miles away. On the way the courtier took Ma to his house and welcomed her with great affection. The members of the household earnestly requested Ma to return via this place. The Rani and other citizens of this kingdom expressed great happiness at having been blessed with Ma's *darshan*. The Rani declared, "Ma, our home has been purified by your visit." The Rani declared, "Ma, our home has been purified by your visit." The courtier's son who lives at Almora had written home to say, "Ma is leaving for Kailas, welcome her with due respect." These people told us that this was why they were all awaiting Ma's *darshan*.

It was raining and it was also very warm, especially since we had been walking in the sun which seemed to be very strong. After the river Ram Ganga, we could see the Gauri Ganga which flowed very swiftly. We walked for five miles and then encountered the river Kali Ganga. The meeting point of the rivers Gauri Ganga and Kali Ganga is said to be the entrance gate to Kailas. Many have a ceremonial dip here and offer charities. The pathways have been damaged by rain and the coolies are also tired. For want of water and shopping facilities we have not been halting at dak bungalows. In Askote we saw shops selling cloth and other items. The Rani had given her own *dandi* for Ma's use and Ma was now being carried in it.

It was after dusk when we covered the ten miles to reach Balvakot. However, we took the wrong path and could not climb high enough to find a suitable halting place. We decided to spend the night inside the *dandi* under the trees. Parvati had brought along a tent for Ma, which was put up and some of our luggage was also kept inside it. The Raja had sent a letter to the chief of this village and it was sent to him at the top of the hill. He arrived and said, "You have taken the wrong route-we have a school in our village above, where you could have stayed." It was not possible to climb to the village in the dark. The village chief had some cow's milk purchased for us. Just as we settled down some what comfortably, a violent storm broke out and the rain lashed

at the *dandis* making us all, including Ma, wet to some extent. The rain continued unabated through the night. With the break of dawn we continued our journey in the rain. We left all our luggage; it could follow us later; only our five *dandis* moved forward.

We were now finding it difficult to proceed because of the rain. We got some milk in a village on the way (at two seers for a rupee) and drank it. In between the path was very bad and we could not cross the fast flowing river on foot. With great difficulty we sat on the backs of the coolies and crossed the river, while almost seven coolies carried Ma's *dandi* across. We had another river to cross, but by then the rain had abated and the sun was peeping through the clouds. At eleven thirty we reached a dak bungalow in a place called Dharchula. We put our wet clothes and blankets out in the sun. As the coolies had not yet reched with our luggage we could not prepare any food. The hill tribeswoman, Parvati, was trying hard to help out.

The history of Dharchula has it that when Vedavyasa descended from Kailas, he had cooked food in a large vessel perched on these three mountain peaks. Since he had converted the three mountains into a fireplace the spot had acquired the name of Dharchula (*chula* means fireplace). The village was fairly big and the roar of the Kali Ganga was loud-it sounded like the sea. We were travelling along the bank of the Kali Ganga. We halted at a small dak bungalow which was surrounded by many lofty mountain peaks. These mountains like unshakeable, immovable *rishis*; seemed to be engrossed for aeons in meditation of the Universal Father. Outward disturbances cannot touch them. Underfoot, the river, too, seems to sing the praises of the Lord as she flows along. A deep emotion surges within because of the atmosphere here.

After the luggage arrived we cooked and ate by three p.m. We had procured some greens and vegetables on the way and we all enjoyed it. As many items are not available here we had to carry a number of things with us. As the path was treacherous we had to be ready for many contingencies and had, therefore, come armed with such necessities. We had to carry all this from Calcutta to Almora and I had been perplexed for I had not been in touch with packing trunks and cases for a long time. Also, I had not found the need for so many things and was not being able to cope when faced with them. The boys were exhausted, doing the shopping, for whosoever remembered a particular item he thought would be needed, it was purchased immediately. Finally it was Ma who knew exactly what we required and instructed us about essential commodities. Later others told us that the same items would be essential. When I could no longer manage the packing (the day before our departure) Ma sat near me and gave instructions which I followed. In a trice everything was well organized. My Ma is *purna* (complete) and therefore she accomplishes every job so

beautifully. Nothing is either discarded or favoured by her. Every job is equally important to her—there is no differentiation between one and the other. Therefore she does perfectly whichever job is presented before her.

After the meal, before sunset, Ma took Joytish Dada and went for a walk on the banks of the Ganga. On returning she told me, "Khukuni, Ganga took away the *kurta* you had made for me." I remarked, "Say you threw it in the Ganga. You did well." The *bhava* is not new to Ma, I have written many a time about how she has thrown *kurtas* and *dhotis* into the river. On being questioned she declares, "The water took it away," and flashes her sweet smile. Now she had again behaved similarly. She said, "This *kheyala* arose quite some time ago. It arose again now."

At night all the coolies were sent back for they were charging one rupee a day and on reaching Garbiyan where they would just sit around, they would still have to be paid ten annas a day. Their rates are rupee one for travelling and ten annas for waiting. A Rai Sahib here had received letters from Krishna Pant of Nainital and the Askote Raja requesting that all arrangements be made perfectly ready for Ma. They were now going to fix new coolies. They said, "The route now is going to be very difficult and these coolies are sturdier." The coolies who had been with us till now were tired and had decided to return the next day.

Tomorrow we have to stay here because the new coolies have to be brought from a distance of seven miles; they will again weigh our luggage and carry thirty five seers each. We heard that the route from here to Garbiyan is very bad and in comparison the route till now had been very easy. Everyone was enjoying every moment in Ma's company. At midnight we slept. Two incense sticks had been lit near Ma in the evening. An Ustadji (who knew Ma) had arrived from Dehradun and was to accompany us to Kailas. He sang for some time and played the violin.

Almost everyone had gone to sleep and I was on the verge of falling asleep (next to Ma) when Ma called out from underneath the sheet which she had wrapped around herself, "Khukuni, have you fallen asleep?" I sat up instantly and asked, "Why did you call me, Ma?" Ma replied, "Is there more incense? Light it and shut the window near me." I did accordingly but Ma remained just as she was wrapped in a sheet. I lit the incense and asked, "Ma, has someone come?" Without moving, she replied, "Yes" No further conversation ensued, I wrapped myself in my sheet and lay down.

(to be continued)

THE UNIQUE MOTHER

(Personal Reminiscences)

—Br. Niranjani

23rd April 1963— Kishenpur Ashram Dehradun :

Shree Ma was walking in the courtyard, in front of the Shiva temple. Devotees were standing all around. She blessed some by throwing garlands towards them. Ma was saying, "Wherever the eyes look there itself Sri Krishna appears: until this state is reached there is ignorance and unhappiness. Sri Birla took this body to the spot where Gandhiji left his body. Many died of heart attack due to grief, yet many were happy at this. This is a state of the mind (Actually there is nothing called Happiness or Unhappiness). This world is all in the mind-Manomaya. There is place so the importance of certain place. In the same way the importance of Guru "Saying this Ma laughed" This is a small child Pitaji (father) she keeps talking just like this "A devotee asked for Ma's Grace. Ma," Father (Pitaji), Grace is like rain. It is raining all the time. When the vessel is kept upright it gets filled up; when it is kept upside down it flows away. Keep the vessel upright." Shree Ma sat down on the Shiva temple vermdah Naval Kishoreji asked Ma about Didiola Ma replied" After Modinagar Haribaba took thisbody (Her) to Jodhpur. Three things happened there. First, the cloth which is used to cover this body became short secondly, there was stomachache, together with the *kheyal* that if Didi Ma could stroke Her she would become all right. The third was (the *kheyal* of) not drinking water.

Suddenly a devotee sitting close by heard Ma as if telling someone, "Alright, go" then "Not now." She continued : Then on the same day here in Haridwar, Didima gave jaggery to monkeys and came back to the Ashram and lay down in front of Tulsi and saw she was in a boat and someone in white clothes and black hair (Shree Ma) was rowing the boat. Didima tells the boatman (signifying God) that till each and every soul dependent on her including even tiny beings like insects, does not get liberated from this world she will not leave this body. Didima-kindness personified took promise from the boatman-Purna Brahma Narayana Himself-three times. Then she sees she is climbing a staircase with the same person clad in white with flowing black hair and reaches a Lok (other world) where there is light everywhere. Ma said that the light was neither of Sun nor of Moon. There Didima saw Dada Mahashaya (Ma's father). All the souls there were Illumined. Seeing her husband she for a

moment remembers herself in red bordered saree—a symbol of married status, then suddenly she remembers she is a sanyasini and the previous thought goes away. Ma said Didima (Muktananda Giri ji Maharaj) had taken sannyas to stay with Shree Ma. After seeing all this in Haridwar Didima wanted to leave her body just like after *kirtan batasha* (sugar puffs) is strewn, her body was also lying in the same way. She asked Shree Ma's permission to leave her body. At first Ma said "Alright" then "Not now" and stopped her exactly as the incident in Jodhpur. In Haridwar Yogibhai (Raja Sahab Solan, Baghat Naresb) picked up Didima and took her inside. Didima told her sevika (attendant) exactly the same three things that happened with Ma in Jodhpur (through this incident the devotees could understand Shree Ma and Didima's Swarup being Divine). Then Shree Ma immediately sent a telegram to Didima to tell Didima to keep her body healthy. As ordained someone just then arrived who could immediately send a telegram. When Shree Ma reached Haridwar Didima did not come out to meet Ma. She complained "You only stopped me." Ma said Didima never praised her family. Her great grand mother in law was a supreme *bhakta* (devotee). Her husband had only God's name in his tongue while leaving the body. He said 'I will not live anymore' and left his body of his own will. Ma's middle brother knew he was going to leave his body and according to Bengal Hindu tradition and came lay in the courtyard and called all his relatives and left his body happily. Ma's third brother too left his body chanting "Durge/Durge! Shiva/Shiva" Shree Ma too while relating the incidents pronounced the Names in Her own celestial voice.

24th April — The *kirtan* group from Raipur did *kirtan* with great fervour and devotion. Ma sat in the hall and listened for a while then went to the courtyard for a stroll. It was evening time. *Maun* (silence) took place Ma distributed fruits to all. Ma's devotees comprised of all kinds, some great, some small, some rich, some poor, some lonely and sad, some worldly, some seekers, some curious and so on. Ma treated all with affection and understanding.

25th April— Akhand Ramayana (for 24 hours) took place. On Shree Ma's appearance in the hall the crowd started pushing despite Ma's advice, Ma left the hall and went outside to the courtyard. She scolded the crowd saying, "Have you no faith in Ramayana?"

26th April— Ma is sitting on the Takht (wooden settee) in the Hall. Shree Ma is distributing *batasha*-sugar sweets. Ma fulfils the desires of each one in a subtle way or controls them and gives Her message intuitively to each one. Some she showers with *batashas* some get a rare single one, some get more than once, some do not get at all. Some proud, stubborn and rich do not stoop, some catch them in mid air, some appeal to Ma, some shed their hard outer shell and learn to be soft, natural and

spontaneous. Everyone is cheerful, Anandamaya, enveloped in a Spirit of Divine Grace. Ma too sheds her quiet Omnipresence, All Knowing serious look. She is active, laughing, smiling, playing Divine play, those sitting near Her could observe all this. There is a special *bhava* (expression) of Grace on Her Beautiful face.

29th April

Today Shree Ma is leaving Dehra Dun. In the morning darshan was happening upstairs in the veranda. Ma came Her expressions were deeply serious She told all to speed up their *pranams*. her eyes were luminous. A devotee's garland got entangled; everyone was amused at the situation Shree Ma too smiled and told the devotee to take away both the garlands blessed by Her. A devotee did *puja* on Ma despite Ma's disapproval and forcefully applied coloured tika (dot) on Ma's forehead!

In the evening Shree Ma reached the station and was giving *darshan* (audience) in the northern side of the single platform. All did *pranam*. Ma was strolling on the platform. The crowd of devotees surrounded Ma on three sides and walked with Her in rhythm. Once in a while she would stop to bless a lucky one. Suddenly Her gaze cut through the crowd and fell on a young lady at the back. She aimed a garland at her and threw it. It reached the right person. The young lady was alert and caught the garland on time. The special powerful Gaze directed at her and the young lady's grateful acceptance froze the moment in time and space This is Shree Ma's unique and wonderful style, when She wants to bless someone no matter how big a crowd and wherever the person may be Ma locates the person accurately and draws the person's attention, in a split of a second, conveys Her intention subtly and then gives Her blessing in whatever way She would like to, viz an article, flower, garland, Gaze, calling the person closer, by touch, etc. She protects devotees from forthcoming dangers, sometimes enhances good fortune, removes obstacles spiritual or worldly and in innumerable ways cares for and blesses her devotees.

Such is our Beautiful Blissful Mother She spreads Cheer. Wherever She goes an atmosphere of *sattvik bhava* predominates Nothing can go wrong when She is around. *Shakti* emanates from Her. The weak are infused with self confidence. All negativities disappear; things, people situation take a new look in right perspective. Complications and ignorance disappear. We come closer to the Truth.

(to be contd.)

GREAT SĀDHUS AND BHAKTAS—ASHRAMS GROW UP IN VARIOUS PLACES

(From MA ANANDAMAYI LILA)

—Late Sri Hari Ram Joshi

In summer 1942, Mataji stayed at Bhimtal in the newly built cottage of Dr. Pitambar Pant, to fulfil his keen desire that She should spend one summer there with him. A couple of months after Mataji returned from there to the Kishenpur Ashram, Dr. Pant died. After his demise Sri Hira Ballabh Tripathi, M.P., Chairman, Municipal Board, Haridwar, helped a great deal in putting the *Ānandamayī Nārī Śikṣhā Niketan* on a sound footing. The gift made by Dr. Pant in the name of Mataji in 1938 is being well utilized in imparting education upto the B.A. standard to more than 1500 girls.

While Mataji was at Bhimtal in summer 1942, my younger brother, Dr. Madan Mohan Joshi, died at Bhumiadhar (Bhowali) in the presence of our parents and his wife and children. Two days later I went to communicate this news to Mataji. I learnt that Mataji had told Gurupriya Didi two days before at 3 P.M. that crying had started at Bhumiadhar. She however had not stated plainly that She saw Madan Bhai on his death-bed and that his relatives were weeping. Just before his death, Madan Bhai told our mother that Mataji was standing before him. Our mother and his wife did not believe him, but when I went to Bhimtal, Mataji herself told me that She had been watching Madan Bhai at the time of his death. A day before his passing, when he was so weak that he could not even turn in his bed without help, Madan Bhai suddenly got up and started reciting *Rāma nāma* and *Śiva nama*. He had completely lost his voice a few months before, as his throat had been badly damaged by T.B. Our mother and his wife became very anxious when he started reciting *Rāma nāma* and *Śiva nāma* and made him lie down in bed quietly. Madan Bhai had been admonished by Mataji to write *Rāma nāma* every day 28 times into a note-book and also to write every morning before taking any food the mantra 'Om Namah Śivāya' with sandal paste on eleven *bilwa* leaves. Madan Bhai carried out his injunction to the last day of his life. Before passing away he requested his mother and wife not to weep for him since he was dying in peace, and he also begged of his wife not to worry as she and her children were under Mataji's protection. These incidents clearly show that by Mataji's grace Madan Bhai, who had been extremely attached to his wife and children, was able to shake off completely his family attachment (*moha*) before he passed away.

Another younger brother, Janaki Bhai settled in Solan after Madan Bhai's death. He had lost his wife who left behind three daughters and a son. Mataji gave me an indication that Janaki Bhai should not marry a second time. Unfortunately he ignored Mataji's advice and married again. Two years later, he died of tuberculosis and his wife, within a year of his death, succumbed to the same disease. Mataji often says that whatever is destined must take place in spite of Her advice for doing or not doing a particular thing. In one's helplessness one is unable to follow Her instructions, as destiny has its own way. The story of the death of my second brother and his wife amply illustrates this point.

In 1943, after my return from Vindhyachal to Lucknow, I visited Vrindaban in the month of March to see my uncle, Pt. Padma Datt Joshi who, in his old age, after giving up the practice of law, had left his home at Almora and decided to pass the rest of his life in Vrindaban. He was eager to invite Mataji to Parvatiya Dharamśālā in Kishoripura which he had established for the comfort of pilgrims from the hills, Mataji had returned to Vrindaban from Vindhyachal and was staying in Sri Uria Babji's Ashram. When I had gone to Vrindaban in 1939 to pay respects to my uncle, I also had visited the Ashram of Uria Baba Mahraj for his *darśana*. On that occasion I had related to him how I was attracted by Her divine Personality, though I had heard nothing about the supernatural powers that She possessed. But I did tell him that I had at once felt that I was in the presence of a *Sthitaprajña* as defined in Chapter 11 of the Gita. Babaji at that time did not express his views about Mataji but only smiled.

When I went to Vrindaban in 1943, I was happy to see that Mataji was staying in Sri Uria Babaji's Ashram along with Sri Hari Babaji and others. In that Ashram, *Rāsailā* used to be performed every morning between 9 and 11 A.M. It was invariably attended by Mataji, Uria Babaji, Hari Babaji and others. One day I requested Mataji to grace by Her visit the Parvatiya Dharamśālā which was located in Kishoripura, not far from Uria Baba's Ashram. Mataji agreed and when the *Rāsailā* was over She came to the *Dharamśālā* with Didiji and Swarni Paramanandaji. Although my uncle was a great devotee of Lord Krishna, he performed *ārati* of Mataji with sincere devotion and recited some *stotras* (hymns). After offering *prasāda* to Mataji, he told her that though he belonged to the *Śakta* cult by birth, he had become Vaiṣṇavite ever since settling down in Vrindaban. He narrated to Mataji how he had received a *tulasi mālā* (rosary) from his *Iṣṭadeva* Sri Krishna in a mysterious way. He then asked Mataji when and how he would be blessed with his *Iṣṭadeva darśana*. At that moment, I intervened and told my uncle: Was not the *ārati* performed by him a few minutes back in such a devotional mood, of his own *Iṣṭadeva*, who had appeared before him in the form of Mataji? On hearing this, Mataji in a stern voice rebuked me

for making such a statement and pointed out that if I myself were really convinced of the truth of what I had said, my whole life would have been totally transformed. In reply I told Mataji that I was discharging the function of a messenger who delivers a letter to the proper addressee without himself knowing or making an effort to know the contents of the letter. I also told Her that in case She was pleased to tell us that She had not appeared in the form of Lord Krishna thousands of years ago, I would never again make such a statement. Mataji only smiled as usual and remained silent.

Uria Baba Maharaj, while listening to *Bhāgavata Kathā* in his Ashram at Vrindaan, was murdered by a devotee of his, who in turn was killed by the infuriated crowd assembled there. Consequently the reasons why Babaji was murdered by his own follower could not be investigated. Uria Baba Maharaj was a saint of great fame in that part of Northern India. As a young man he had practised *sādhanā* on the bank of the Ganga in Anupshahr. He had a very large following. Hari Baba Maharaj, who often stayed with Mataji upto his death, was very much attached to Uria Baba Maharaj. The daily programme of *Rāsailā* continues in the Ashram even now.

(to be continued)

*

“When touching your finger one has touched you, although you are not the finger; by touching your dress one has contacted you, though you are not the dress. Just as you are in the smallest part of yourself, so you are also in the whole of yourself. He is one and yet He is the many; and in spite of being the many He is one. Such is His Ilā. He is as equally whole in a grain of sand as He is whole in man, and as He is whole is His totality—complete and perfect. Nevertheless, among all creatures, it is man’s distinctive mark to be endowed with the special capacity or power to realize this perfection, this wholeness. This body calls a human being him who has discrimination, who is aware of this possibility. One who is not conscious of it but is engrossed in desires for sense objects, what is one to call him?”

—Shree Shree Ma

ASHRAM NEWS

From the Editor's Desk

Dear Anandaswarup brothers and sisters,

In this news letter special mention must be made about Mahakumbh Festival at Triveni (the confluence of three holy rivers of India-Ganga, Yamuna and Saraswati) at Allahabad, Utter Pradesh. Shree Ma Anandamayee Camp and Kalpavas was organized by Shree Ma's, Varanasi Ashram and Kanyapeeth. This sacred occasion was much awaited by Hindu devotees from all over India. This year the Mauni Amavasya Snan, one of the three Shahi Snans (Holy Dip) was very special as the auspicious configuration of stars happened after 144 years. The camp was organized in more or less the same way as on previous occasions under Panu da's guidance. On 10th January it was inaugurated by Kalash Sthapana on top of Shree Ma's Kutia, Shree Ma's large photo with a full smile, in a sitting posture was installed on Shree Ma's bed-kept exactly as Ma liked it in Her times. There was much singing of *bhajans*, *stuti* and *kirtan*, *arati*, blowing of conch, beating of bells, gongs and drums and enthusiasm all around. From the next day the daily programme was religiously followed. In the auspicious hours of Brahma Muhurta beginning with *stuti* to awaken the Universal Mother, and singing of Praise to the three Devis of Triveni Prayag Tirth Raj - the mightiest of all the holy places as mentioned by Shree Ram Himself in the Ramayan. This was unique to Shree Ma's Camp. As the Kalpavasis (those who followed the rigours of *tapasya* for full Kumbh festival time) were physically located on the lap of the pure Mother Ganga i.e. on the sandy bed (at this time of the year - but Ganga flows here in the monsoons and thus this spot is known as Narayan Kshetra) they were physically, mentally and spiritually transported into an inspiring world. Some felt Shree Ma's holy and warm presence too. This was followed by *usha kirtan*, personal *sadhana*, Shree Ma's daily *puja* and *arati*, *path* (recitation) of Vishnu Sahasranam, Chandi, Geeta, Upanishad, Bhagwat (and reading from Amulya Kumar Datta Gupta's *Shree Shree Ma Anandamayee Prasang*) till about noon. Later from afternoon till 9 p.m. readings from books related to lives of *sadhakas* like *Bharater Sadhaka* in Bengali, Gurpriya Didi's *Shree Shree Ma Anandamayee* - specifically Kailash Yatra and *Tapobhumi Narmada*. Reading from *Magh Snan Mahatmya* too was added. At sunset Sri Ma's *arati* was lovingly performed which attracted many people.

Slowly but steadily the numbers of serious minded visitors increased and some

came regularly. The maximum numbers came from Yogada Satsang of Parahansa Swami Yoganandaji. Many were overjoyed to get first hand information about Shree Ma from old devotees. Many came because they got relief from the noise pollution at other places and appreciated the simplicity of this camp. Ma's devotees from Allahabad too participated fully in the activities.

There were three main occasions of Holy Dip in the Ganga known as Shahi Snan. The first one was on Makar Sankranti when the sun's journey towards the northern hemisphere begins according to the Hindu calendar on the 14th of January. This was done with Nirvani Akhara. Ashram inmates danced, sang and walked in procession behind Shree Ma's flag and banner towards Triveni Sangam in the early morning hours before sunrise, took the Holy Dip and returned to perform *puja* on Ma's photo in the *Kutia*. On the 27th January another Holy Bath was taken on the Full Moon Day.

However, the 10th February Shahi Snan was the most special on the occasion of Mauni Amavasya (New Moon Day). As said earlier, this year the *yoga* of stars was unusually auspicious, which attracted millions. All moved with a single minded *bhava* towards Triveni Sangam. The tremendous spiritual energy felt created its imprint on human consciousness forever. As on previous occasions Shree Shree Ma's devotees moved behind Ma's flag and banner, chanting and singing "Brahma maya Kumbha jala" "Om Ma", "Hara Ganga" etc with great spiritual fervour.

This time we were with the Niranjani Akhara. After the Holy Dip the procession returned safely by Shree Ma's Grace and offered special *puja* at Sree Ma's *Kutia*.

On 15th February the Vasant Panchami Shahi Snan was better organized. This time we joined the Nirvani Akhara again. The spirit on the whole was of a deeper nature, though auspicious yet solemn, in consonance with the general feeling of prayer for the departed. However Shree Shree Ma's unit led by Br. Gunita sang "Om Ma" and "Brahmamaya Kumbh Jala" throughout in deep tones full of *shraddha* and *bhukti* in the Divine Atmosphere. The Holy Dip was a special blessing from Ma Ganga, Yamuna and Saraswati, which left all with a feeling of *Purnam* (plenitude) ... indescribable in words. The human sea was no less than on the previous occasion All were permeated with the nectar of Divine Peace. All were transported to a higher world. Shree Ma's love and affection could be felt in a subtle form. After returning to the camp Saraswati Puja was performed on a beautiful *vighraha* (statue) by Br. Gitadi. Just as the *yajna* and *Purnahuti* were over the first heavy rain of the Mahakumbh descended on all as if a Divine Blessing were showered upon all.

This much about the main Shahi Holy Dips; now we will talk about the happenings in Shree Ma's Camp (*Shivir*) During this period, two saints visited our *Shivir*,

viz Vedanti Ram Kamal Dasji from Bhopal and Parameshwaranandaji of Sadhan Sadan. The latter made a beautiful comparison between the Mahakumbh mela and the Virat Roop Darshan (Lord Krishna's Universal Form) as extolled in the 11th Chapter of the Gita. He advised the devotees that in order to realise God, formal learning and intellect are not necessary; rather *bhakti* (devotion) and love should be stressed upon. On the 11th of February Bhandara (feeding) of 100 Sadhus took place from Nirvani Akhara and similarly 51 sadhus from Niranjani Akhara were fed on the 13th February.

Besides, students from Kanyapeeth were shown the Kumbh township and details of special camps like the Yogada Satsang, Ramkrishna Ashram, Karshni Ashram of Guru Sharananandaji, Shankaracharya Vasudevanandji, Ramayana Satsang of Murari Babu and Vedanti Kamatdasji. Out of all of them Guru Sharananandaji gave special time from his busy schedule. Nevertheless the students attended *satsang* of most saints mentioned above. They were also taken to important and well known temples of Allahabad like Beni Madhav, Badc Hanumanji, Vasuki Sheshnaag, Saraswati Koop, Alopi Sidhpeeth, Someshwar Mahadev and Bharadwaj Ashram. In all this much guidance and support was received from the erstwhile princess of Kashi Vishnupriyaji, who resided in the campus. On the 20th January all the girls of Kanyapeeth were taken to the Sangam for a Holy Dip. Then on the 19th of January and February too they were taken by boat to the middle of the Triveni Sangam, chanting *stotras* and singing *bhajans* to the Ganga, Yamuna and Saraswati. To add to the jollity hundreds of Siberian birds hovered over and around the boats as they were fed.

Of course without the senior members of Kanyapeeth specially Br. Gunitadi all these activities would not have been possible. On the 17th of February the Kalash on Shree Ma's *Kutia* was brought down and all returned cherishing the wonderful memories to the mundane world.

On February 24 and 25 Maghi Purnima was celebrated in Shree Ma's Ashram in Tarapeeth. A group of brahmacharinis from Kanyapeeth escorted by Swapan da made a special effort to attend the function. Rudrabhishek was done in Shiva temple followed by the recitation of Vishnu Sahasranama and daily readings from holy texts. The holy tree under which Shree Ma's hair was kept was visited specially; it was followed by sprinkling the holy water of Jeevat Pushkarini, visiting the birth place of Nityananda, *darshan* of the beautiful statue at Nishchindipur and Bama Khopa temple and so on. In the evening about 300/400 devotees performed *arati* and *kirtan*, then in the presence of Shree Swapan Ganguli President of the Tarapeeth Branch of Ma's Ashram and Secretary Shree Umapada Chatterjee, *satsang* and *bhakti geeti* programme

was concluded with *maun*. On 25th February *shodashopchar puja* was performed at 3 a.m. in Ma Tara's temple. On Monday the group visited the Shiva Chandrachud Mahadev temple where Bholanathji had attained *siddhi* and paid their respect by offering a garland of *akanda* flowers a favourite of Lord Shiva. Later the group performed *seva* at ashram premises by cleaning it. Then at 7 a.m. on behalf of the ashram *puja* was offered to Tara Ma and Bamdev; a *parikrama* (circumambulation) of *shmashan kshetra* and *pranam* at the feet of Tara Ma were done. At 8 a.m. *Nagar Bhraman kirtan* were (singing *kirtan* in the streets of a town) was done with much enthusiasm, followed by Ma's *puja*, *Chandi puja*, *Shiva mandir puja*, *diksha*, *Geeta*, *Chandi*, *Vishnusahasranama* recitation, *kirtan*, *bhog*, *arati*, *yajna*, *sadhu bhandara*, *brahman bhajan* and distribution of *prasad*. In the evening discourse, *arati*, and *satsang* took place. In this way the *utsav* ended happily.

Shivaratri festival was performed beautifully in the city of Vishwanath i.e. Kashi at the ashram by the students and inmates of Kanyapeeth headed by the Chief Pujarini Br. Jayadi. Two whole days went in preparation of *shodashopchar* and *dashopchar puja*. As is the custom since Shree Ma's times devotees sit in circles around Shivalingams, each one is given all the necessary articles. It is indeed a beautiful sight. The *puja* was performed with great enthusiasm along with *bhajan*, *stuti* and *kirtan*. Other Ashrams at Kankhal, Vrindavan, Rajgir Almora Pune, Ranchi etc. also celebrated Shivaratri with Rudrabhishek at some places.

Last to mention but not the least interesting is the festival of Holi. The festival began on 26th March 2013 with the celebration of Hari Babaji's birthday in Varanasi Ashram. Here it will not be out of place to remind/inform the readers that Hari Babaji was a true saint who was also an environmentalist and social worker. He brought relief to villagers on the bank of Ganga in Muzzaffarpur district Uttar Pradesh from yearly flood by the construction of a dam by incorporating voluntary help from villagers who were spiritually inspired by Baba. They sang *nama kirtana* Hare Krishna Hare Krishna, Krishna Krishna Hare Hare Mahamantra and did physical work with renewed energy and faith. They completed the dam without external help and it is still standing, and is a tribute to faith and perseverance. He had total faith in Shree Ma and so he decided to leave his mortal body in Shree Ma's Kashi Ashram in Shree Ma's presence. To resume the narration, in the evening a platform was erected in the courtyard of Kanyapeeth. *Narayan Puja*, *Adhiwas* (Prior to *kirtan*) *Pujan*, *Holika Dahan*, *bhajan*, *kirtan* followed in a charged atmosphere.

On 27th March *shodashopchar puja* was done again on the platform of Holi in the morning then offering of colours to the Lord took place. Immediately everyone went straight to Anand Jyoti Mandir. Beloved Gopalji's Vighraha was affectionately

and respectfully brought out in a large vessel and then devotees offered special colour known as *abir*, *gulal* and different colours to Gopalji simultaneously chanting mantra. In this way all played Holi with Gopalji. Then Gopalji was taken back into the temple where *Maha abhishek*, *Shodasopchar Puja* and *Sringar* were performed on the Lord. Meanwhile devotees showered their love by singing praises to the Lord and doing *kirtan*. Then *bhog* was offered and finally the programme culminated in *arati* and partaking of *prasad*. Once more an occasion to feel the Lord close to our heart and come out of our smallness ended suitably in a spirit of Ananda.

In Pune Ashram Shree Shree Chaitanya Mahaprabhu's birthday was celebrated with morn to evening *kirtan* of the *Mahamantra* Hare Krishna Hare Krishna Krishna Krishna Hare Hare Hare Ram Hare Ram, Ram, Ram Hare Hare, offering of *bhog* and partaking of *prasad*.

With this we end the news for this issue.

JAI MA
The Editorial Board.

*

LIST OF FESTIVALS/UTSAV

- | | |
|---|-------------------------------|
| 1. Shree 108 Swami Muktananda
Giriji's Sannyas Utsav | - 14 th April 2013 |
| 2. Shree Shree Basanti Durga Puja | - April 16 to April 20 2013 |
| 3. Shree Shree Annapurna Puja | - April 18 2013 |
| 4. Akshaya Tithiya | - May 13, 2013 |
| 5. Baba Bholanathji's Nirvana Tithi | - May 18, 2013 |
| 6. Buddha Purnima | - May 25, 2013 |
| 7. Janma Tithi Puja of Shree Shree Ma | - 27, 28 May, 2013 |
| 8. Shree Ganga Dushehra | - June 18, 2013 |
| 9. Guru Purnima Mahotsav | - July 22, 2013 |
| 10. Shree Swami Muktananda Giriji's Nirvana Tithi | - August 13, 2013 |

OBITUARY

1. Swami Arupnandaji (Br. Debavrata)

Swami Arupnandaji, formerly Br. Devavrata, joined Shree Ma's Ashram forty years back. He was a true sadhu and worked selflessly for Ma in several Ashrams. Ma was very pleased with the hard work he rendered in gardening in Pune Ashram specially. He used to send loads of vegetables carefully grown to Ma. He was a humble and simple person fond of reading rare spiritual books, and encouraged devotees to do *satsang*. He was in Kolkata Ashram when he left his body on June 8, 2012. For his Brahmlcen self all rituals were performed respectfully. We offer our prayers to Shree Ma for his eternal rest at Her feet.

2. Swami Sarvanandji (Sudhanshu da)

Br. Sudhanshu was an old student of Shree Ma's Vidyapeeth and after graduating joined the Ashram. He became an expert in performing *puja*, as he used to help Nirvananandaji from his Vidyapeeth days. After taking Naishthik Brahmacharys and later Sannyas he was known as Swami Sarvananda. He used to perform *arati* and *puja* in Ananda Jyotir Mandir till the end, besides other duties in the Ashram. He was very kind to all the devotees and popular amongst them. He breathed his last on 7 November, 2012. The void created by him in the Shiva temple premises in Kankhal Ashram can never be filled. We pray to Ma : may his soul rest in peace.

3. Dr. Priyaranjan Ghosh

Dr. Priyaranjan Ghosh was a former dentist in Ranchi. He built a place for a dental hospital. Just then Shree Ma arrived in Ranchi and as destiny would have it Shree Ma was invited to his house for celebrating a function organised by the devotees. At the end of it, his intentions changed and he decided to dedicate the building to the ashram for Ma. The registration was done in Shree Ma's presence. A transformation took within him and he dedicated his life as Brahmachari to Ma. He used to travel with Shree Ma. He was very fond of doing *japa*. He stayed in Kankhal Ashram for several years in his old age. On Decembers 25, 2012 his soul merged in Shree Ma's feet. His body was cremated at Manikarnika ghat in Varanasi according to his wish-after it was first brought to the Ashram where Shree Ma's *prasad* was smeared on his body. We pray for his soul. May it rest in peace.

4. Shrimati Kamala Pandya —

Late Sm. Kamala Pandya was the daughter of a very old devotee, Baneshwari Prasad of Allahabad. Her grandfather was the Dewan of the erstwhile state of Gwalior.

She was dedicated to service. She had Shree Ma's first darshan after her marriage with Ma's devotee Late Jagdish Prasad Pandya. Ma's first sentence on seeing her was "From where have you come here"? The couple's *diksha* took place in a divine atmosphere. They received their mantra from space. Ma said "God Himself gave mantra to you both." After her husband Jagdish P. Pandya's demise she lived a pure life following ashram rules. Her last words were "I am that what you are and you are what I am. Brahmanandam Parama Sukhadam..... Gurum Namami Anandamayee Ma give Ananda to all". She said Ma told her that She has relieved her of all worldly ties. Shree Ma told her daughter Aruna, "Such parents are not seen generally. They will help you always." Ma accepted her service like from other ashram inmates. Paramananda Swamiji also corroborated this. She lived with her daughter Aruna in a *kuti* next to the ashram till the end. We offer our prayers for the departed soul at Shree Ma's feet.

5. Brahmachari Yogananda

Brahmachari Yogananda was a true *sadhu*. Non attachment was his virtue. He sang Hare Krishna song in a melodious voice. His soul merged with Ma on February 11 2013 in his *kuti* in Bhimpura ashram. His brother Brahmachari Shyamal was in Kumbh Prayag where he offered prayers. A *bhandara* was given in the ashram. We pray for the peace and liberation of his soul at Shree Ma's feet.

*