

# Ananda

Newsletter of the Shree Shree Anandamayee Sangha  
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Contents – Second part of April 2019 Amrita Varta



**Swami Chidananda** talks at a retreat in Uttar Kashi in April 1996

<https://youtu.be/0b3Zd7OdNmo> – Retreat held at DLS Ashram, Uttar Kashi to mark the birth centenary of Ma Anandamayi

Text File.

**Excerpt from Smaranika** (souvenir at the time of inauguration of Sri Ma's samadhi temple in 1987.)  
<http://www.anandamayi.org/new/SubDhuttsovfinal.pdf> Article about Ma by Subimal Dutt

Sound file:

**Sri Ma Anandamayi.** Sri Ma sings Govinda, Govinda Jayo at Varanasi in 1955

<http://www.anandamayi.org/mmedia/mp3/Govindagopala.mp3> DIV bMS00556 AU\_002B\_Side 2. Performed by Anandamayi, 1896-1982. Govinda Govinda, Varanasi 1955) Repository: Ando-Harvard Theological Library, Harvard University.

**Sangha website** <http://www.shreeshreeanandamayeesangha.org>

## Mother as seen by a Westerner

Arnaud Desjardins (Paris)\*

Flow on, Ganga, holy river, from the mountains to the gigantic plains, from Rishikesh to Benares, called Kashi or Varanasi by its children. I now intend to return to the sacred city.

At last I shall see face to face the sage whose two pictures, at an interval of several years, stirred me so profoundly that I could never forget them. When I had only just completed my studies, lost along the various problems that confront a young man hardly prepared for life, I one day, in a bookshop, glanced casually through the pages of *Autobiography of A Yogi* by Paramhansa Yogananda, the founder of the well known Self-Realization Fellowship. Among all the photos of austere sages and venerable old men that illustrate the work, the picture of a very young woman with closed eyes struck me like a shock. She seemed extraordinarily beautiful and I thought: this is the Woman, the Mother, the Virgin.

Eight years later someone presented to me the beautiful book *India* by the English photographer and writer Richard Lannoy. As I turned the pages, the face of an elderly woman with a look unlike any other, touches me to the quick. I am reminded of the meaning of the name of Krishna: "he who steals the hearts". I do not even skim through the rest of the book: it has remained open on that page and never been closed again.

And a few months ago, when in my own car I started on my first trip to India, I made my first halt in a small Swiss village, at a distance of

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\*The following are short extracts translated from the French book by Arnaud Desjardins : *Ashrams, Les Yogis et les Sages*, Published by La Palatine, Paris Geneva

several thousand miles from my destination. Two courageous women spend every summer in that village. They both lived a number of eventful years in the country that I am about to explore. To my question: "If I were to meet only one person in India, who should it be?" One of them replied very softly: "Ma Anandamayee."

When I mentioned her to Swami Sivananda, She said, "She is the most perfect flower the Indian soil has produced."

Today I only think : "It can hardly be that I shall not be disappointed." And, I am not even sure that I wish to meet her.



Banaras is the touchstone for the love or the horror of India for Europeans. I have perhaps never been so perfectly happy as during the weeks that I spent in that city, and thanks to my friends Bhattacharyas who made me discover the heart of their city. I lived as if in the Kingdom of Heaven. But I know a number of travellers from whom it remains the memory of a veritable nightmare. I am sure one could spend one's whole life in Benares without exhausting its riches.

At the very end of one of the narrow lanes that all resemble one another, and where it is easy to lose one's way, right at the bank of the Ganges, in the *mohulla* of Bhadaini is situated the main ashram of the great Bengali saint and sage Sri Sri Ma Anandamayee. I arrived there for the first time one evening during the Durga Puja festival. I shall always remember it.

Having started at sunrise and succeeded in reaching Varanasi by nightfall, I am fairly exhausted. To locate Bhadaini is yet an event. At last I park my car in a road broad enough for carriages and, led by a few children, proceed on foot through the lane that seems even more mysterious and unreal in the dark of night.

What I see at the end of the lane is fantastic.



A swarming multitude enters, emerges, and watches those who enter and emerge. One might think the bustle on the footpath due to a

special performance at the Opera-house or to a ball in some large hotel, of which the guests have been miraculously deprived of their shoes.

The narrow entrance, giving away under the streamers, is blocked by flower and garland-sellers and by a heap of shoes and sandals scattered all over the pavement.

Inside, the crush is indescribable: tanned backs, *dhotis* shining white in the night, a rainbow of *saris*. A guide whose dark features I am unable to distinguish catches hold of me, and not without difficulty tracing out a passage for us, walks ahead of me up a narrow staircase.

The noise, the chanting, the music are deafening. But as we enter the terrace where the crowd become, if possible, even more dense, the threefold rhythm beaten on gongs, bells and cymbals bursts abruptly. Those who know it, will guess at once. Those who have ever heard it, cannot imagine it. Thundering, sublime, piercing, overwhelming, shaking the whole body with its ever repeated three beats, capturing emotion, imposing silence on the mind, it raises in that wonderful autumn night the cry of the planet towards the sparkling sky. Across the white of a portico, amidst the black infinity of the plain far below, I distinguish the broad band of the eternal Ganga. In that frame, which opens out from a small outer staircase rising from the river, I see the most beautiful face of a man I have ever seen. Some wandering sadhu for whom this evening is but a halt on the road without end. The serene and silent peace that emanates from him, his ineffable smile and the light in his eyes give their meaning to the clangour of the brass under the blows of the clappers. Then he vanishes.

Instantaneously, abruptly there is silence, total, absolute, nourished by a thousand individual silences.

I do not know for how long.

And suddenly I am pushed through the once again moving and noisy crowd, towards Her whom I had almost forgotten. "Mother, Mother", says a voice close to my ear. A woman who seems at the most forty years old, with long black hair falling loosely over her shoulders,

dressed in a spotless white *sari*, more beautiful than I ever dreamt, smiles at me.

There is no question of my prostrating and putting my forehead on the ground: I cannot tear away my gaze from hers. I place one knee on the floor. I do not know how long this lasts. Then she turns round and walks away. I have had my first *darshana* of Mataji.



Devotees and visitors are sitting around Mother in a cluster in order to have her *darshana*, her blessed sight, and she enlivens by her supernatural presence and her silent radiance the singing of the hymns.

Close by her, dressed all in white, the young girls who have dedicated their lives to her.

And I marvel at the extraordinary destiny of that humble woman of the village, who lost several children at a tender age, and whose baffling little girl, more serious, more gentle and joyous than all the others, the little girl who did not cry after she was born and who never wept except once during her childhood, has become the epitome of the Mother for millions of men and women. While Didima's life was confined to her modest home, how could she have thought that she would one day travel all over India and that the crowd of the small and the splendour of the great would come and bow at her feet?

Three women share the honour of fanning Mataji, and their movements seem in rhythm with the music.

To the accompaniment of his little harmonium, a *brahmachari* sings. His singing has attained to such an abandon, to such an impersonality that he rally seems to transmit something divine. Then two of the young girls, dressed all in white, sing some songs and this is perhaps even more perfect, even purer. Among the crowd are many children. Some play quietly in their corner. Others, curled up, sleep without the slightest movement. A few gaze at Mataji, unwearied.

Without a pause, newcomers worm their way to Ma, prostrate and offer a few fruits, flowers or a garland..

Off and on her eyes gaze into the far distance and her expression takes on a beauty that is truly divine and beyond all description. What does she see at such moments? With which world is she in touch? What is the significance of a being in our midst so totally different? She has eyes like ourselves and yet so entirely unlike. She sees us and sees much more than us. Why have we no access to her vision? Why are we thus banished from the world of which she is a living proof? The more I look at her, the more fascinated, the more amazed am I.

Sometimes she smiles at a newcomer. Sometimes suddenly, her gaze fastens open one or the other with such intensity that it is almost unbearable even for those who only witness it. This lasts for a few seconds that seem an eternity.

The hymns follow one another, but now it is Ma who sings, and the crowd repeats in chorus: "*Hari bol, Hari bol, Hari bol, Hari bol.*" Her singing has such force, such vigour that we are shaken in our entire being. This surpasses by far everything of that order that I have had the chance to experience. Something immense that very nearly causes giddiness makes its presence felt among us. We want even more of it. But we feel that we should be unable to bear it.

Her face is so powerful that I cannot disengage myself from it. Lost in a crowd, I have never before known a similar impression of intensity and fullness. At last, something has actually happened in my life. And, this certainly remains with me day after day for weeks, together with the one, not less forceful, that everything is possible for Mataji.

A sentence comes to my mind: "I am not worthy that you enter my house, but say only one word and my child will be saved."

Perhaps I have been capable of really knowing this, for at this very moment Ma Anandamayee slowly turns her face in my direction and looks at me. Of that instant I will not speak. Now she talks. She speaks with animation and gaiety. She laughs a great deal. "Anandamayee"—does it not signify "permeated by joy"? Everyone seems highly amused. Questions are asked in quick succession.

The atmosphere is completely free, intimate, spontaneous, relaxed. I do not understand anything, for sure. But what does it matter? The French disciple, to whom someone remarked: "You don't understand anything of what Ma says?", only replied: "But who does?"

This reply is correct. The teaching of Ma Anandamayee is absolutely beyond words, just like that of Ramana Maharshi. And when she speaks, she still remains beyond her words and beyond the comprehension of her listeners. Nevertheless, a teaching of Ma Anandamayee, formulated in words, certainly does exist. One has often been surprised and dumbfounded by the way this unlettered woman replies, without ever a moment's reflection, to the most difficult and perilous questions that are put to her by very learned men. Her words have for years been recorded by her disciples, especially by a quite astonishing and indefatigable woman, Sri Gurupriya Devi, and by Brahmachari Kamalda, and some have been translated into English. They are extraordinarily interesting and striking, and represent one of the monuments of metaphysical thought and a prodigious commentary on all *sadhanas* known to us.

I myself have, assisted by the Swami who served me as an interpreter, prepared in minute detail several conversations with her. Certain sayings, certain utterances have impressed me profoundly.

But this was never the most essential point.

(Excerpt from *Mother as seen by her Devotees*, published by SSAS, 2nd edition, October 1967)

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## Ma Anandamayee Camp in Allahabad Kumbha Mela 2019

Most revered Maluk Peethadishwar Sri Sri 1008 Rajendradasji visited the camp of Ma Anandamayee during Kumbha Mela in Allahabad to pay his homage to Mother. He remembered a number of incidents and his own experiences of Mother. Following are some highlights:

I have the privilege today that I got the opportunity to sit down in front of Mother's photograph in her camp in Allahabad Kumbha Mela. I remember an incident and narrating my reminiscences. There was a sadhaka living in the ashram of Oriyababa in Vrindavana. He belonged to Agarwal Vaishya community and spent long decades in Vrindavana. He had the opportunity to get along with many great sadhakas including Oriyababa, Swami Akhandanandaji and Mother. He used to visit the ashram of my Guru and narrated an incident that I'm telling you today. The sadhaka told us: "I spent more than forty years in Vrindavana but I could not experience any spiritual feeling. There is a temple inside Radha Vallabha temple in Vrindavana and it is known as the temple of Jeevan Vallabha. Once there was religious discourse of Swami Akhandananda. He was delivering his discourse and Mother sat nearby. She was totally under *bhava samadhi* (while praying or talking to god when one loses its senses of 'I' and becomes one with the energy of god, it is *bhava samadhi*) while listening to *Krishnalila*. After some time, Mother went down deep in her *bhava* and all the signs of *prema* (pure love or divine love) emerged on her body. Her eyes were half open. Swami Akhandananda too was in *bhava samadhi* making the audience immerse into the same feeling. All of a sudden, I noticed child Krishna came out beneath the chair of Mother and climbed up to her. Child started playing on her lap while Mother was in her deep *samadhi*.



I continued to watch the *bal-lila* of Krishna. I became motionless, could not even hear what Swami Akhandanadaji was telling. I continued to get involved in a dream like situation. Child Krishna merged to Mother's body after the discourse was over. I experienced such a great feeling for the first time during my long stay in Vrindavana. I now can realise that divine *lila* was possible in Vrindavana but that needed the spiritual power like Mother and other saints through whom Krishna can continue his *lila*".

Mulak Peethadhishwar said Gopalji of Mother installed in Kashi ashrama continues his *lila*. God and divine souls are inseparable. It is said in the *Veda*, 'ब्रह्मविद् ब्रह्मैव भवति' (The knower of the Brahman becomes Brahman). According to the *Naradiya Bhaktisutra*, it is explained as 'तस्मिन् तज्जने भेदभाव' (there is no difference between God and His devotees. Divine souls are *satya* (truth) and *nitya* (eternal), same as God. Mother was full of divinity and the symbol of *satya* and *nitya*. We are not sitting in front of the portrait of the mother. Instead, we are here directly sitting by her side. I'm fortunate enough that she called me in her camp on this auspicious occasion of the Kumbha.

I refer here to Mother Madalasa, 'संगः सर्वात्मना त्याज्यः सचेत् त्यक्तं न शक्यते सः सद्भिः सह कर्तव्यः सतां संगो हि विमुक्तये' *Sanga* means *asakti* (आसक्ति) or attachment which must be discarded away with full force. 'सर्वात्मना आसक्तिः त्याज्यः' calls us to be detached. It is because जीवात्मा is a fraction of *parambrahma* (Absolute) and a part always carries the virtues of its origin. God is नित्य-मुक्त (eternally liberated) and beyond any bondage. *Atma*, the soul is the part of the Absolute and hence it is also beyond any bondage. It means one must free himself from all types of bondage to remain the part of the God.

Now question arises why god is free and *jiva*, the individual soul, is under bondage? Lord Krishna seldom condoled following the destruction of his relatives and community. It was a vast community of 56 crore *yaduvanshis*. He remained deter and continued smiling. Why?

It is because he is beyond any bondage and is स्थितप्रज्ञ, *sthitaprajya* – maintaining equilibrium in all situations. It reflects the symbol of *mukti*. In other words, common people are entrapped within their own small shells that causes bondage and *asakti* leading to the cycle of birth and death. This also causes delay in total freedom or *mukti*. Therefore, *asakti* cannot touch God while it grasps the common people all the time.

Next question arises immediately as to how attachment is removed. Usually bad habits are rarely removed. And how does attachment, cause of the continuing cycle of birth and rebirth in a chain process, can be got rid of? Many saints and scholars have opined that people cannot get rid of *asakti*. But, it may also lead to liberation instead of bondage. 'सः सद्भिः सह कर्तव्यः' means people must turn their *asakti* to the divine souls, being in the company of the truth (सत्संग). More you are attached to them more your bondage will minimise. This is the way to free from the cycle of birth and death. We have to turn our attachments (cause of sufferings and sorrow) to the lotus feet of Mother and other great souls and their divine grace can only make us detached from the worldly pleasures.

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## *Children Section*

### **Noble Gesture**

There was a thief whose only activity was theft. Once he was out of his home for theft like other days but he was not successful in his bid. At last, he found a cottage of a sadhu. He thought what he could collect from there as there would not be any precious things or money because a sadhu does not possess any riches. The thief thought he would have to be satisfied with a few small articles only.

He found the sadhu's cottage empty. The door was closed but not locked. He first thought the sadhu would have been inside and he pushed the door gently. Since the door was not locked, it opened with the push. The thief peeped into the cottage and found nobody there. There was complete calm outside. He entered the cottage and found a few articles of daily use – a dish, a glass, a water pot (*kamandal*), a couple of clothes and a mat. He wanted to take away all these articles in the absence of the valuables. He collected all and made a bundle but confronted the sadhu while coming out of the cottage. He started running and the glass came out of the bundle. He did not stop to pick it up because he had to escape.

The sadhu well understood the situation that a thief had stolen all his articles and now escaping. All of a sudden, sadhu picked up the glass and started chasing the thief. It was just like a competition of a race of the two persons. Sadhu at last got hold of the thief who became very nervous. He thought he had to go to jail for his crime.

However, to his utter surprise, he found the sadhu neither rebuking

nor beating him for the crime. Instead, the sadhu said, " This glass was dropped from your bundle. Have you collected all the articles from the cottage?" He then handed over the glass to the thief and left.

The thief was spellbound with these words. Tears rolled out on his cheeks. He fell flat on the feet of the sadhu and apologised.

The thief left stealing on that very day and started a new life under the guidance of the sadhu living with him in his cottage.

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### List of Festivals

1. Sri 108 Swami Muktananda Giriji's Sanyas Utsav	April 14, 2019
2. Akshay Tritiya	May 7, 2019
3. Adi Shankaracharya Jayanti	May 9, 2019
4. Baba Bholanath's Nirvan Tithi	May 12, 2019
5. Buddha Purnima	May 18, 2019
6. Sri Sri Ma's Janmotsava	May 3 – 21-22, 2019
7. Sri Ganga Dashahara	June 12, 2019
8. Guru Purnima Mahotsava	July 16, 2019
9. Sri 108 Swami Muktananda Giriji's Nirvan Tithi	August 7, 2019

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## Prabha Sakshi Interview

Ascetics and devotees throng Maa Anandamayee camp in Allahabad Kumbha seeking peace

Prabha Sakshi is a devotional media channel that approached Maa Anandamayee camp to highlight messages of Mother and the history of the camp. Two senior inmates of Maa Anandamayee Ashram, Br. Geeta and Br. Gunita answered the following questions:

**Prabha Sakshi:** Tell us the importance of this camp. Why have you gathered here?

**Br. Geeta:** In 1962 Hardwar Kumbha Mela, Niranjani Akhada came out with the procession with Mother Anandamayee sitting on an elephant. She was honoured and worshipped with *kalash* and *angavastram* as a senior *brahmavid*. Niranjani Akhada described Mother as 'Kumbha Jyoti'. The then Prime Minister, Mrs. Indira Gandhi, visited Mother in her camp in next Kumbha held in Allahabad in 1966. I was present at that time. Our camp remained full with devotees all the time. Many ministers too visited our camp following the visit of Mrs. Gandhi. She also visited Mother for her grace after becoming the Prime Minister. Even police and administrative staff visited the camp and they were moved by the visit of the Prime Minister and wanted to have the *darshan* of Mother. Purna Kumbha mela was held in Allahabad in 1977 and Mother attended it. Her last visit to Kumbha mela was in 1982 in Allahabad when she recited a *kirtan*, '*brahma-may kumbha jal, jai ananda kumbha jai*'.

A consciousness always covers the Kumbha which is attended by hundreds and thousands of great ascetics. Mother Anandamayee is the consciousness that passes through these ascetics and great saints. No work is possible without inner consciousness and Mother resides within all of us in the form of inner consciousness. She empowers us and it

reflects in the Kumbha Mela too.

Prabha Sakshi: Please highlight the promotional activities of Sanskrit language?

Br. Geeta: Indian culture and philosophy are based on Sanskrit. You know that even foreign scholars and scientists are recognising this as a holistic language. Devnagari script derives from Sanskrit and is said to be a holistic language. Infact, Hinduism has its base in Sanskrit language which, I think, is in our blood. Our existence entirely depends on this language. It's a driven force in our life.

Prabha Sakshi: What is your opinion about the present generation?

Br. Geeta: Knowledge without Indian tradition and Sanskrit language leads to a haphazard development in the evolution of man. Ideal character and *sanskar* (sacrament) are two most characteristics that reflect the quality of education, youth are getting at present. Unfortunately, today's syllabus does not compile these characteristics. I stress on building a synthesis between modern education and India's ancient teachings.

Prabha Sakshi: You spent long time with Mother since your childhood. Tell us some of her messages that would inspire the people.

Br. Gunita: Mother was requested to deliver her first lecture in Bangalore in 1952. She said, "Take the name of Hari (God). Rest is useless or rubbish". This, infact, is Mother's main message. Main aim in our ashram is to get ourselves attached with God in any way. This attachment is not done in aloofness, instead, it is established simultaneously doing all the daily chores and discharging all the duties and responsibilities. Mother taught us how to do all activities in a detached manner in order to keep ourselves attached to God. It's the *mulamantra*, for all the inmates in our ashram.

Prabha Sakshi: You enjoyed long association with Mother. Can you tell the feeling of the devotees towards Mother? How does this feeling inspire others?

Br. Gunita: Mother had the unique nature to get along with the

people. She became child when she met the children. She behaved with the people including her devotees as per their own '*bhava*'. She never hurt anybody's '*bhava*' or religious conceptions. Thus, everybody thought she was speaking in her/his inner feeling and she adored him/her most. However, she said one single word to everyone, 'get yourself attached to your god'. This message was for all- to the ascetics as well as to the householders. She taught how to remain attached to the God all the time without disturbing usual activities. You can easily do it from within yourself, she used to say. And, to give an example she narrated a brief story: There was a woman whose husband died and she went to the cremation ground for his last rites. That was the time of remembering her God. She did it by keeping herself going by the side and came back after few minutes to do her duty. This way she maintained her relationship to her god. This world is full with miseries and suffering and people must remember god during this crucial time. God reciprocates and gives power to fight against those sufferings. It (reciprocation of God) contains the core, essential truth of creation, and its vibration is so powerful that it can change your fate and destiny. This is the *mula mantra* of our Mother.

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## Ashram Varta

Anandaswarupeshu,

सतीर्थराजोजयतिप्रयागः

Rotation is the law of nature. Kumbha Mela follows the same law. It happens in every six or twelve years. Sometimes it is *Purna kumbha* while sometimes it is *Ardha Kumbha*. This year's *Ardha Kumbha Mela* was held on the bank of Triveni *sangam* in Prayagraj from January 15 to March 4. Maa Anandamayee Ashram organised a camp under the supervision of Swami Devchhananda Giri, Secretary of Varanasi Ashram. Sri Tapan Kumar Basu, a devotee of Mother, arranged the camp and Sri Sri Maa Anandamayee Kanyapeeth organised various programmes during the Kumbha Mela. Mother's devotees from all over India thronged the camp.

Inmates of all the ashrams of Mother and her devotees took part in *Shahi snan* (शाही स्नान) on January 15 (*Makar Sankranti*), February 4 (*Mauni Amavasya*) and February 10 (*Vasanta Panchami*) along with Nirvani Akhada. Saraswati puja was organised on *Vasanta Panchami* day in the camp.

Princess Vishnupriya and Princess Krishnapriya of Banaras royal family attended and assisted the camp. General Secretary of Maa Anandamayee Sangh, Sri Swapan Ganguly took holy dip on the first and last bathing days. Rev. Swami Golakanandaji of Puri also took part in three *Shahi Snans*. *Sadhu bhandara* was held on January 15 and February 4 and blankets were distributed to the sadhus while young *hatuks* (celibates) of Nimbarka ashram were fed and given blankets on *Vasant Panchami* day.

Mother introduced the tradition of honouring the great saints during the Kumbha. This very tradition was duly followed. We visited different Akhadas to honour Sri 1008 Swami Avadheshananda Giriji, Mahamandaleshwar of Juna Akhada, Mahant Nimbarkacharya Sri 1008



Vrinvandasji Maharaj, Sri 1008 Maluk Peethadhishwar Rajendradasji Maharaj and Sri Gurusharananandaji Maharaj of Karshni Peethadhishwar of Ramanreti, to name a few. They were honoured with *angavastram* and *prasada*. All were invited to Mother's camp but it was not possible for them to visit owing to their busy schedule. Rev. Rajendradasji of Maluk Peethadhishwar visited our camp to pay homage to Mother (the event was covered in this issue of the *Amrit Varta* separately).

We are grateful to one of Mother's close devotees, Sri Karunananda Vajpayee, judge of the Allahabad High Court and his elder brother, Sri Mukundbhai Vajpayee who not only visited our camp but also ensured smooth running of the activities. They will receive the divine grace of Mother.

Annual *Satyannarayan* puja was organised on February 21 in Kashi Kanyapeeth. Ananda Milan Utsav was held in Tarapeeth Ashram of Mother.

*Mahasivaratri* festival was held with full religious fervour in all the ashrams of Mother on March 4. Festival of colour, Holi was celebrated in all the ashrams. Special features included *Holika-dahan* on March 20 followed by colourful puja of Gopalji in Varanasi Ashram and Chhaliyaji's *dol-mahotsav* in Vrindavan Ashram the next day.

### **Ashram Utsav in Agartala**

The nine-day special *utsav* of the consecration of the deities in Agartala ashram was celebrated from March 7 onwards. Many *sanyasis*, saints, *brahmachris* and *brahmacharinis* from different ashrams of Sri Ma attended this programme.

Agartala, the capital of northeast state of Tripura is a picturesque city surrounded by lakes and temples. Ashram of Sri Ma is situated in a sprawling campus in front of Agartala royal palace. Uma Maheshwar temple, located in the east of the palace, is in the campus of the ashram. Sri Ma made her last visit to this ashram towards the end of March 1982.

Ashram houses varieties species of flowering and trees. Coconut trees invite one in long queue at the entrance. A beautiful lake is situated

at the centre of the ashram, surrounded by a white building and a temple.

Uma Maheshwar temple houses the deities of Uma and Maheshwar in black stone. All the rituals are held here with fidelity and precision. The priest, carries out his duties in total devotion and he is particularly caring to the devotees.

#### **Thursday, March 7, 2019**

A devotee donated a piece of land in Udaipur area and a building was constructed at the site. *Adhivas*, a ceremony preliminary to an auspicious act, of the idols of Sri Ma, Swami Muktananda Giriji and Baba Bholanath was performed following all the religious norms.

#### **Friday, March 8, 2019**

Murti or Idol *pratishtaha* (*murti pratistha* refers to the ceremony by which a *murti* is consecrated in a temple, wherein hymns and *mantra* are recited and the idol's eyes are opened for the first time) ceremony of Sri Ma, Swami Muktananda Giriji and Baba Bholanath was held in the new temple in Udaipur ashram. *Kumari puja* was also organised on the occasion. *Brahmins* were fed and devotees took *prasad*.

#### **Saturday, March 9, 2019**

*Shodoshopachar puja*, a puja that is performed with 16 different offerings, was organised in Uma Maheshwar temple. Eminent spiritual orator Prabhu Nityagopal Goswami captivated the audience with his rendition of Bhagavat *katha* in the evening.

#### **Sunday, March 10, 2019**

Students of Anandamayee Vidyapeeth of Agartala presented lovely cultural programme in the evening in the hall of the ashram.

#### **Monday, March 11, 2019**

A musical evening was organised in which the vocal and instrumental artists presented their performances.

#### **Tuesday, March 12, 2019**

Devotes and the *kirtana mandali* took out the *nagar parikrama* (moving round the city by chanting devotional songs) in the morning.

Gangapuja was performed on the bank of the lake. Initiation programme was also organised. *Adhivas* of the idols of Sri Ganesha, Radhakrishna and Hanumanji was performed in the newly-built Sri Mokshada Sundari Bipin Bihari Bhawan on the bank of the lake.

### Wednesday, March 13, 2019

Idols of Sri Ganesha, Radhakrishna and Hanumanji were installed with *shodoshopochar puja*. *Kumari puja* and *batuk puja* were organised to mark the occasion. Initiation programme was also held.

*Adhivas* of Siva idol and idols of Sri Saraswati, Muktananda Girji and Baba Bholanath was held in the evening. *Matri satsang* was organised the same day and *brahmacharinis* of Varanasi Kanyapeeth presented classical music recital. Senior Br. Geeta Banerjee presented a graphic narrative of the arrival of Sri Ma at Agartala (this description was penned by late Br. Panuda). This presentation described the great supernatural power of Sri Ma and the audience remained captivated to listen to Her magical and spiritual journey. Br. Gunita welcomed the guests and devotees.

### Thursday, March 14, 2019

Installation ceremony of the idols of Parama Siva, Sri Saraswati, Muktananda Girji and Baba Bholanath was held with absolute perfection. Swami Achyutanandaji Maharaj, President of the Sangha, narrated his reminiscences on Sri Ma followed by another reminiscences shared by Vedantacharya Br. Jaya Bhattacharya, former Principal of Sri Sri Ma Anandamayee Kanyapeeth. Both the sharings took the audience to another world, a world full of divine bliss. After musical event, initiation programme was held and Br. Chandan Didi, first Principal of Kanyapeeth, initiated the devotees. *Adhivas* of Sri Ma was held and *naam-yajna adhivas* (नाम यज्ञ अधिवास) was initiated by Sri Ashish Chowdhary, Assistant Secretary of the Sangha. *Sadhus* and *brahmins* were fed and the poor and destitutes were distributed *prasad*.

### Friday, March 15, 2019

Sri Ma's murti or idol was consecrated in the newly-built temple in

the morning amidst chanting of the *Vedas*. Special pujas were held in all the temples. Swami Adhyatmanandaji of Ahmedabad spoke on Sri Ma (*Matri pasangu*). *Naam-kirtana* (devotional chanting of God's name) continued from the dawn to dusk. *Maha-prasad* was distributed to the devotees.

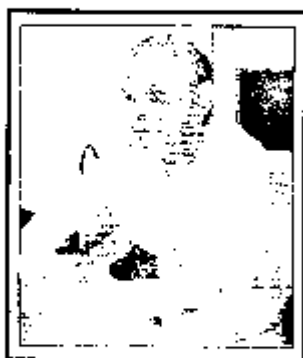
Nine-day *utsav* concluded with the *mandir-parikrama* (circumambulation of the temple) and *Hari-naam sankirtana* in the evening.

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“Wherever God may keep you at any time, from there itself must you undertake the pilgrimage to God-realization. In all forms, in action and non-action is He, the One Himself. While attending to your work with your hands, keep yourself bound to Him by sustaining japa, the constant remembrance of Him in your heart and mind. In God's empire, it is forgetfulness of Him that is detrimental. The way to Peace lies in the remembrance of Him and of Him alone.” ?

– Anandamayi Ma

## Homage



Shri Subhash Bhattacharya (26.02.1947 - 02.08.2018)

– Annapurna Bhattacharya

By the divine grace of Shri Shri Anandamayee Ma, we have had the good fortune of knowing many visionaries in ashram, who, have left an indelible mark in our lives. Subhash Bhattacharya, fondly known as Keshto Da, is one such individual, whose contribution to the ashram and devotees have been immense.

Keshto Da was born in Dhaka (Bangladesh) on February 26, 1947. He was the third youngest son of Shri Ananda Mohan Bhattacharya and Smt. Bijon Bala Devi. He and his elder sister, Brahmacharini Jaya Di came to Shri Shri Ma in Almora Ashram during their infancy and remained associated with the Ashram since then. They completed their education from Vidyapeeth and Kanyapeeth respectively, and went on to accomplish various ashram responsibilities entrusted to them. On the professional front, Keshto Da worked as Senior Proof Reader in Delhi University Press and retired on February 28, 2007.

Keshto Da's services towards the ashram fraternity have been enormous and unforgettable. He was blessed to be present during *Ati Rudra Maha Yagna* at Kankhal in 1981 and attended Mother as and when required. Moreover, his dedicated services were required during several Durga Pujas held in various ashrams in different periods of time.

For years together, he has made immense and highly important contributions and supervised the religious functions in Delhi Ashram, and additionally and notably, Sri Annapurna Puja in Varanasi. Devotees have come to associate his presence and involvement in the Annakut function in Delhi Ashram as a vital part of the festivities. His recitation of *shloka* from scriptures, specifically, The *Bhagawad Gita* were inimitable. He was a true *dhaarak* (bearer) of the tradition of Mother being duly steeped in his being.

Keshto Da has lived in the Delhi Ashram for more than fifty years. He has been an integral part of the ashram fraternity and his memories and instructions will remain ever relevant in the years to come. Being extremely witty and wise, he was hugely involved in building a personal connection and bonding with the devotees in ashram. He was the one person who knew almost every devotee for at least three generations and was instrumental in ensuring everyone got the *bhog prasad*. Many devotees recollect reverentially about the care with which Keshto Da used to ask one and all to accept the *bhog prasad* distributed in the ashram. Keshto Da will always be remembered for his kind gestures and consideration towards devotees. Once Keshto Da revealed that it has been Shri Shri Ma's kind instructions to get food prepared in little extra quantity than required in ashram, so that, if at once, devotees happen to visit ashram on any routine day, other than *utsav* time, then also *bhog prasad* remains sufficient enough to be taken by everyone. It is to Keshto Da only that Shri Shri Ma once said, pointing to the plants and trees in Delhi Ashram, "These are all parts of me only, nothing moves without this body wishing it so". Shri Shri Ma's divine grace remains ever cherished by one and all.

Often we would find Keshto Da enthusiastically narrating the details of Shri Shri Ma's *lila satsang* in ashram premises. He had a characteristic aura and charisma of his own and he will remain as one among the "*tejaswi putras*" of Shri Shri Ma. Keshto Da had special affection for kids and used to motivate youngsters for their educational and spiritual pursuits.

Steeped into the philosophy of *sanatana dharma*, Keshto Da maintained "*sama- bhava*" towards one and all and never differentiated among his kins with their other ashramites or devotees. Ashram's interests have been the only thing which mattered to him. He remained a one-man encyclopedia and was absolutely well versed in the *parampara and niyam* of Vedic knowledge and systems, procedures and philosophy, followed in the ashram. Being ever vigilant, firm and affectionate, he would execute all duties with great elan and proficiency. He was an extremely helpful individual and ensured that everyone is well taken care of. Be it accomplishing any responsibility or honouring distinguished guests in ashram, he remained completely committed and pro-actively involved. He was a very hard-working, forthright, amicable, practical, modest, meticulous and jovial individual and his dedication to the ashram has been exemplary. His personality reflected serenity, simplicity and '*sadaa prasanna-sat-chit-anand-swarup.*'

There is a huge void created by the sudden passing away of Keshto Da and the loss for the ashram fraternity is irreparable. It is impossible to imagine Delhi Ashram without him. As Keshto Da left for heavenly abode, a treasure trove got lost and many spiritual instances remain undocumented. We realize that Keshto Da is *Matri-leen* now and enjoying Shri Shri Ma's care in the divine realm. He will be fondly remembered in our cherished memories and will forever continue to inspire us for generations together in future as well. We offer our humble offerings at the lotus feet of Shri Shri Ma and pray for peace and strength for one and all. Om Shanti! Jai Ma!

*(With inputs in the above text from Br. Geeta Di, Br. Jaya Di, Shri Sandip Datta and Shri Shubrashish Sen.)*