



SWAMI BHAJANANANDA

The Last Journey

She took refuge at Mother's lotus feet. She was a chosen devotee of Ma. She is Swami Bhajananda. It was the evening of the 15th February this year, when at the age of 80 Swami Bhajananda shed her earthly frame and set forth for the Deathless Abode.

She was popularly called "Pushpadi" in the ashrams, since Ma gave her the name of "Pushpa" when She accepted her into the ashram as a Brahmacharini. Before this, she was "Savitri", since she was born on the Savitri Chaturdashi Tithi. And after a very long time when she emerged into an ascetic life, initiated by His Holiness Swami Chidanandaji Maharaj, she became Swami Bhajananda.

She was born on 14th May, 1923 in an eminent Vaidya family of Mymensingh, presently in Bangladesh. Her father, Umesh Chandra Sen was a legend himself as a Headmaster in the both sides of Bengal. At 90 he embraced Sanyas, became Swami Krishnananda Giri, and lived upto 99 years, teaching English to the girls of Kanyapeeth at Varanasi Ashram. Pushpadi's mother, Kshirode Basini Devi, the eldest child in the family, was born to the great Dastidar family of Sylhet. Herself an all rounder by any standard, she was highly educated at home, since in those days women of aristocratic families used to be educated only at home. She was a prolific writer of poems, texts on pujas and folk vratas and history of the Rajputs.

Bhajananda had her schooling in Kolkata, at Mymensingh and Dhaka. It was just when preparations for University education was underway, after her education at Kamarunnessa Girls' College was over, the communal riot at Dhaka assumed serious dimension, the second world war was knocking at the Eastern Front and the curse of the 'Great Famine of Bengal' shattered the hopes. But from the early childhood she was a singer, having taken lessons from her mother, from the illustrious grandfather, and when she was just a student of Class VIII, she became a regular performer on the All India Radio at Dhaka. Later in the forties in Calcutta she became a student of the famous Kanak Das in Rabindra Sangeet at "Geeta Bitan" and of Sri Sukhendu Goswami in classical Hindustani music at "Sangeet Bhavan". For sometime she was a teacher in her own school in Dhaka, when she came in touch with Lila Ray, a close associate of Netaji, and played in the role of

"*Saudagar-Putra*" in Tagore's "*Tasher Desh*". She learnt also violin from Jamini Kanta Rai Dastidar, one of the eminent Dastidars.

Endowed with all the great virtues, a divinity in human form. Swami Bhajanananda, a close follower of Ma, left the marks of her contribution at most of the ashrams of Ma, namely, Agartala, Agarpara, Baroda, Vindiyachal, Tarapeeth, Delhi, Pune, Varanasi, Ranchi, Dehra Dun and Kankhal, to name at random. She was Mother's constant companion from wherever to wherever She moved.

The end came on the evening of 15th February at Pune, when she was returning to the Pune ashram in a motorcar, lying in the backseat, anxiously attended by Brahmacharini Kirti. Pushpadi, with a heavenly glow on her face, uttered "Ma. Ma. Ma," and breathed her last.

Then the herculean task of arranging to transport the body to Kankhal in accordance with the wishes of Bhajanananda was upon her admirers. On the morning of 17th February, amidst the spontaneous assembly of sadhus, brahmacharis and brahmacharinis, the body was lowered to rest in the depth of the Holy Ganga at Hardwar.