

A Garland of

LIGHTS

Baba's love for Taiwan



Avadhutika Ananda Lalita Ac.

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BABA'S LOVE FOR TAIWAN

AVADHUTIKA ANANDA LALITA AC.

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Dedication

*To my Gurudeva,
Whatever I have, You have given to me,
And I dedicate it all to You.
You are the only one in my heart and my thoughts.
You are the one whom I call out to.
All I am I offer to You.*

This book is dedicated to Gurudeva Shrii ShriiAnandamurti,
whose love is eternally embedded in our hearts.

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Baba in the China Airlines VIP Lounge, August 15, 1979

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Preface

This book is a collection of the disciples' reminiscences of their spiritual master, Baba, when He visited Taiwan in August 1979. Before Baba came to Taiwan, the Margiis had heard countless miraculous stories about Baba; therefore many were expecting miracles and demonstrations of occult power. But instead, Baba appeared very modest; there was no miracle, no occult power, but rather a boundless love and affection, and a personal touch that has lasted a lifetime. The sentiments of the Taiwanese Margiis can be summed up in this Taiwanese bhajan that we sang to Baba, and which He enjoyed very much:

There is One who taught me why I live.
There is One who taught me why I love.
Baba, Baba, do you know?
That One is you, my Supreme Guru.

What more is there than knowing why we live and why we love?

It wasn't until Baba left His physical form in October 1990 that I and many other people realized how precious His physical presence was, and how fortunate we were to have met Him in person.

I returned to Taiwan in 2003 for over a year, and during that time the Margiis often asked me about Baba's visit. Seeing the earnest thirst of disciples who had never met Baba, how eager they were to hear even the smallest story about their guru, reaffirmed for me the preciousness of Baba's fourteen days in Taiwan.

* The word "Margii" is short for Ananda Margii, a member of Ananda Marga.

It was indeed a rare and unique experience, worth waiting a million lifetimes for, not only to live in the same era as the sadguru, the perfect master, but to be there when He came to Taiwan. Thus, to collect and archive the stories of His visit was not only an important task but an obligation and an honor. Dada Manavendrananda was posted as the Public Relations Secretary of Hong Kong Sector at the time and he was based in Taiwan. When I expressed my thoughts about interviewing and collecting stories from the Margiis who had been present during Baba's visit, he graciously offered to videotape the interviews. Most of the stories in this book are from the 2003 video interviews we did with the Margiis from the "early days" in Taiwan. A few stories were collected in 2004 or later.

I was also able to collect stories from a number of acaryas who were in Taiwan during Baba's visit.* I met Didi Ananda Gaorii at the didis' jagrti in Singapore in late 2003 and she graciously shared her stories. I met Dada Krsnabuddhyananda in 2004 at the Los Altos jagrti in California, and he also graciously agreed to share his experiences. It was only then that I learned why Baba had stayed in Taiwan for fourteen days instead of the few days that had been originally scheduled for the DMC program. A few years back, I met Didi Ananda Rucira in Portland, and she revised the stories she had sent me while she was working in Africa. The stories from these acaryas filled in many missing pieces that the Margiis were not aware of at the time.

After transcribing and editing the interviews, the stories were reviewed by the interviewees for accuracy before the final printing in Chinese. Subsequently, many Margiis who did not know Chinese expressed an interest in reading the stories of Baba's visit to Taiwan. Thus I took it on myself to prepare the English version of this collection.

While doing this work, I often felt the presence of Baba, as if I were transported back to that time. Existing both within and beyond the creation, He has been guiding us all along. He is the ever-flowing fountain of love and inspiration.

* An acarya is an Ananda Marga teacher, in most cases a monastic disciple.

Part One:
Baba is Coming

Baba Gives His Word to Visit Taiwan

Didi Ananda Lalita

I was an LFT for several years, and I often saw how acaryas struggled financially. Some of the elder Margiis who had professional careers and business experience proposed to the SS Dada at the time — Dada Sudhiirananda — that they could set up some kind of trading company to help support the missionary work and acaryas of Ananda Marga. I wasn't engaged in their discussions. After Dada Sudhiirananda was transferred out of the sector, no one pursued it further. Some time later, Dada Sudhiirananda came back to visit. The same Margiis and sympathizers became enthusiastic again. This time some of them, together with Dada Sudhiirananda, talked to me seriously about it, presenting the possibilities and urging me to help. After thinking it over, I agreed to give it a try. We opened the company and Dada named it Vibhuti, which means "occult power" or "wealth." We were sure the company would make a fortune, but a year passed and not a single one of its business ventures proved successful. I started wondering whether I was wasting my life, questioning whether or not I should continue. At the same time I knew very well that if I quit, it would be the end of the company. I had taken a loan from my uncle to start the venture and there would be no way to pay it back. It was a huge dilemma for me — I didn't know what to do or whom to turn to for a solution.

One morning, I was the first to arrive at the office. I saw a letter at the door. Curious, I picked it up and was surprised to find that

it was addressed to me. I opened it and found a telegram with the following words: "Prepare your travel document; go to Geneva to see Baba."

Go to Geneva to see Baba? The telegram was unsigned and I could not imagine who might have sent it. Yet it provided an instant answer to my painful dilemma. That's right — go see Baba! That was the answer! Excited, I showed the telegram to an acarya and soon afterward he confirmed the news: Baba would be touring in Europe and conducting DMC in Switzerland.

I had never been abroad, so going to Europe was a big deal for me. Many things had to be arranged. The hardest part was getting my parents' approval — I had to give them convincing reasons for the trip before they would agree. Then I had to apply for a passport and visa, raise money for the trip, make a decision about the company, and so on. While these preparations were ongoing, brother Sumitra expressed that he would like to go as well, and after overcoming many obstacles, the trip was finalized.

We flew into the Geneva airport, and in the arrival terminal I called the number I had been given in Taiwan, carefully noting down the directions given to me by the sister who answered the phone: where to catch the train, what train to take, where to get off, and so on. We found the station and got on the train without much difficulty. The train ride was very pleasant and enjoyable, but after sitting for several hours I started feeling uneasy. I was afraid that we had missed the station where we were supposed to get off. Not knowing whom to ask, I walked back and forth between the different compartments looking for the ticket collector. He was nowhere to be found, but I saw many students diligently studying their textbooks. I also noticed some cheerful young passengers in one of the compartments, but I was too shy to talk to them. The third time I entered their compartment, one of them greeted me by saying "namaskar."

I was so happy; it was as if an angel had been sent to me. We chatted a bit and I found out that they were also going to see Baba.

But when I inquired which station they would get off at, it was different than the one where I had been told to get down. Unsure what to do, I went back to my seat, and after talking with Sumitra we decided to follow the instructions given by the sister in the Ananda Marga office. But when we got off at the station, there was no sign, no building, and it was drizzling and getting dark. We had no idea what to do. Fortunately, at that very moment, just as our anxiety was mounting, a lady with an umbrella who was walking a few steps ahead of us turned around and smiled and said, "namaskar." She was another angel who had appeared when we felt lost. I was so happy and relieved.

We followed her toward the place where I would soon see Baba, and from a distance we could hear voices singing Baba Nam Kevalam. That was our GPS back then! As we got closer, the kiirtan become louder and louder, and more and more powerful. My heart was filled with unbounded joy. I realized that Baba Nam Kevalam was indeed a universal mantra, another beautiful way to find Ananda Margiis.

I was happy and excited to finally reach our destination. The DMC site was a big hall filled with hundreds of devotees. Baba was not there when we arrived, however. I was told that He was out for field walk. As we were the only Asian Margiis there, people were curious about us. Soon I heard people shouting "Param Pita Baba Ki, Param Pita Baba Ki." Baba must be coming, I thought. The shouts of "Param Pita Baba Ki" became more and more intense and full of devotion. I looked in the direction where everyone was looking and there I saw Baba in the distance, walking majestically toward us in a way that reminded me of my worldly father. In that very first glimpse, something struck me deep inside, penetrating into the core of my being. Tears started rolling down my cheeks and I couldn't help but sob, louder and louder. I felt like a lost child, finally returning to her father. I had a clear feeling that He knew me. Nothing was unknown to Him — past, present, and future. He knew me better than I could possibly know myself. I

was crying so loudly by then that people were looking at me even more curiously. It was very embarrassing, yet I couldn't help it. A few months earlier, I had seen Baba in a particularly vivid dream and it was exactly the same Baba that I was seeing in person for the first time.

The kiirtan continued as Baba made His way to the dais. It was very vibrating and beautiful, and as I sang, the tears continued to flow. After that there was kaoshikii and tandava, followed by Baba's discourse. That was my first night at the DMC program.

The DMC was taking place in Fiesch, a small Swiss village surrounded by picturesque mountains, and apart from Sumitra, the only Margii I knew there was Omprakash, an Italian who lived in Taipei with his wife and small daughter. He was the general manager of the Taipei Ritz, a five-star hotel, and he was a very devoted Margii and a VSS volunteer. When he had heard of Baba's tour in Europe, he had asked for a special leave from his work to see his guru. We were both surprised and happy to meet each other in Fiesch.

Omprakash was one of the VSS chiefs during the program. One day, after returning from field walk with Baba, he told me excitedly that he had had the good fortune during the walk to talk directly to Baba. "Baba," he had said, "when are you coming to Taiwan? So many devotees there are waiting for you." Baba replied that it would be very difficult for Him to go due to passport restrictions. But then after a long pause, He said, "But I must go." I was thrilled to hear this and Omprakash was equally excited.

May is springtime in Switzerland. The green, grassy fields and colorful wildflowers blooming all around made for a perfect backdrop to the house where Baba was staying. Margiis, didis, and dasas were hanging out around the house as much as possible, hoping to catch a glimpse of Baba. Soon I was told that I and some other sisters were approved for Personal Contact (PC) with Baba.

While we were waiting to be called in for PC, I collected some wildflowers and made them into a bouquet, intending to offer it to Baba. While picking the wildflowers, my heart was filled with joy, thinking of Baba and at the same time enjoying the beauty of Mother Nature — the meadow, the spring flowers, the crystal clear sky, the beaming sun, the snow on the mountain, the fresh air. It was like a dreamland in a fairy tale. After waiting for what seemed like ages, we were called. It happened so fast, my mind went blank as I followed the other sisters into Baba's room. I was the first to go in front of Baba. He asked me my name, my duty, where I came from, and who was my acarya — that was it. I sat down, unable to believe that my first meeting with Baba had been so brief. With a sharp stab of agony in my heart, I looked at Baba and thought, Baba, I came halfway across the world to see you and all you asked were these common questions that everybody knows! Engrossed in my pain and disappointment, I sat there watching Baba talk with the other sisters. When the last one had talked to Baba, Didi Ananda Karuna signaled for us to leave the room.

Moving reluctantly toward the door, I was the last to leave. Suddenly I remembered the bouquet of flowers I had picked for Baba. I asked Baba innocently, "I have a bouquet of flowers for you, but I forgot to bring them in; may I go get them?" Baba didn't answer. I looked at Didi Ananda Karuna but she also remained silent. I felt a yes in my heart and rushed out to get the flowers. When I offered them to Baba, He said some loving words and smiled the sweetest and most glorious smile I had ever seen, thousands of times more brilliant than the brightest sun. I was so absorbed in His smile, I didn't pay attention to what He said. When I asked "What?" Didi Ananda Karuna repeated what Baba had said: "The first opportunity, I am coming to Taiwan." It was completely unexpected, but not only was it assured that He was coming to Taiwan, it also answered the other huge dilemma that was in my mind — it was now crystal clear to me that I should go back to Taiwan and prepare for Baba's visit. While I was in Fiesch,

many acaryas had done their best to convince me that I should go directly to the Sweden training center instead of going back to Taiwan. Since becoming a Margii I had always been very obedient when it came to acaryas' instructions, and I had felt an inner call for several years to become a didi. At the same time, I didn't feel it was appropriate to leave my parents without talking to them. I had also taken a loan from my relatives to start the Vibhuti Trading Company and for my travel to see Baba, and it would have been very irresponsible of me to leave that debt behind. My heart was torn in two directions and the dilemma had been weighing heavily on my mind: should I follow those acaryas' advice and go to the training center, or should I return to Taiwan? What was the right thing to do? Now Baba had lifted that dark cloud, showing me which direction to take.

My return ticket to Taiwan had restricted travel dates, however, and thus I had to stay in Europe for nearly a month. After Fiesch, Baba visited other countries in Europe, accompanied by many devotees. I was eager to follow Baba on His tour, but in those days Taiwan passport holders couldn't get visas for most countries. While in Switzerland I was only able to get visas for Germany and Italy. I saw Baba again in the transit lounge of the Frankfurt airport, and then I went with the Margiis to Italy to wait for Baba. Just when Baba was due to arrive, we were all shocked and saddened to hear that Italian officials at the airport had refused to allow Baba to enter the country. I then went to the LFT training center in Italy for two weeks, until I was able to return to Taiwan.

Preparations

Didi Ananda Lalita

By the time I made it back to Taiwan, the news that Baba would be coming had been conveyed to the acaryas and Margiis. Because of the constant political tension with mainland China, Taiwan had been under strict martial law for decades. To arrange visas for Baba and the acaryas who would be accompanying Him was no easy matter, especially since there were no diplomatic relations between Taiwan and India. After many inquiries and much research, we learned that first of all we needed to have a nationally registered organization — at the time Ananda Marga was only registered locally in a few major cities. Fortunately Dada Bhaskar came up with a brilliant idea. He started flipping through the English Yellow Pages and found an interesting listing: The Republic of China Yoga Association. We had no idea that such an entity existed. Dada asked me to dial the number, and when a man answered the phone I told him who we were. The man introduced himself as Mr. Chiu Bin Chun, chairman of the yoga association, and we made an appointment to visit him the next day. We met him at his residence, where we discovered that there were no yoga activities and that he was the only existing member. Without any hesitation, he agreed to assist us by using his yoga association, which was nationally registered, to apply for visas for Baba and the acaryas. It became my duty for the next several months to go back and forth between the jagrti and his house, at times waiting

there for hours for him to issue a letter or document required by the government.

Besides allowing us to use his association as an umbrella organization, Mr. Chiu also introduced us to a friend of his who was a professor at Chinese Culture University. This professor was a devotee of Sai Baba and he understood what type of venue we needed for the DMC program. He helped us to rent some of the campus facilities so that the program could take place smoothly. Situated in Yangmingshan, Chinese Culture University was surrounded by beautiful natural scenery. It was a very sentient environment and only a short distance from Omprakash's residence, where Baba and His entourage would be staying. We rented the auditorium on the seventh floor of Da Zhong Building for the darshan hall, and the Margiis stayed in the student dormitory buildings. It was indeed a most ideal venue for the DMC.

Despite all the efforts we made to secure visas for Baba and His entourage, however, our application was rejected. We then went through a special governmental channel to meet with high-ranking officials who showed us the negative reports they had received about Ananda Marga. One of those reports described the scene at the Manila airport where Baba's entry into the Philippines had been denied. When the plane carrying Baba and His entourage was taking off, hundreds of Margiis broke through the airport security line and chased after the plane in an attempt to stop it from leaving. These reports had alarmed the Taiwanese government, thus the rejection. By this point we had exhausted every possibility we knew of and nothing had worked. The one thing we could hold on to was what Baba had said to Omprakash during His field walk and to me during my PC — that He would come to Taiwan. We took it as His assurance. His words sustained us, filling us with unbreakable faith and the inner strength we needed to overcome the obstacles that stood in our way. We knew in our hearts He would come, no matter what. Then, at the very last moment, Shaktideva used his family's connection with the foreign affairs

minister to help Baba and His entourage get their visas and a VIP reception by the Taiwanese government.

Didi Ananda Suveda

It is always such a sweet memory when I reflect on Baba's visit to Taiwan.

When SS told us at a collective meditation about Baba coming to Taiwan, everybody got excited and we began making preparations, and when Liila came back from Europe and told us what Baba had said to her and Omprakash, our efforts went into high gear.

Between airfare and other expenses, it was going to cost a lot of money to host Baba and His entourage. Our first priority, therefore, was to raise funds through the sale of books and donated items, dinner events, and so on. That was foremost in our mind.

Before we had raised enough funds, everybody was nervous. I was working in the sectorial office at the time and during those two months, the atmosphere in the office underwent a transformation. Everybody was busy with the preparations, contacting the media for interviews, and so on. We also increased the number of yoga classes and this helped to boost our income. At the time, many acaryas were encouraging me to join their respective trades. Didi Rukmini was responsible for GV, and since I had a good impression of GV, I agreed to become a GV optee.

The week leading up to Baba's arrival the phone in the sectorial office was ringing almost nonstop. Some people were calling to register for the DMC, others wanted an update, and I was busy nonstop. Sanjaya and I were responsible for finances, so we were running around collecting money and posting the donations received on the bulletin board. We managed to collect between three and four hundred thousand NT, which was a lot of money at the time. Dada Nityasatyanandajii had also arrived in Taiwan about a week in advance. He asked me to help him find suitable places for Baba's field walks, so I took him around to different

places. "Baba likes climbing hills," he said, "but taking into consideration His physical condition, we should stick to flat areas for Baba's walks."

Baba's arrival was delayed for one day. Originally Baba was scheduled to arrive on August fourteenth and the DMC program was scheduled to start on the fifteenth, but then we heard that Baba hadn't gotten His visa. We were all very anxious, especially since the Margiis were already waiting at the DMC site. The situation was further complicated by the weather: heavy winds and torrential rain. Those of us who were still at the sectorial office didn't know what to do. Then we received a phone call from the DMC site telling us that we had better go there right away, since the Margiis were all asking when Baba was going to arrive. So despite the rain, we rushed to the DMC site.

When we arrived at the DMC site, the Margiis bombarded us with questions, wanting to know what time Baba was going to arrive. We knew Baba still hadn't gotten His visa; nevertheless we tried to calm them down by telling them that Baba would be arriving the next day. Of course, this didn't stop some of them from complaining and wanting to know the reason behind the delay.

That evening when we returned to the jagrti, SS called a meeting. He informed us that Baba couldn't get His visa and asked for suggestions what to do. Nobody answered. We felt helpless given the situation.

After dinner, Dada Rameshananda couldn't stop asking anxiously, "What should we do, what should we do?" He was not alone. Everyone was worried that night. Baba's plane was due to arrive at 5 p.m. the following day, but He still didn't have His visa. What could we do?

Early the next morning, the SS called me into the office and told me excitedly, "Did you hear the news? The Ministry of Foreign Affairs has agreed to issue Baba a visa." That was the happiest news I had ever heard!

Later on, we learned that Shaktideva had requested help from the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Mr. Yanshi Jiang, and it was he

who had granted Baba's visa. When I asked Shaktideva how he had managed it, he told me that Minister Jiang was a friend of the family and he was happy to receive any anti-Communist spiritual leaders. He had sent a telegraphic message to the office in Thailand early in that morning and Baba's visa was issued within minutes.

Everybody was ecstatic when they heard the news.

Sanjaya

In August of 1979, Baba accepted the invitation to conduct a DMC in Taiwan. I was given responsibility for the finances for Baba's visit. As the day of the scheduled visit was approaching, Baba and His entourage still had not received their visas to Taiwan. The Hong Kong Sector SS, Dada Rameshananda, was very anxious and didn't know what to do. At the time, Taiwan didn't have diplomatic relations with India and it was difficult to get visas. SS Dada decided to go to the government office to inquire about it. Although we didn't hold out much hope that this would help, we had no other option but to give it a try. Thus, a couple of days before the scheduled DMC, a few Margiis, including Yogatma, Tapeshtar, Ganesh, and myself, stayed up the entire night to prepare the letters and documents we would need for our meeting with the government official the next day. At about five a.m., after getting the papers together, we went out for some hot soymilk and then returned to the jagrti for a little rest. At 8 a.m. the jagrti phone rang. I picked up the phone and the caller said, "I am calling from the Ministry of Interior Affairs. Do you have a Mr. P. R. Sarkar who is planning to visit Taiwan?"

"Yes," I said, somewhat worried. "May I ask what this is about?"

"Mr. Sarkar is coming to Taiwan. If you need any assistance, please do not hesitate to let us know at any time. We will gladly help." The gentleman then left his name and contact information.

I was very surprised. We had stayed up the entire night trying to resolve the problem of the visas and now the Ministry of Interior

* P. R. Sarkar was Baba's legal name.

Affairs was offering us their help. What had happened to make them call?

When I told the dadas, who had been on pins and needles, about the phone call they were puzzled and asked the same question we were asking ourselves: "What happened?"

Immediately afterward, we received official notification from the Ministry of Interior Affairs that the government was going to receive Baba as a VIP.

Shaktideva

I was studying in Donghai University in 1975 and was earnestly searching for the true meaning of life when I started learning Ananda Marga yoga and meditation. I made many friends in Ananda Marga and also experienced the bliss of mediation; however, my path was not a smooth one. I didn't understand reincarnation, nor did I believe that Baba was God. For me, He was my spiritual master. My parents had often warned me to be cautious about religious and political organizations, so I chose to live in such a way that I could enjoy the spiritual bliss but at the same time keep a safe distance from the organization. I spent almost every weekend with my Margii friends at the beach near Jeelong or in temples high in the mountains. We did meditation, enjoyed vegetarian meals, and discussed philosophy and life in general. It was the happiest time in my life. In the meantime, I was busy preparing to go abroad to study in the US. I was just about to leave the country when we heard that Baba would be visiting Taiwan. The Margiis were overjoyed and started anxiously awaiting His arrival.

One day I received a phone call from a Margii who told me that there was some problem with Baba's visa for Taiwan and that the Margiis wanted me to attend a meeting in the Taipei jagrti, but I told them I had to stay home in order to help solve the problem as quickly as possible.

After getting permission from my elders, I approached the minister of foreign affairs, Mr. Yanshi Jiang. Mr. Jiang was an old and good friend of my family. Among all the elders I knew, he was one of the most warmhearted and venerable, a kind gentleman who liked to help others. The US had recently severed diplomatic ties with Taiwan, but the Taiwanese government was willing to maintain friendly relationships with all the countries of the world through unofficial channels, and Minister Jiang was happy to promote international friendship for Taiwan on all levels. I told him that Baba was a peace advocate, a prodemocracy and anti-communist spiritual leader. Knowing my peace-loving nature, he took my words at face value and forthwith issued visas for Baba and His entourage. He even arranged a special VIP reception to welcome Baba.

Didi Ananda Rucira

When Baba came to Taiwan I was GV Sectorial, since in those days there were no didis posted at the regional level. Some months before Baba came to Taiwan, I urged the Margiis to write bhajans. One Margii wrote the lyrics to one song and I composed the melody. That first bhajan was written in Mandarin. Soon after that, LFT Liila promoted a Taiwanese bhajan composed by a sister. It became even more popular. Later on, Liila composed another bhajan in Mandarin, so by the time Baba came we had three lovely bhajans.

Didi Ananda Lalita

For several months prior to Baba's visit, everybody was working with great dedication to make the necessary preparations. Acaryas and LFTs traveled regularly throughout the island to discuss the details with the Margiis. When I went to Tainan, I visited sister Tapasii, who was a good friend of mine. She was a bit shy and

introverted by nature. After some casual chatting, she told me she had composed a song in Taiwanese for Baba. At my request she sang it for me. The song, which was entitled "There is One," was short and simple, yet very lovely and touching. The lyrics went like this:

"There is One who taught me why I live. There is One who taught me why I love. Baba, Baba, do you know? That one is you, my Supreme Guru."

With great enthusiasm I encouraged her teach it to the Margiis so that we could sing it for Baba when He came. Indeed, during Baba's stay in Taiwan, we often sang this song before His darshans. Baba liked it very much. Later on, the song became quite popular in Ananda Marga. Even some overseas acaryas knew how to sing it, and till this day, some overseas Margiis remember it.

Part Two:
Taipei

Baba's Arrival

Didi Ananda Lalita

The day before Baba's arrival a powerful storm rolled in — it was officially graded as a super-typhoon. After the gauntlet we had run to get Baba's visa, we now had another worry — how could Baba's plane possibly land in such weather? Yet miraculously, just one hour before Baba's scheduled arrival, the storm passed. The rain stopped and the sun shone through the clouds.

Before the plane landed, we were already in the airport, ready to receive Baba. While we were waiting, one sister handed me a beautiful flower garland. In Fiesch I had learned that the Bhukti Pradhan was supposed to garland Baba. Yogatma was the Bhukti Pradhan but he didn't have a garland, so without any hesitation I gave him "mine." The plane landed and some time passed but there was still no sight of Baba and His entourage, so we started searching here and there. After some inquiries, we were directed to the China Airlines VIP Lounge, where we found Baba sitting with some of the Indian acaryas. SS Dada and a few local acaryas went in to greet Baba while the rest of us remained outside, singing kiirtan, full of joy and devotion. Suddenly, I was called into the room. As I made my way through the crowded doorway, I saw Baba sitting across the room with a bright, beautiful smile on His face. SS Dada indicated for me to come forward to garland Baba, but I no longer had a garland. Sister Priti, who was standing next to me, generously handed me the garland of artificial flowers that

she had been hoping to offer to Baba. I took it but when I reached Baba I hesitated, not wanting to offer Him something artificial. He smiled and asked sweetly, "Is this garland for me?" Shyly, I replied, "Yes, Baba," and then I garlanded Him. I realized at that moment that He knew everything in our innermost hearts and that the love with which we make an offering is what matters most.



Seeing Baba in the VIP lounge. First row from the left, standing: Liila, Priiti, Dada Viniit. Second row, Rajendra (second from the left), Yogatma, Dada Krsna Das.

Baba remained in the VIP lounge for quite a while, and everyone was overflowing with joy, scarcely able to believe it was real. Baba spoke eloquently on various subjects. I remember that He explained about Tantra and how it spread. One of its branches spread into China, and after some thousands of years, due to linguistic changes, *tantra* became *taota* and then later *tao*. The practice of dhyana became Chan in China and Zen in Japan. He also said that in the distant past monks from China went to India and monks from India went to China, spreading the teachings in both directions.

He further said that the interaction between these two countries would increase in the future.

It was only then, while listening to Baba's talk, that I realized why there were similarities between some of Ananda Marga's spiritual practices and the ancient Taoist practices. Unfortunately, no one thought of taking notes. Later, in one of Baba's discourses, He talked about the topic in greater detail. That discourse was recorded and transcribed, so that such a precious historical treasure would not be lost.

Mr. Chiu Bin Chun, who had provided us with the official entity we needed to secure the visas, was also there in the VIP lounge. He had composed a poem in Classical Chinese for Baba's coming to Taiwan and recited it for Him. Baba listened attentively with His eyes closed and He appeared to enjoy it very much.

Didi Ananda Suveda

We made arrangements for Baba's transportation and then went to the DMC site to announce the news and make arrangements for the Margiis to receive Baba at the airport. We were still anxious, however, due to the weather. How was Baba's plane going to land in the middle of a raging storm? When our chartered bus loaded with Margiis left the DMC site in Yangmingshan for the airport, it was still pouring heavily. Nevertheless, everybody was excited and all they could talk about on the way to the airport was what it would be like when Baba arrived. And then, all of a sudden, as we were approaching the airport, the sky cleared, revealing a beautiful sunset unmarred by clouds. It was a magnificent sight.

I was as excited as everyone else. The plane is about to land! I thought. In a few minutes I will be seeing Baba! I felt as if the storm had passed and the sun had come out just to welcome Baba.

The moment we arrived at the airport, we started running around, trying to find out where Baba was. After some inquiry, we heard that Baba was in the VIP Room, but we didn't know which

VIP Room. Finally, we found out that Baba was upstairs in the China Airlines VIP Lounge.

In the midst of the confusion, Nirmala ran up to me and handed me the water bottle she was carrying. "I brought this coconut water for Baba because I heard that He likes coconut water," she said. "After four or five hours in the plane, I'm sure He will want water. But I am feeling nervous about it, so I think it's better that you give it to Baba." A few days earlier, I had dreamed that Baba had entered a house where some people were waiting to welcome Him. When Baba entered, He called my name and said, "I am thirsty. Can you fetch me a glass of water?" I said yes and immediately went into the kitchen to get some water for Baba. But when I looked in the refrigerator and then throughout the entire house, I couldn't find a single drop of water. I felt really bad about it and had to tell Baba, "I am so sorry, Baba. You are thirsty, but we don't have any water. What should we do?" Baba said kindly, "It's all right. It's all right."

I didn't know what the dream meant at the time, just that Baba was thirsty and I wanted to give him water. So when Nirmala asked me to give Baba the coconut water, I was very happy, remembering my dream, and I agreed to do it. Moreover, it gave me an excuse to gain entrance to the VIP Room.

Once Baba had been taken to the VIP Room, the Margiis started entering one by one, singing kiirtan, until the room was filled with Margiis singing with their eyes closed, overcome by devotion. I was one of the last to enter the room, and as I approached the door many thoughts were racing through my mind. I had been meditating for three years and had had many experiences but I had never seen my guru. Now I was about to see Him!

When I entered, the kiirtan had stopped and Mr. Chiu of the Chinese Yoga Association was reciting a poem. I didn't know the protocol of offering Baba water but I had the water in my hand and I mentioned it to somebody. They told Baba my name and then I came up and said, "Baba, please have some coconut water."

Baba looked at me and smiled. He said, "You know, the China Airlines people received me as a VIP and they offered me some Chinese tea. I had some tea so don't need to drink any more. Thank you."

I was a bit sad and mildly upset. I thought of my dream and said to myself, "Baba, you asked me for water, but when I offered it to you, you didn't take it." I was feeling truly sad, but at the same time when I came out of the VIP room, the atmosphere felt so beautiful and sweet. Nothing external seemed to matter anymore. I just wanted to sit down, close my eyes, and enjoy that sweet feeling. Later somebody told me that when I came out, I looked intoxicated and unaware of where I was.

Suresh

The didis and dadas usually stayed at my house when they came to Tainan. I would drive them to various locations whenever there were programs. I was out of work for a few years and during that time I would drive the acaryas south to Kaohsiung or wherever they needed to go. Right before Baba came, Dada Bhaskar assigned me to VSS. We had the duty to protect Baba and maintain order, and for this reason we all had to undergo training. Sometimes Dada would take us to Bai-He Dam for vigorous training. When Baba's arrival was drawing near, we went ahead of time to Omprakash's home, where Baba would be staying, and there we were trained to handle any unexpected situation. For example, if Baba wanted to go for a walk, even if it were in the middle of the night, we would have to be immediately ready to carry out our duties.

The day Baba was due to arrive, we were at the Chinese Culture University at Yangmingshan, getting ready to go to the airport to receive Baba. But that day there was a heavy storm with howling winds and torrential rain. It was hard to imagine how the plane was going to land in such darkness. I was with Dada the whole time, worrying how we were going to handle the situation. There

were hundreds of devotees at the college waiting for Baba, and I couldn't help but wonder if the event would have to be cancelled. But Dada kept saying, "Do not doubt. Do not doubt." He was right. A few hours later, around 3:00 p.m., the storm stopped all of a sudden. The sky cleared and the sun shone through in patches, and so we jumped in the car and headed for the airport. I was driving Omprakash's Nissan. The construction of the Taoyuan Airport had just been completed and there was only one terminal and one parking lot. I couldn't park in the parking lot because I had been told to wait out front where the passengers came out, and thus I could only drive slowly around the terminal so that as soon as Baba came out, He could get into the car. I couldn't let Baba wait but neither could I stop the car by the curb with the police moving me along.

I drove around for about two hours with no word of Baba's arrival. By then I was doubting if He were going to come at all. This was the first time I had driven in Taipei and I wasn't familiar with the roads. But I kept thinking that there was no need to worry — Baba was the all-knowing God and He would guide me. Then, just as the sun was about to set, I saw Baba exit the terminal, followed by a group of Margiis singing Baba Nam Kevalam.

When Baba got into the car, I was overcome with emotion. God is sitting in my car! I thought. Then as I drove the car away from the terminal I realized I was going the wrong way down a one-way street. I had to back out and became nervous, so I stopped the car on the side of the road. Baba said to Dada Bhaskar, "You should ask someone who knows the proper way to drive." I was very embarrassed. Such an important task should not have been given to an inexperienced driver like me.

Ganesh

We went to the airport to receive Baba on the day of His arrival. I was walking behind the other Margiis without knowing anything.

Someone said Baba was over there, so we rushed there. Then someone else pointed in a different direction, saying Baba was there, and again we rushed there. Soon I was exhausted, dragging my crippled leg around. Suddenly a thought flashed into my mind: Baba wanted me to lead the group that was to meet Him! At that very instant I spotted my brother, who worked in the airport for Singapore Airlines. I told him that our guru was in the airport but no one knew where to find Him. My brother had always been very good to me, and he found out that Baba was in the China Airlines VIP Lounge.

When we arrived at the VIP lounge, my brother opened the door and peeked inside. Then he signaled to me that Baba was indeed in the room. In a heartbeat, I felt the special connection between Baba, my brother, and me. I was glad that my brother had the good fortune to see Baba, even if it were only a glimpse. When I saw Baba I cried. I knew instantly that He could read my mind. He was divine.

I was about to do *sastaunga pranam* when Dada Rameshananda urged me to take photos. I grabbed my camera without doing *sastaunga pranam* and started taking photos. This was also Baba's endless compassion. Probably He had noticed my crippled leg and thus saved me from having to do prostration. Except for my PC, I never did *sastaunga pranam* to Baba. So I continued taking photos of Baba, one after another. I had no idea at the time of the strict rules in Tantra. Having the rare privilege to take Baba's photo was such a great honor.

Urmila

The first time I heard of Ananda Marga was September 3, 1978, and several days later I met some Ananda Margiis. I believe I had a pact with Baba to be His daughter again in this life.

The Taipei jagrti moved to 257 Roosevelt Road Section 3 later in 1978. The second floor was an Ananda Marga vegetarian restaurant

and the third floor was a meditation hall. It was close to my work, so I usually went there as soon as I finished my shift, and I often got so absorbed in that joyful environment that I didn't want to go home. Those happy days had a lasting and profound influence on my life. In 1979 I had been a Margii for one year and I began to hear people talk about Baba's forthcoming visit to Taiwan. There was a team of people working on the preparations and I was assigned the duty to make the flower arrangements and Baba's seat cushions.

While this was going on, my grandmother was critically ill. I was visiting her one day in the countryside when I received an urgent phone call from Taipei that Baba would arrive the next day and I had to return immediately to make Baba's seat cushions. Fortunately, I was able to return and complete my assignment on the very same day. By then most of the Margiis had already gathered at Chinese Culture University in Yangmingshan to await Baba's arrival.

Baba arrived the next day. There was a typhoon that day and heavy rain. Full of expectation, we left from the university for Taoyuan Chiang Kai-shek Airport to receive Baba. Being a new Margii who knew little of spiritual practice, I felt very fortunate to have this chance to see Baba in person, and my fortune only got better. One senior Margii told me that I could make a garland to offer to Baba, so on the way there I set about making my very first garland.

When we reached the VIP room where Baba was, we found a crowd of acaryas and Margiis singing kiirtan and waiting to get in to see Baba. Just then, a dada announced that those who had garlands could go inside. How lucky I was! I was the third one to go inside. The other two were senior Margiis who spoke English fluently. Baba talked to both of them. When it was my turn, I felt both excited and nervous. I don't even remember whether I did my second lesson or not. First, I did namaskar to my guru. Then Baba leaned His head forward a little for me to put on the garland. It was really lovely. He didn't ask me anything but instead

said several sentences. I realized that Baba knew that my English was poor, so in this way He helped me to feel comfortable. I also knew that what He said must have contained His blessings. After doing namaskar, I exited the VIP room smiling from ear to ear.

Sanjaya

In those days, I had no clue about guru; even the word was strange to me. The only thought I had about Baba was that my acarya was pretty impressive, so then my guru had to be even more impressive. But now that Baba was coming, I didn't know quite what to think or expect.

When I arrived at the airport, the corridor leading to the China Airlines VIP Lounge was crowded with Margiis. It took some effort to get through the crowd. Finally, I was able to stick my head into the room. The moment I saw Baba, I thought, How can any man on this earth be so resplendent and so mysterious? Baba's radiance, His smiles, were so irresistible. If He were a king, He would be the king of kings. If He were the sun, then the acaryas would be like candles. The acarya I had so admired was sitting next to Baba, and he now seemed so dull by comparison. Seeing that indescribable spiritual glow emanating from Baba, I was shaken to my bones. From that moment on, until the New Year of 1990 when Baba got out of the hospital and I saw Him again at Tiljala, so many things happened, so many changes in my life, but my first impression of Baba has remained vivid and unchanged.

Once an acarya answered a question raised by an American Margii in Taiwan, Jianeshvar. He said, "When you meet a great sadhu, your samskaras from the past three lifetimes are cleansed." I didn't know what samskara meant then, but when I saw Baba I realized that what that acarya had said could not describe even a tiny fraction of what it meant to see Baba. Seeing a perfect guru wiped out more than just three lifetimes' samskaras! Being able to meet a perfect guru is of utmost importance in life, so much so

that cleansing the samskaras no longer matters. He is the eternal light of your life.

Even now, I still cannot forget how I felt the first time I saw Baba in the airport.

Rajendra

I was initiated in the summer of 1975. Like every Margii at that time, I longed to someday see our spiritual leader and pillar — Baba. I was studying at Chinese Culture University at that time. Didi Madhurii (later Didi Ananda Mitra) approached me about forming a yoga club on campus but I was the only Margii there and I didn't have the courage to do it. But she kept trying to persuade me, and like a newborn who is afraid of nothing, I eventually overcame my fear and went ahead and did it.

I think all Margiis who did Baba's work had the same deep feelings and inspiring experiences. Baba will never abandon those who do His work. If need be He sends help. I was by myself when I set out to start the yoga club, but somebody came to help me and everything went smoothly. We held yoga classes and meditated in the beautiful surroundings of Yangmingshan. Those days were among the most memorable of my life. It was a very joyful and inspiring experience.

One day, Didi said to me, "Rajendra, you can write to Baba in India."

"Isn't Baba in jail?" I said.

"You can write to him in jail."

"Really? Will Baba receive my letter?"

"Yes," Didi replied. "You write the letter and Baba will know."

So I wrote to Baba in the jail. My letter went like this:

"Baba, although you have never met us, we all miss you. I am a student at Chinese Culture University. We have formed a yoga club and we have meditation and other activities. I hope you will come to Taiwan one day and come see us."

I didn't receive any reply. I thought maybe He didn't receive my letter, and then I forgot about it. But four years later, in 1979, Baba's reply came in the form of His visit to Taiwan.

I had just graduated from Chinese Culture University and had begun working in Taichung. If I had known that Baba was coming to Taiwan, I definitely would have waited until Baba had visited Taiwan before beginning to look for a job. It was very hard for me to get any time off, but I was so determined to see Baba that I went to Taipei for the DMC anyway and didn't care if I still had a job to return to.

The venue for the DMC was right on my college campus where we usually held our activities. When I received the news of Baba coming, the emotions and excitement were beyond words. It was like He was responding to my letter and I was convinced that He knew everything. On the day He was to arrive there was a powerful typhoon. We all thought the plane would not be able to land and would surely be diverted elsewhere. During my four years at Chinese Culture University, I had never seen wind and rain of that magnitude. The rain poured down like a giant pouring water from the top of the mountain to the bottom, and the roads quickly turned into rivers. The downpour was so great it washed clean the entire mountain, leaving it spotless, as if to welcome the coming of a great saint. Such a scene had never happened before. After the typhoon subsided, however, Baba's plane was able to land and we left for the airport to receive Him. I remember wondering if it was a coincidence or a miracle. Either way I was deeply affected. I believe many Margiis felt the same way.

When we reached the airport, Baba was in the VIP lounge. There were VSS guarding Baba, making it difficult to get close to Him, but I managed to fight my way to the front. Now that my guru was there, I had to get near Him, no matter what. I got to the front and there I was, right in front of Baba. I was so happy; my heart was filled with warmth and bliss. My guru, whom I had longed to see for so long, was right before my eyes. It was too wonderful for words.

Dada Krsnabuddhyananda

In August 1979, we heard that Baba was going to visit Hong Kong Sector. The initial plan was for Him to visit Taiwan and Japan. I was in Tokyo at the time and we workers did our very best to contact the concerning authorities to arrange visas for Baba and His entourage. Unfortunately we were unsuccessful and so those of us who were posted in Japan flew to Taiwan to receive Baba, with the exception of Dada Dhritibodhananda, who had been recently transferred from the Sweden training center to Hong Kong Sector as the chief secretary of Prout. He stayed an extra week in Japan making a final effort to arrange Baba's visa. LFT Ravi gave Dada his ticket to Taiwan and for that reason Ravi couldn't come to see Baba. Later, he went to the WT training center and Baba gave him a lot of special grace.

In mid-August I flew from Tokyo to Taiwan with some Japanese Margiis the same afternoon that Baba was flying in from Bangkok. It was a rainy day with very heavy winds, a typhoon, which was cause for concern. When I got to the airport I called the jagrti to ask what was going on. "Everybody is at the airport," they told me. "Baba has already arrived." So we looked around the terminal until we found out that Baba was in the China Airlines VIP Lounge. By the time I reached the lounge it was already full. Somehow I managed to crowd into the doorway to the left of where Baba was sitting.

The various Margiis and workers — SS Dada, the Bhukti Pradhan, and several others — gave Baba garlands and introduced themselves. Baba was very cordial, smiling and thanking everybody. I learned later that He had been formally welcomed by some officials from the national government. I remember that the president of The Republic of China Yoga Association was there. He read a Classical Chinese poem for Baba that he had written for this occasion. It was not composed in the typical Mandarin style — it was more dramatic and Baba enjoyed it.

As preparations got underway for Baba's departure, people started clearing out of the room and I got to sit next to Baba on His

left. Dada Ramananda was sitting in the chair to Baba's right. The president of the yoga association came up to Baba and said, "On behalf of the government and the people of Taiwan we would like to invite you to visit the mausoleum of President Chiang Kai-Shek. Baba smiled and said, "You will have to ask Dada Ramananda; he is in charge of my schedule." Ramananada smiled and said, "I don't see why not."

Baba was brought to the house of brother Omprakash and sister Janaki in the mountains north of Taipei, a place called Yangmingshan. That house was the former residence of the Japanese ambassador. It was a bungalow with several bedrooms, a large garden, servants quarters, verandas, lots of parking, and a boundary wall, a kind of VIP residence very suitable for Baba. Omprakash was the general manager of a new Ritz Hotel, which was preparing for its grand opening that was to take place a few weeks later.



VSS volunteers in Omprakash's compound. Sandiip: front row, far left; Suresh: back row, far right.

When Baba arrived at the house, many Margiis were already there to welcome Him. We had some Margii sisters who were excellent cooks and they had been selected to prepare Baba's food along with Didi Ananda Karuna, so the kitchen was very busy. We also had different brothers and sisters who were serving as security volunteers. They were wearing the VSS and GV uniforms and you can see them in various photos taken during that time, walking next to Baba, holding an umbrella for Him when He was walking in the sun, things like that. We had one special volunteer, sister Liila, who was an LFT at the time. Baba was very fond of her and whenever He would go out for field walk or for some program with the Margiis, He would always say, "Liila, Liila, where is my Liila. I can't do anything without my Liila. Somebody call her. Get her to come."



Girls Volunteers. Tapasii: third from the left.

There was no formal program that first evening, but there was a meeting with the workers in Baba's room. There was a long hallway just off the living room and the last room on the right

was Baba's room. It had an attached bathroom. Opposite that was Baba's personal assistant Dada Ramananda's room. Going back up the hallway, the next bedroom on the right was occupied by Omprakash, Janaki, and their daughter, Anindita, and the room opposite them was occupied by the central dasas — the Acting GS, Dada Girijananda, the PRS, Dada Jagadiishvarananda, the DPS, Dada Tapeshvarananda, and the RU/RAWA secretary, Dada Nityasatyananda. Didi Ananda Karuna was representing the Women's Welfare Department but she was staying elsewhere. So we all crowded into Baba's room, and Baba thanked us for the nice welcome He had gotten. He gave His blessings to everybody and told us that He had great expectations for this program in Taiwan. He expected to see some organizational growth and output in addition to the darshans and other blissful festivities that were scheduled. Then without further ado Baba launched into a reporting session. He wanted the daily report for the sector and from around the globe, which He took from the central dasas. He became very serious then and started scolding the central dasas, saying that the global report was not satisfactory and why was it not up to standard? He even told Dada Ramananda to use the stick a little. We all got a tingle. "Oh, Baba is serious," we thought. There's going to be some drama while He is here. It's not only going to be fun and games. There is going to be some serious reporting. Then Baba said, "Okay let the junior workers go out of the room." The SS and the central dasas remained in the room for another half hour or an hour, and we understood that serious reporting was going on. Exactly what happened or what was discussed, we didn't know, but the SS came out walking a little gingerly, so it seemed that he had gotten a little bit of Baba's prasada during the meeting.

Didi Ananda Lalita

From the airport Baba was brought to Omprakash's residence. By then it had become quite late, so no one expected that Baba would

still want to go for field walk, yet He did. I was on GV duty that first night. A group of us volunteers were in the motorcade that followed Baba's car. After some time, Baba's car stopped and a VSS guard took out a folding chair from the trunk. What a thoughtful arrangement, I mused. The mountain air was especially fresh after the recent rain. Even the vegetation seemed to be happy. After walking for a while, Baba stopped and the VSS guard set out the folding chair for Baba to sit on. Looking around, I realized that we had stopped at the tomb of a wealthy family. It didn't feel scary, though. It looked like an elegant garden. No one would notice the tomb unless they really paid attention.

The atmosphere was peaceful and sweet, and it was so quiet you could hear a pin drop. The acaryas had reminded us repeatedly that we should not ask Baba any questions, so as not to interrupt His thoughts, and to only speak if He spoke to us, and thus everyone remained silent for a while. Omprakash, however, was bold by nature. He broke the silence by asking, "Baba, what is the relationship between Chinese and Japanese?" To me the question sounded a bit out of place. I guessed it was because his wife was from Japan and they lived in Taiwan with their daughter, Anindita. Omprakash was a great devotee who felt very close to Baba, and that gave him the courage to ask Him questions.

Baba didn't answer Omprakash's question directly, however. He was quiet for a moment. Then He said, "Purusa is eternal, infinite. It cannot be described or expressed by any finite object. For the sake of philosophical explanation, we use a horizontal line to represent Purusa and a vertical line to represent Prakrti. The meeting point of these two lines, representing Purusa and Prakrti, is this manifest universe." Baba's words inspired in me a profound sense of awe. When I was little, I liked to look into the boundless, mysterious sky at night. I often asked: How big is the universe? What is the origin of life? And so on. But if this vast, infinite universe was only a dot, how big might the entire creation be? It was really mind-boggling.

After a pause, Baba said that there were four major human races in the long past: Aryan, Mongolian, Negroid, and Dravidian in South India. He talked about the main areas where they spread, their skin color, facial features, and physical characteristics. He also said that their physical differences were due to the different geographical locations and climates. For example, the Aryans lived in high-latitude areas with cold weather and less sunlight; therefore they developed lighter skin, prominent noses, and narrow nostrils so that when they breathed, the cold air wouldn't rush directly into their lungs. People from the Negroid race spread around the equator where the climate normally was very hot and thus they developed flat noses, wide nostrils, and medium-sized bodies. Their skin produced black pigment to counteract the strong sunlight; otherwise, they would be susceptible to skin cancer. "Over a long period of time," He continued, "these racial groups gradually migrated and blended with one another. The languages they spoke also underwent transformation. Thus the human races and their languages were further diversified."

Baba's words touched me deeply. I realized that the differences among human races and languages were due to the variations in geographic locations and climate. Our ancestors originated from the same source. Having the same roots, why were human beings so keen to fight and destroy one another?

I was standing just a few steps from Baba. After His talk, He turned to me with a grin and said, "This was your previous subject, wasn't it?" I was taken aback. Oh my God! How could Baba know this? I didn't even remember it myself. My university major had indeed been anthropology and sociology. I had taken courses on the study of human origins, the migration, blending, and relationship of different races and cultures. But I had forgotten all about it. What Baba explained in twenty minutes was more than I had learned during my four years in college. But what moved me even more was the way Baba asked me. Time and again, in His very special way, Baba demonstrated that He knew everything about

me. He even knew what I had forgotten. Baba communicated this to me in a way that only He and I understood. My relationship with Baba was and is truly one of a kind.

Mahesh

I had long wanted to see Baba and it was a rare opportunity that He was coming to Taiwan. I was serving in the military then and was lucky to get some time off, but Baba's arrival was delayed, so I could only receive Him at the airport. When I got to the airport, it was crowded with devotees, some offering garlands, some singing. Although I had to rush back to my base, I was happy and content to have been able to see Baba.

I was initiated in Taipei and had been meditating four times a day. I sat for long periods of time and felt peaceful and blissful. When I first meditated in a graveyard, I was fearful, afraid that there might be somebody behind me. But after that, I had a very pleasant feeling. I liked meditating a lot then and could even feel the vibrations of animals and plants.

Kalyanii

When Baba came to Taiwan, I was living in Hwa-Lien. I was a high school student and had a great desire to do spiritual practices. I was sick then but I told my mother that I wanted to go to Taipei to see my guru. She tried to stop me, but I insisted and decided to fly so I could get there sooner. I was still sick when I arrived in Taipei and unfortunately Baba's arrival was delayed. I waited a few days but then I had to return. I am sorry that I never got to see Baba, but I often see Him smile in my dreams.

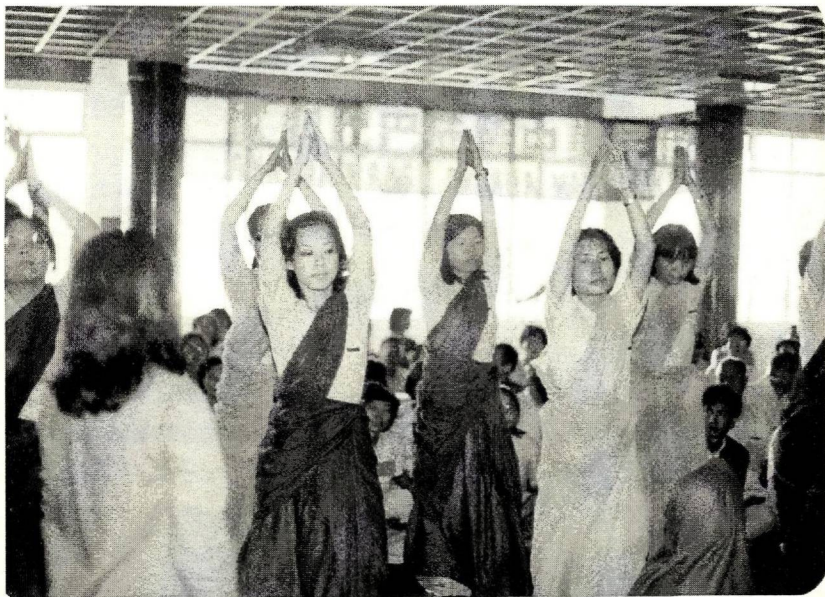
DMC



Da Zhong Building where the darshan and DMC were conducted.

Didi Ananda Suveda

The next day before darshan, all the LFT sisters put on their kaoshikii uniforms and did kaoshikii before Baba. The feeling of dedicating kaoshikii to Baba was very enjoyable and after we finished, Baba said, "Very good, very good." We then sat in the front row to listen to Baba's darshan. But when I sat down, I couldn't look at Baba or listen to Him speak. I closed my eyes and felt as if I were submerged in another world, unaware of myself or my surroundings. It was only after a while that my mind became normal and I was able to listen to Baba talk. Later, when I watched the video, I saw that my body was shaking very strongly.



Sisters' Kaoshikii at Baba's first darshan. First row from the left: Shiila, Sharada, Priiti. Aruna: second row, center

Didi Ananda Karuna had come from India as part of Baba's entourage and she was in charge of His food. She told us that while she would be preparing Baba's meals, the Taiwanese sisters could also

prepare some local Taiwanese food for Baba. I was very happy to hear that, since I wanted to cook a dish for Baba that I had invented — bitter melon and sweet potato. Didi agreed to let me prepare it for Baba's dinner; however I was very nervous and it ended up getting burnt and becoming mushy. I was embarrassed and asked Didi if it were still ok to serve it to Baba. "It's ok, it's ok," she said, and thus my dish was brought in to Baba anyway. I wasn't there to see Him eat but I heard He took a bite of it. That was all I wanted, to know that Baba had tasted the food I had cooked for Him.

Being in Baba's kitchen I observed that every time Baba ate they brought Him so much food. "How come so much?" I asked Didi Ananda Karuna and the sisters in the kitchen, "Can Baba eat all that?" They said, "Just wait and see." When the food was removed from Baba's room, I saw that He had only eaten a very small portion of it. Then Didi called us and said, "Hurry up! This is Baba's prasad." We then happily devoured all the delicious food that Baba had blessed.

One morning, Dada Rameshananda telephoned me and asked me to do some shopping. I hurried out without eating breakfast to take care of the errands and then went to Yangmingshan where Baba was staying. By the time I arrived, it was already afternoon. Somebody asked if I had had lunch. When I said no, I hadn't even eaten breakfast because I had been doing errands, they told me that Baba had just had breakfast and I could eat some of Baba's prasad. Although somebody reminded me not to eat it all because others would also like to have some, I ended up eating nearly half of it. I felt such happiness and satisfaction, knowing that Baba was looking after me.

Baba gave darshan on the sixteenth, seventeenth, and eighteenth at Yangmingshan, and I was happy and fortunate to attend those darshans. After Baba's morning darshan on the seventeenth, somebody told me to get ready for PC. Then Didi Girija and Didi Rukmini came and asked me if I wanted PC. "Of course," I said. "Then if you want to have PC, you have to promise to become a didi."

“I want to be a didi,” I told them, “but not right away, so I cannot make that promise.”

They told me that if I didn't promise, then I couldn't get PC. I felt very disappointed. As badly as I wanted to get PC, I could not violate my principles. I wanted to be a didi, but I wasn't ready to make that promise. Although I was caught in a dilemma, I stuck to my decision. Fortunately, in the end they allowed me to have PC.

That day seven or eight of us sisters went to Baba's quarters for PC. On the way, we met some Margiis who asked us if we were on our way to get PC. They asked if we had shaoca manjusas with us, since Baba might ask, and when we said we didn't, one of them told us that the group of Margiis before us used empty Yakult bottles. Thus forewarned, we hurried to buy some small Yakult drinks. Because it was a fasting day, we emptied out the drinks and put the bottles in our pockets. But Baba didn't ask us if we had our shaoca manjusas.

When we entered Baba's house, I heard a brother crying loudly in Baba's room. I was surprised. How come he is crying? I thought. There were people crying outside His room also. Finally, it was our turn to get PC. I was very nervous. We entered Baba's room and did namaskar to Baba. Baba was lying on His side on the bed and this made me feel a bit strange. Baba is our guru, I thought. Shouldn't He be sitting up for PC? How come He is lying on His side in such a relaxed manner? I couldn't help feeling a little awkward and somewhat puzzled. But He was the guru, what could I do? Later I heard that it was a special mudra of Baba's, almost like a state of samadhi.

During PC, Baba said to me, “Do you know? You must do a lot of service for this suffering humanity.” I said, “Yes, Baba,” but in my mind I was thinking, Baba, I know this and I will do it, but I am hoping that you will tell me more about spirituality. But Baba didn't. I was a bit disappointed, mostly because I was hoping to have PC with only two or three people, not a group. But I understood later that PC was to provide an opportunity for a small group of people to be with Baba.

That day everybody was busy with the final preparations for the DMC that evening and Didi Ananda Karuna was teaching us how to make garlands. About seven p.m., somebody said that Baba was about to arrive, but we were waiting and still there was no sight of Baba. All of a sudden, somebody came running in distress, saying, "Oh no, some police officers are downstairs, what should we do?" Somebody told me to go downstairs to check it out, so I went. I found a few plain-clothed officers from the Yangmingshan police station. They asked me politely, "What kind of gathering is this? Can we participate?"

"Have you learned meditation?" I asked. When they said no, I told them that it was our rule that only those who had learned meditation could attend this spiritual assembly.

One of them insisted that he wanted to participate but I was very firm. "This is a rule made by my master and there is no exception."

I was still arguing with them when all of a sudden somebody shouted, "Here comes Baba!"

I pulled the officer back and told him that he could not go up. In the meantime some Margiis were escorting Baba in the elevator to go upstairs. It was my turn to call the kaoshikii dance that evening and once Baba arrived, the kiirtan and kaoshikii would start right away, so I had to leave the officers and hurry upstairs.

I was very nervous about leading the kaoshikii, so I focused my thought on Baba and my mantra. I began feeling a beautiful sweetness flowing through me, and as a result the kaoshikii went smoothly. Afterward, I was immersed in that blissful feeling. I sat down, closed my eyes, and listened to Baba's discourse. I had heard people say that when Baba was giving His mudra, it was better to close your eyes and focus on feeling Baba's blessing with all your heart.

Baba's English was very clear. Even though I couldn't understand certain words, I could understand the meaning of almost every sentence. I was listening and meditating at the same time. All of a sudden, the whole world seemed to have become immersed in

a blessed tranquility, as if everything had become non-existent. I thought to myself, How strange! After a while I opened my eyes and saw that Baba was still on the stage. The universe, which had previously come to a standstill, was still there.

After the collective guru puja, I realized that I hadn't seen Baba's mudra. "Baba didn't give His mudra tonight?" I said out loud. "How come I didn't know?" The Margii sitting next to me said, "Yes, Baba gave His mudra before guru puja." Later I realized that the moment I went into that tranquil state of non-existence was the precise moment when Baba was giving His mudra.

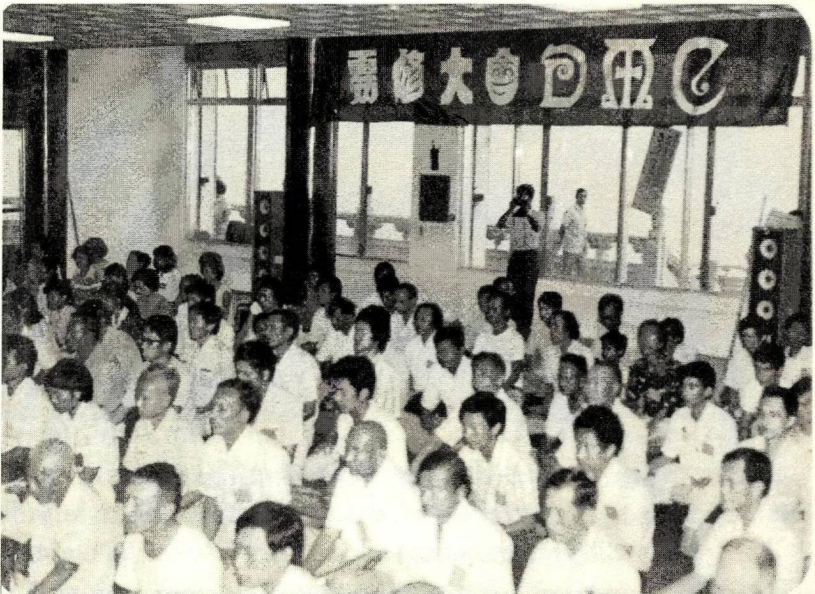
Baba gave darshan again the following morning. Some GV sisters had gone home after the DMC and we were in need of GVs, so Didi Rukmini asked me to stand guard. She instructed me to stand straight without moving and to remain alert. But while I was on guard listening to Baba's discourse, that sweet vibration returned. I couldn't help but close my eyes and enjoy the sweet vibration. It was only a few moments, but one brother came up to me and said, "Wow, you are really something. You can sleep while standing? I was wondering whether you were sleeping or in samadhi!"

Like me, Aruna had a strong desire to have an individual PC with Baba, but she had her PC with the rest of us sisters. Since she felt her desire was not fulfilled, she remained outside, doing kiirtan and crying and throwing tantrums. After she had sung for two days, they asked me to tell her to stop, but she wouldn't listen. So I sat down to meditate next to her and invited her to meditate with me. That meditation was very peaceful, very sweet and spiritual. It was further proof that the beautiful feelings I had experienced during the previous three years were real and beyond doubt.

Dada Krsnabuddhyananda

Baba let it be known that we would need to be ready in the morning for organizational meetings, reporting, and planning. First He

would take the morning reports and then He would go for field walk. The program for the first three days was DMC at Chinese Culture University, which was on summer holiday at the time, so after field walk He would proceed to the college for morning darshan. The Margii brothers and sisters were staying in the dorms and the meeting hall was on the seventh floor of the main building, which was a pagoda-style structure. We used to give yoga and meditation classes in that hall. It was on the top of the building and if you were down in Taipei and you looked off into the distance you could see that building up in the mountains with its pagoda fanning out on the rooftop. The hall had a large, square veranda from where you could look down into the valley and the city of Taipei. It was so nice, with fresh air and good sunlight, and it was big enough to hold four or five hundred people.



DMC participants

Nearly five hundred Margiis attended the program. They packed the hall all the way to the back. After Baba gave His morning

darshan He would return by car to Omprakash's house and do noon sadhana and have His lunch. Then we would have afternoon reporting and sometimes evening reporting. This was mostly with SS and the central workers. The local workers' meetings with Baba were mostly in the morning. Then Baba would do His evening meditation, go out for field walk, and then go to the darshan hall about eight or eight-thirty. As with any DMC, the sisters would organize the sisters' kaoshikii and the brothers would organize the brothers' kaoshikii and tandava. On the sixteenth evening Baba gave His RU lecture and on the seventeenth evening His DMC lecture.



The central dadas during RAWA night. From left to right: Dada Rameshananda, Dada Tapesvharananda, Dada Nityasatyananda, Dada Girijananda, and Dada Jagadiishvarananda.

Prior to that first General Darshan, Baba began assigning new postings to the local dadas and didis. This was common practice during DMCs, and incoming workers from the training centers would replace them in their old postings. In my case, Baba said that

I should become the Prout federation secretary. I was inspired when I heard this. Oh, Prout, I thought. That's an interesting posting. Then Baba paused and said, "No. Is the Prout chief secretary in the sector?" At that time it was Dada Dhritibodhananda. People told Baba he would be coming tomorrow or the day after. Then Baba said, "What about the chief secretary of SDM, is he in the sector?" That was Dada Sumitananda. SS said, "No, he hasn't arrived. He will not be here in time for the DMC." Then Baba said, "Well, then SDM will not be represented. That cannot happen. Better he be posted as SDM." My mind went down a little bit when He said this. Oh, it's not as glorified as a Prout posting, I thought. It's just SDM. Baba was looking at me and smiling, seeing my reaction. "No," He said, "he is fit for Prout; he should do Prout work. Let him be federation secretary." Then again Baba said, "But SDM is not represented. That would be a shame. Let him go to SDM." And a few moments later, "But I really wanted him for Prout, let him be Prout." Then SS said, "But Baba, there is nobody for SDM." Baba looked at me and said, "Krsna Das, do you know music? Do you know how to play a musical instrument?" My name was Krsna Das at the time. I said no, because I knew what Baba was doing. Baba looked at SS and said, "What do you say?" SS said, "Baba, he plays guitar very well. He's always composing kiirtans." Baba looked at me and said, "Then it is decided. You will be HPMG secretary, and until the chief secretary arrives, you will also be acting chief secretary for the purpose of reporting."

And so it was decided. I was posted three times to Prout and three times to SDM, but I remained in SDM, so probably my Prout samskara was finished in that meeting. There is always some symbolism behind the dramas Baba makes.

The next morning I was sitting in the far back corner of the room, behind Baba's left shoulder. He was reclining on the bed, facing away from me in the direction of the door. GS was standing in front of Him, so Baba could not see me. He was talking about an incoming worker, a German dada, Bhavatosh, who was on his way

from the training center. Later he became Dada Vijakarananda. Bhavatosh had been a Margii for a long time. He had served as an LFT in Hong Kong and Japan and had studied Chinese medicine in Canton, so he was fluent in Mandarin and Cantonese. Baba paused and said, "Yes, let Bhavatosh go to Tokyo; let him be the diocese secretary of Tokyo. Japan is a good place for him." I was thinking, Tokyo? Why Tokyo? He speaks Mandarin and Cantonese; he should be posted as RS Beijing, not DS Tokyo. He can be better utilized in China. Suddenly Baba stopped talking. He sat up on the bed, turned all the way around to the left, and looked me straight in the eye. In a serious tone of voice He said, "Krsna Das?" "Yes, Baba?" "Do you have a better idea where somebody should be posted?" He wasn't smiling. All eyes were on me now. Everybody was surprised that Baba had asked me that question. I realized that Baba could do His work and at the same time He could hear the chitter chatter in my mind, criticizing His decisions, thinking that I knew better than Him where somebody should go. So I said, "No, Baba," and He said, "Well, all right then." Then He laid back down.

Baba had said that Prout, VSS, and SDM should cooperate to open offices together to facilitate their work, called trio-offices, but we didn't know that. So Baba asked about the progress of trio-office formation and we all looked at each other. It was the first time we had heard of a trio-office. Then Baba said, "Well, if I don't have one trio-office in every diocese of this sector, then I will cancel my program with the Margiis. There'll be no darshan, nothing." We were worried now.

Then He asked SS, "How many dioceses are there in Hong Kong sector?" SS didn't know.

"What do you mean, you don't know! You are supposed to give a proper report. You don't know how many dioceses there are?"

"Baba, this sector is mostly communist. It is mostly mainland China and Russia, Siberia, and Central Asia. It's all communist. We are only working in Hong Kong, Macau, Taiwan, South Korea, and Japan."

"I don't want to hear communist or non-communist," Baba said. "We have to cover the entire sector. I want to know immediately how many dioceses there are. You must find out and I want one trio-office in every diocese of the sector. I want 100% coverage by tomorrow morning or I will cancel the entire program and the Margiis will have no darshan. I will just pack my bags and go back to India."

We were all scared and shaking. We came out of the room and said, "Dioceses, we've got to make some dioceses." Nobody had ever paid any attention to the communist areas because we couldn't go there. So we called for Liila and sent her to a bookstore in Taipei to pick up a map of Asia so we could see our sector and count the countries. So she went and brought a big map of Asia, and then we began to say, "Okay, this country, that country, this region here, that region there." We brought it to Baba and He made some adjustments. "Now," He said, "I've already helped you. You can cover Hong Kong and Macau regions with workers and give the report." He also said that Beijing Region would remain as is, completely communist, and of course we had Tashkent Region, which is Central Asia, and Vladivostak Region, which is Siberia, Far East Russia, and North Korea.

Then Baba said, "I will not compromise. I want to know how many dioceses there are and I want 100% of those dioceses covered with trio-offices in the next twenty-four hours or I will cancel the entire program." So we were busy the rest of the afternoon and evening dividing up the countries into regions, dioceses, and districts as best as we could. We came up with a total of sixty-nine dioceses. Now, how were we going to cover them with trio-offices? We thought that a Margii's house could be a trio-office, so we started calling around to get addresses from different parts of Japan and Taiwan. We even tried to find out where Bhavatosh used to live in Canton so we could list that as a trio-office in mainland China.

In the end we were only able to gather some twelve or thirteen viable addresses, and we were very worried the next morning. We

were afraid our report would be so bad that Baba would get angry and cancel the program. There would be a lot of sad people and we would have let the Margiis down. Baba was very serious that morning — it was the second morning of the DMC. The Margiis had already enjoyed one morning and one evening darshan. Baba looked at us and called SS for the report. He was in a very severe mood. He said, “SS, what is the progress for the target I gave last night? How many dioceses in the sector?”

“Sixty-nine, Baba.”

“Sixty-nine? Oh. And how many are covered by trio-office?”

“Thirteen, Baba.”

“Thirteen! What was the target? Ramananda, what did I tell them yesterday?”

“Baba, 100%.”

“And thirteen out of sixty-nine, what does that come to roughly?”

“Roughly 20%, Baba.”

Baba looked at Ramananda and GS Dada and said, “What do you think?”

“Baba, it is very bad. It is a very bad report.”

“Yes, it’s very bad. What should be done?”

Baba was looking very sour and all the workers had their heads down. Everyone was depressed — like, oh no, it is the end of everything.

Then Baba said, “Well, it has only been twenty-four hours and yesterday they did not even know how many dioceses there were. At least today they have covered thirteen of those dioceses with trio-offices. So it is a beginning. What do you think, Ramananda?”

“Yes, Baba, it is a beginning. They should show more progress during the program.”

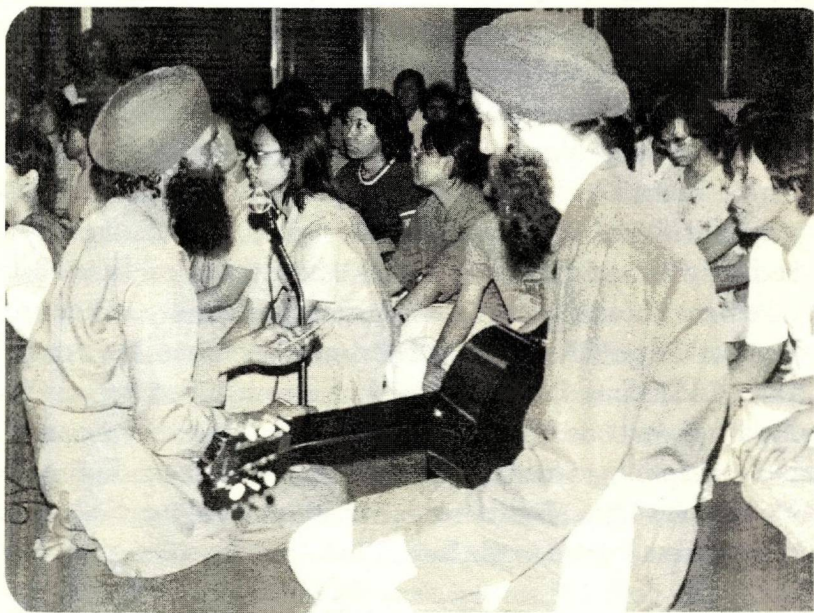
Then Baba said, “Ok, then the program will go on. Everybody’s head was still down. Baba sat up on the bed and said, “What? Nobody is laughing?” So then we understood that He was playing with us. Nevertheless He added that He wanted to see more departmental output.

After seeing the report Baba said, "How come there is no out-turn? I want the SDM report. I want SDM optees, I want some WWD optees."

WWD is easy because all the sisters are WWD. But what about ERAWS, AMPS, SDM, Prout?

Jagadishvarananda said, "All right, Baba. This afternoon I will give a seminar. I will explain all the departments and trades to the brothers and then everybody will decide which they want to work for."

Baba said, "OK, very good, very good idea."



Dada Rameshananda and Dada Krsna Das explaining the organizational departments to the Margiis

Now that morning just after Baba came back from field walk, the chief secretary of Prout, Dada Dhritibodhananda, had arrived from Japan. He was looking around and saying namaskar to everyone. We had just finished lunch and we were on our way to the

afternoon seminar. He had just arrived with his bags and we were going out the door. SS was supposed to massage Baba after lunch, but when he saw Dhritibodhananda, he asked him if he would like to massage Baba. SS knew that Dhritibodhananda loved to massage Baba and was eager to see Him, so he thought to offer that opportunity to him. Of course SS didn't actually want to go into Baba's room, because Baba had been scolding him so much about the reports and about Prout, so he was happy to have someone else go in instead.

Since I was now acting chief secretary for SDM, Baba gave me the duty to organize the brothers for kaoshikii and tandava, and to be in charge of the kiirtans. On DMC night I got a stick, wrapped a cloth around it, and dipped it in kerosene, and that night we did tandava with a burning torch. Baba liked it. I was playing kiirtan and the next morning Baba said, "Last night's kiirtan was so wonderful. Krsna Das is such a good musician, such a good kiirtan player. I enjoyed it so much. He is the right man in the right place at the right time." Earlier — I think it was the third day — Baba asked me to come into His room after lunch and play kiirtan. I brought the guitar and sat with Baba in His room. The new RS, Dada Sudarshan, came with me and accompanied me on viola while I played one of my kiirtans for Baba. He was lying on His bed and smiling. Some didis had gone into samadhi during that kiirtan a few times, Didi Ananda Mitra and Didi Ananda Bratatii, so it became known as the "samadhi kiirtan."

Regarding Baba's talks, He was very particular about the translation. He spoke in the meetings with the dasas and didis about proper translation. He said that to translate into English you should have a knowledge of Latin and Greek. He was concerned whether the people were translating His talks. Who were the translators? I think He had a special talk with one or two of the Margiis who were translating His talks into Chinese but I don't know the details.

The morning after DMC I was on security duty and I went with Baba to the venue. This was the speech where Baba talked about how the monks of China used to come to India and vice versa. The Chinese were advanced in certain aspects of astanga yoga and the Indians in others. The Chinese, He said, were very advanced in dharana, so the Chinese monks used to cross the Himalayas and teach the Indians how to practice dharana, concentration on different points. Later that was incorporated into acupuncture, martial arts, and kung fu, the specialized concentration of chi and energy. The Chinese were specialized in that, but the Indians were more skilled in dhyana, so they used to go to China and teach them pure meditation. One of the most famous ones was Bodhidharma, the founder of Zen. Zen in Chinese is chan. Dhyana became *chan* and *chan* became *son* in Korea and *zen* in Japan. They all mean the same thing. Bodhidharma founded his temple in southern China and that was the beginning of the Zen sect.

After Baba's talk we came out to the parking lot. All the volunteers were there. They had their lathis and they saluted Baba as He reached the car. Baba paused before getting in and spoke to the brothers who were right next to the car. The GV volunteers were off to the side. "Did you understand my talk today?" He asked. They nodded and said yes. Then Baba said, "You know, during the Buddhist and the Mogul periods in India those scriptures were destroyed in India but the scriptures that describe what I spoke about today are still kept in different places in China and Tibet. It might be good to research those scriptures. What do you think?" Some brothers said yes and Baba said, "Then would anyone of you be ready to visit mainland China and bring those scriptures back so we can study them?" They were hesitant. Wow, mainland China, who can do that? It was thought to be impossible in those times. Then Baba smiled and got into the car.

Incidentally, there was a military guesthouse nearby with a guard posted outside the gate. It was an elite area. Many political leaders had their estates and facilities there, and that guesthouse

was for VIPs — politicians and heads of state who were visiting Taiwan. Baba's car had small swastika flags flying on either side of the front fender and behind Him came the motorcade, the security cars. For three days in a row, each morning and evening, Baba and His motorcade would drive by the guesthouse on the way to the college, and the guard would see the motorcade and the flags, so he would salute Baba and Baba would give him namaskar. Every time. Baba said that they also like the dharma.

Didi Ananda Lalita

Before Baba came to Taiwan, the Margiis' knowledge of Ananda Marga was mostly limited to spiritual practices — meditation and yoga — and social service. They had no idea about the organizational structure. Though I was an LFT, I didn't know that there were departments like VSS and GV until I went to Europe, let alone anything about the reporting system. While Baba was in Taiwan, He gave pressure to the acaryas to educate the Margiis and strengthen the organizational structure. Baba was a master of human psychology. He knew that in order to bring solidarity among people and inspire them to do something concrete for humanity, they must have a well-built organization, and everyone should have some duty in that organization. Otherwise, people would scatter like loose sand. SS Dada did his best to follow Baba's instructions, utilizing every spare moment to explain to the Margiis about the various departments in Ananda Marga and how they functioned.

One day, an acarya rushed up to me and sent me hurriedly down Yangmingshan to the city to buy a big map, with instructions to come back immediately. I was puzzled. Why a map? Why so urgent? Later, I learned that Baba wanted the acaryas to delineate the regions, dioceses, and so on for Hong Kong Sector (East Asia). He had said that it had to be done within a certain timeline — otherwise He wouldn't continue with the program. This was how Baba got work done!

During one of Baba's darshans in Taipei, just after we finished singing bhajans and kiirtan, Baba said, "Two countries I love dearly — Taiwan and Israel. The people of these two countries struggle very hard for survival." I was very touched to hear this.

One day, during the DMC, my mother suddenly showed up at Omprakash's home. I was shocked. Though I had told my mother about Baba's visit and had invited her to attend the DMC, she had declined and I had left her without any further attempt at persuasion. My family lived in Kaohsiung. It was a long journey from Kaohsiung to Taipei those days and my mother rarely went to Taipei alone, which made me wonder how she had found her way to Omprakash's house all by herself. Though she was inside the compound, she wouldn't come into the house, no matter how much we requested her. She remained in a sunroom in the back where the Margiis usually meditated while they were waiting for PC. It made me sad to see this. I wanted to keep her company and take care of her, but as an LFT and a girl volunteer I was bound by my organizational duties. This left me torn and tormented.

Dada Ramananda was aware of this and he asked me if he should arrange PC for my mother. I looked at him in disbelief. He can't be serious, I thought. He must be saying this just to comfort me. Though my mother was initiated, I never saw her meditate, let alone follow the Sixteen Points or participate in Ananda Marga functions. These were the basic prerequisites to have PC with Baba. Moreover, she and my father had enlisted the help of my cousin's husband, a military judge, to draft a letter that they sent to SS Dada, threatening that if I became a didi they would take action against Ananda Marga. Given all this, I couldn't understand why my mother had taken so much trouble to come all the way to see Baba.

When Baba came out of His room to go for field walk, I was on GV duty inside the house. I was very surprised to see my mother come into the house. It was the first time she had come inside.

When she saw Baba, she seemed to want to say something to Him. Baba looked at her and gave her a very deep and loving namaskar. At that very instant my heart was put at rest, as if a great weight had been lifted off my shoulders. I felt that my duties toward my mother had now been taken care of. What could be a greater fulfillment of my filial duty to my mother than to have her receive a blessing from a sadguru capable of bestowing salvation? The most I could provide would be physical and mental comfort, but Baba's blessing purified one's very soul.

Several years later, my cousin told me why my mother had come to see Baba — she had wanted to ask Baba not to let me become a didi.

Didi Ananda Gaorii

Baba said that Chinese culture is very old and that many of the old values still continue. He appreciated the etiquette of the Chinese Margiis, their politeness and respect. He told the Indian dasas and didis, "You see, when they leave the room after PC they don't turn their backs to me."

Some of the other things He said about Chinese culture can be found in His darshans; for example, some of what He said about the Indian and Chinese schools of Tantra — Cinacar and Divyacar. He explained that in the past there was interchange between India and China, and monks used to go between the two countries.

He mentioned the name of one Chinese monk who traveled from China to India. I still remember His emphatic intonation when He said it — Pa Fa Hu Le. He also said that Vashishta, the famous Indian yogi, went to China to learn Tantric practices there. Baba said that in Cinacar Tantra the practice of dharana was more developed and in Divyacar, the Indian Tantra, the practice of dhyana was more developed. So the monks from India used to go to China to study dharana and the monks from China used to go to India to study dhyana.

Divyacar or Viiracar is the southern school of Tantra, which came from the Himalayan region to the Indian subcontinent, and Cinacar is the northern school of Tantra, which passed through Tibet and into China. Baba also said that the word *tantra* in Sanskrit became *taota*, then *taoa*, then *dao* or *tao*, as in Taoism; also that dhyana in Sanskrit became *chan* in Chinese and then *zen* in Japanese.

In those days I was the acting SWWS, the head of the WWD department in Hong Kong Sector, and so during Baba's visit I had to give Him the progress report from the WWD department during our daily reporting sessions. One of the reporting items He was focusing on at the time was newsletters. We had many sisters from different units there during Baba's visit and they were all busy creating one- or two-page newsletters for their units, knowing that it had been said in the past that newsletters were Baba's food. So every day we had various newsletters from WWD and Baba was very happy. For several days during reporting He praised WWD, and indirectly me, since I was the head of WWD.

Then maybe He felt it was enough praise and He decided to change the flow. That day during reporting He started to talk about different languages. He asked if someone knew French and I said I knew a little. He asked me what was "paper" in French. I said, "*le papier*, Baba," and He said, "Very good." Some people started commenting, "Oh, Baba is going to praise you again," but then Baba said, "Japanese is her mother tongue." Actually when I was growing up I never considered Japanese to be my mother tongue because all my education had been in English and my Japanese was not as good as my English. Nevertheless, several times in the past Baba had mentioned to others that Japanese was my mother tongue. Anyway, this time He pointed it out again (or maybe He asked me what my mother tongue was and I replied, "Japanese, Baba"). Then He said, "Can you tell me how to say, 'the internalization of external objectivities' in Japanese?" I thought a little and started to say something but then Baba said, "No, no. In one

word." I was stumped. "I don't know, Baba." Then Baba looked around at everyone and commented, "You see, Japanese is her mother tongue and she doesn't know how to translate this phrase." He smiled and nodded His head. I think after so much praise He had to rub my ego a bit. Years later I read in one of Baba's printed discourses that the internalization of the external objectivities is "knowledge." One word!

Didi Ananda Rucira

During one reporting session, Baba wanted to reduce the number of regions from eleven regions to ten in order to better facilitate the work in the communist countries of the sector. He instructed how the boundary lines should be changed and asked a team to redraw the map and present it to Him.

The team went to work, and in the next reporting session the sectorial secretary stood up and said, "Lhasa Region (Tibet and Northwest China) is so big, we think we should divide it into two." The SS tried to explain — "you see, in the future..." — but he didn't get to finish his sentence. Baba snapped, "In the future? I told you to make eleven into ten and now you want to put it back again to eleven? There is hardly any population there. In ten thousand years there will be no human beings on this planet, so don't talk about "future."

During another reporting session, Baba was very pleased with WWD but He wasn't happy with the dadas' reports. Baba asked a question about certain targets and one dada couldn't reply. Baba scolded the dadas in the ERAWS section for not achieving their targets. Baba then said, "Let the dadas do the ladies' work and let the ladies do the dadas' work." For about a minute or so, AMPS lost its standing. Then Baba set the dadas' minds at ease and revoked the order. He then gave them some new targets, saying, "Let all these work be done."

Baba paused. Looking around, He asked whether His grammar was correct. "Is it work or works?" I was sitting not too far from

Baba and bravely replied, "It's 'works', Baba." Baba looked at me directly and asked, "So, am I wrong?" Embarrassed by my mistake, I quickly replied, "No, Baba!" He then went on to explain that "works" is a noun that means "factories" and the like, and that "work" is correct, even as a plural, when referring to activities to be done.

Some time after, I looked it up in the dictionary and found it to be right. But it was on that day that I learned that Taraka Brahma is never incorrect and one should never disagree with the guru.

Sister Nirmala was a wonderful cook. During Baba's visit she had the duty of preparing Baba's food. This was full-time work and she had no time to go on field walk with Baba. While on one hand she felt blessed to be Baba's cook, she was nevertheless feeling a bit sad that she had missed out on the chance to go on a field walk. She also felt sad that she and some other sisters had missed their chance for Baba to bless them by His loving touch on their head. With this sadness in her heart, she was standing at the entrance to the house one day with other Margiis, waiting to greet Baba when He returned from field walk. When the car arrived, Baba got out and walked up the path to the house, greeting everyone. When He came to Nirmala, He stopped and gave Nirmala a deep namaskar. Then He reached out His hand, placed it on her head, and blessed her. "Now are you happy?" He said with a smile.

Krsna Kumar

When we arrived at Chinese Culture University for the DMC program, Baba was already giving darshan and the VSS guards wouldn't allow us to enter the elevator. I was pretty upset. The guards were Margiis whom I knew quite well. Why couldn't they make an exception? We had no choice but to wait outside. After a while somebody came down the stairs and whispered something to the guards. Guessing that something was about to happen,

we rushed to the elevator in an attempt to go upstairs, but when the elevator opened we were stunned to see Baba inside. We did namaskar and Baba asked the dada beside Him, "Why didn't they attend my darshan?" I replied, "Baba, they didn't allow us to enter." Baba told the dada, "You should have let everyone come to my darshan." Hearing this, we felt vindicated and happy. All our frustration quickly vanished. What great fortune I had that I could do namaskar to Baba face to face, talk to Him and accompany Him to His car. Missing His darshan turned out to be a blessing!

Till then I had admired how handsome the dadas looked. However, they paled in comparison to Baba. From that very first glance, I knew right away that Baba was extraordinary. He had a majestic look, like that of a king. I was deeply charmed by His appearance and I found His eyes entrancing.

The next day Dada Bhaskar asked me why I hadn't gone to the airport to receive Baba? This upset me because I hadn't known that I could have gone to the airport to receive Baba. Why didn't Dada Rameshananda tell me earlier when he was in Kaohsiung? Had he done so, I would have gone to Taipei earlier instead of only reaching there in time to attend the DMC program.

On the last day of DMC, I was selected to perform tandava in front of Baba. After the dance, I had the good fortune to be able to sit in the front row. When Baba gave His varabhaya mudra, I was very close. What a great honor and joy that was!

My PC with Baba, however, didn't go so smoothly. One morning my acarya was looking for me for PC but he couldn't find me. That afternoon he asked me where I had been, and I remembered that I was in a group discussion outside in the hallway. I had no one to blame but myself— I had missed my chance.

The following day I took a bus to Yangmingshan because I couldn't get a taxi. When I arrived, a lot of people were already waiting in the PC line. I waited for a long time and then a dada announced that Baba was in a meeting. There was nothing I could do but continue the endless waiting. I was disappointed and felt

helpless, thinking that my turn would never come. Baba was either in a meeting or had gone for a late field walk, and there was still a lot of people ahead of me. Fortunately Didi Rukmini brought Baba's prasad for those who were waiting and she shared a piece of eggplant with me. I knew it carried Baba's blessing. I felt lucky and satisfied even though I didn't get PC.

Ram Kumar

The day Baba arrived in Taiwan, I was assigned to guard the gate of Omprakash's Yangmingshan villa; for that reason I didn't go to the airport to receive Baba. When Baba's car pulled up to the gate, I did the VSS salute and Baba returned my salute with a namaskar. The moment Baba looked at me, I felt a force surge within me that connected me with Him instantly. It felt as if I were electrified.

The next day I was not assigned any duty, so I went to the darshan at Chinese Culture University with the other Margiis. We were singing kiirtan while we waited for Baba. Whenever the elevator light lit up, everybody thought it might be Baba and started singing louder. But when the elevator arrived with a ding and the door opened with nobody there, everybody's heart sank, though we never stopped singing. This repeated several times and then Baba finally appeared and we all shouted Param Pita Baba Ki!

After Baba sat down, we also sat down to listen to His discourse. I don't know why, but when Baba started talking I felt like meditating, so I sat in lotus posture and closed my eyes. As soon as I started meditating, I felt a very strong energy rising from the tail of my spine, pulling me backward. I fell back while still in lotus posture. Immediately, several people came to my aid, some helping to unfold my arms and legs, some checking my breathing, someone else my heart. One person even massaged my chest. I felt as if my consciousness and my body were separated. My consciousness was watching them while they were busy helping me. Finally, they all dispersed and left me lying on the floor. I'm not sure how long

it lasted, but after a while I felt a desire to see Baba and listen to His talk. I managed to sit up by myself, and I was able to look at Baba's majestic form and listen to His darshan.

Jayaliila

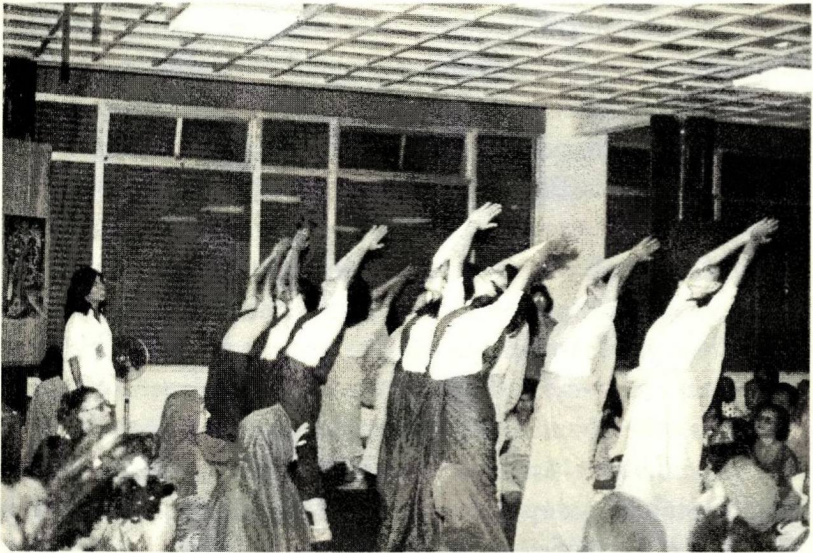
When Baba came to Taiwan, we went north to Taipei and were constantly bugging Priiti to arrange PC for us. I told her that I had gone to a lot of trouble to arrange for some relatives to look after my grandchildren so that I could travel to Taipei and thus I begged her to please help. She was under a lot of pressure and told me impatiently, "Stop bugging me. I told you I am very busy!" Needless to say, I was very disappointed.

One Margii had returned to Taiwan after attending the DMC in Europe. He told us that when Baba gave His mudra at the DMC, the spiritual vibration was so strong many Margiis fell over. Some were shouting out loud, some were crying, and it seemed like he was the only one who was unaffected. He was sitting in the very first row, wondering why he had not felt anything, but then suddenly his body started to tremble and then and there he became aware of how powerful Baba's mudra was.

Listening to him, I wondered if the same thing would happen when Baba came to Taiwan and gave His mudra. I wondered if I would be like the others — bang, bang, bang, and fall over.

The day Baba arrived, there was a typhoon with high winds and heavy rain. The DMC was on the seventh floor of a Chinese Culture University building. The sight of a foreign Margii attending with her infant baby was very touching. When Baba started talking, His voice was clear and strong. It was very blissful, just listening to His voice. Laksmii and some young people were selected to do kaoshikii, but I also did kaoshikii in the back. Somebody said to me, "Ah Po (an expression for addressing an old lady), although your kaoshikii is not very good, it is not bad either." I was very happy to hear that.

After the DMC discourse on the final night, Baba recited a long Sanskrit blessing and then gave His special mudra. At that moment, I felt very strong vibration, like an earthquake. There was a shaaa sound throughout the building. I thought myself fortunate that I didn't fall over, but at the same time I was a little disappointed. Nevertheless, the vibration from Baba's mudra was indeed very powerful.



Sisters' Kaoshikii during DMC program

Jagadeva

Baba arrived in Taiwan later than originally scheduled. I was serving my military duty at the time, but I had a few days' leave and thus I was fortunate enough to be able to attend the DMC. Back in those days, it was almost impossible to go to India; moreover one couldn't ask for a leave of absence from the military. I had those three days off and I used them to attend the DMC. I felt that Baba deliberately delayed His arrival especially for me. It was really His grace and I was very happy to be able to see Him.

I was a new Margii then and didn't know much. The thought of seeing Baba made me excited and fearful at the same time. I was told that Baba was omniscient and omnipresent, so I was very much afraid that Baba might expose all the bad things I had done in the past. Ananda Marga had a high standard of moral conduct, which helped one to move from imperfection towards perfection; therefore, one should not indulge in any immoral thoughts or deeds. I decided that I should take this opportunity, with Baba coming to Taiwan, to examine myself and gain a deeper understanding what I should and should not do. After thinking it over, I gathered my courage and went to see Baba.

From His physical appearance, Baba didn't seem different from other people. But Baba, being Baba, was different from others in many ways. For example, Baba gave darshan in English and He often asked if His speech had been translated into Chinese. If it hadn't, He would refuse to continue. I didn't know why at that time, but now I understand that this was part of His *lila*. Baba was stern and sweet at the same time.

I remember I had a very special feeling the first time I heard Baba speak. It felt like the whole universe was in His pocket. Baba could speak non-stop and so smoothly, describing things that we had never heard of. He was so composed, it looked as if nothing was beyond Him, and I had no doubt that He was the embodiment of the Supreme Consciousness. Ordinary people couldn't even do that with a written script. Thus He indirectly made me believe that He was indeed the Supreme Consciousness personified.

When I was a child I had an active imagination, and I often thought about the nature of the universe, outer space, stars, and infinity. When I saw Baba, I felt that the entire universe had been condensed and was residing within Him and that He was Parama Purusa.

Every time we did kaoshikii or tandava, Baba always praised the dancers. "Very good, very good," He would say. Every move of His seemed to have profound meaning, every gesture, the way He

wiped His mouth, the way He lifted his eyeglasses. It was always so very sweet and graceful.

People from all walks of life participated in DMC. Even the police officers that came to monitor the program ended up asking Margii many questions. I think they had a good impression of Baba and wanted everybody to do good deeds.

Although I wasn't physically close to Baba, I felt close to Him in my heart. I felt that we had a very deep connection that stretched back many lifetimes. Looking back, I didn't reflect too much on my feelings at the time; they were just coming up naturally. Only later, looking back, did I realize: ah, that is what it was! When I had to return to my base, I regretted not being able to spend more time with Baba, and I was already looking forward to one day being able to go to India and make up for lost time.

I feel Baba gave Taiwan His special blessing during His visit. I noticed that in the next ten years we had very few typhoons and no water shortages or damage from high winds. I stopped paying attention after that.

I was fortunate that all the things that Baba used at Yangmingshan were moved to my house. Eventually I moved away and they were moved to another Margii's home, Narendra's, except for the window curtains. While Baba's things were in my house, I tried to keep everything just how it had been. I bought an orange rug and did my sadhana on the rug. It was a very sweet feeling, being in that space. When I was sleeping, I felt that Baba was all around me. One day when I was meditating, Baba's call bell went off suddenly — ding, ding. It sounded two times. I was startled and looked at my watch. Then I thought that maybe I had fallen asleep and Baba had woken me up so that I could meditate properly. It was really very nice.

Ganesh

Dada Jagadiishvarananda was the central public relations secretary and I was helping him with PR-related work — giving daily

progress reports on the work, making news briefings, contacting journalists, etc. Whatever needed to be done, he would ask me to do it, and thus I got the opportunity to visit Baba's quarters every day. Sister Nirmala was preparing Baba's breakfast each morning. A few of us would hang around near the kitchen, waiting for one of those special moments. After Baba took His breakfast, we'd enjoy Baba's prasad to our heart's delight. Never had I taken so much of Baba's prasad.

Shaktideva

When we went to the Taoyuan International Airport to receive Baba, we danced kiirtan in ecstasy. We lost ourselves in the devotional flow, oblivious to the strange looks from the passers-by in the airport. I was only able to attend the two or three days of the DMC. It was filled with intense spiritual vibration but I had a practical side and I knew I could not take that vibration with me. I was eager to enjoy the spiritual bliss but at the same time I was afraid to immerse myself so deep that I would have a hard time adjusting with the external world. For me, acquiring mundane stability was just as important as spiritual bliss. Thus, after the DMC and amid the Margiis' enthusiastic devotional sentiments for Baba, I left Taiwan quietly to study abroad in the US.

I do not regret having missed the opportunity to be alone with Baba, because I believe that we are one with the Creator, just as Baba says in His song "I Love This Tiny Green Island." We are never alone; the Supreme Consciousness is always with us. As long as we follow our conscience and perform selfless service for the people around us, we are doing Baba's mission. Baba taught us that we are all one. Not only should we love our race, we should also extend our love to other races, religions, and even animals and plants. Spiritual practice is from the selfish "I" to the universal "I."

Liilavatii

I met Ananda Marga in 1979 when I attended a beginner's yoga class for health reasons; Tapeshtar was our teacher. When he encouraged us to participate in the Dharma Maha Cakra, I didn't take it seriously, but I did attend the DMC.

When Baba was giving darshan, I didn't understand what He was talking about. When He gave the mudra (only much later did I understand what it was), I looked at His hands, not His face, since He wasn't speaking. I saw white light shooting out from His right hand. I was sitting in the back and I saw the entire hall filled with white light. It wasn't only coming from His hand — everyone present was covered with that bright light and I couldn't see anybody. I told myself to look away; I was afraid I might become blind. The light was so strong, I couldn't stand it; it was like a searchlight shining in my eyes, making them fill with tears. It felt like time and the universe were suspended, and my mind went completely blank.

I diverted my eyes and then looked again. That brilliant light had disappeared and Baba was sitting on the podium, still in His mudra. Although there were many people present, I felt as if only Baba and I were left in the world, looking at each other.

I didn't realize then that it was a special experience, a blessing from Baba. I thought everybody had seen the white light; therefore I didn't give it any special importance. I even thought that the Master hadn't given me any special experience. So on the second morning, I left.

I remember that Saturday was a fasting day. Everybody wanted to see Baba and nobody was in the kitchen, so we, the newcomers who had never fasted before, had no choice but to fast too. I was asked to make a flower arrangement and place it on the podium, but there was no water that day. After I made the flower arrangement, I went to the women's and the men's bathrooms to get water but couldn't find any, so I had no choice

but to place the flowers on the podium without water. That was an interesting memory.

Because I came to the DMC out of politeness, the very next morning I went home to break my fast. On the way home, I had some time to be alone. I was feeling pretty happy, so when I arrived home, I started playing a piece of Chinese music that I just learned on my flute. I don't know if it was because I had just broken my fast, but after a little while, my throat started to feel uncomfortable, so I stopped. But I couldn't stop the happy feeling inside me, so I started singing. I didn't know any kiirtans then, so I sang the songs I knew. Although my throat was dry, I couldn't stop. After singing for a while, I suddenly thought, How come I am singing so much today? I told myself it was enough, I should stop, but I couldn't. Though I consciously told myself I should stop, that blissful feeling kept coming up from my heart (I later learned that it was the fourth cakra), like spring water gushing out from underground. I couldn't suppress it, couldn't stop. I just wanted to keep singing.

That wasn't ordinary happiness but a happiness that came from deep within my heart, something I had never experienced before. I don't remember how long it lasted, but that feeling was so deeply ingrained in my mind, I can never forget it. Later, when I heard that Ananda Marga meant "Path of Bliss", I couldn't help but smile, because I had experienced it. I was happy that I was fortunate enough to have that experience.

I had always felt that I was a very ordinary person, but I was meant to meet this master. I didn't know there was anything special about Him at the time, but now I know that that experience was real. Therefore, we should all encourage one another to move towards Him.

Later I tried to search for that same light, but I couldn't find it. It was the guru's grace. I am fortunate; I know that Sadhana is for life.



Guru Puja. Liilavatii: far left, head down.
Mr. Chiu Bin Chun: bottom right

Tapeshvara

After Baba was released from the jail in August 1978, we started discussing about inviting Baba to Taiwan. Everybody was curious about Baba, and when we were informed that Baba had accepted our invitation, everyone was overjoyed. After the Chinese New Year, we began to make preparations for Baba's visit. Our fundraising target was four hundred thousand NT. The DMC was scheduled from August 5 to 7, but it wasn't finalized until we knew the dates when Baba would arrive. We were kept waiting, full of anticipation, and we didn't get any news until August, which made for great anxiety. When we were finally informed that everything was okay, we all cheered and the DMC was scheduled for August 16-18.

Baba arrived in Taiwan in the evening of August 15. I was eager to go to the airport to meet Baba, but I was assigned the duty of

making the pratiik for the DMC venue and I had to stay at the jagrti to do it. I finished it around midnight and then rushed to Yangmingshan to decorate the venue. On the way, when I passed by Yangteh Boulevard, section 3, where Baba was staying, my heart was filled with emotion. Oh, I thought, tomorrow I will be able to see my long-awaited guru Baba!

After reaching the DMC venue, I arranged Baba's seat and then hung the pratiik on the wall behind it. I slept for two or three hours and then got up and continued decorating the hall, hoping to make it as beautiful as I could to welcome Baba. Later on, when I saw the pictures of Baba taken at the airport and how everyone was gazing at Him, I felt both admiration and envy.

The DMC program began later that day. I saw Baba for the first time that morning, but I didn't feel anything special; nor did I experience any spiritual bliss during the program. I had only been a Margii for one year, so perhaps that was the reason. It was not until 1986, when I first visited India, that I really felt those sweet feelings for Baba. By then I had been practicing meditation for some years and felt closer to Baba in my heart.

In addition to the venue decoration, I was also responsible for taking photographs. I was running around the hall, trying to take photographs from all possible angles, when I suddenly realized that I might be disturbing Baba during His speech. After this thought flashed in my mind, I became very selective about the photographs I took. However, after the film was developed, I was shocked to discover that both my rolls of film had come out blank. Had I not inserted the film properly inside the camera, or was it a small punishment from Baba? Either way, I knew it wouldn't have happened without a cause.

Yogendra

I was the manager of Ai-He Hotel in Kaohsiung when one day Dada Rameshananda came to our place. I was intrigued by his

orange uniform and his gentlemanly demeanor. Out of curiosity I went over to chat with him. I asked him if I could invite him to a movie and he agreed, so I took him to the Asian Theater to watch a film about the Vietnam War that lasted for a couple of hours. During the movie, I noticed that Dada remained perfectly still and didn't talk, not even once. I wanted to ask him why but felt awkward about it. It seemed to me that he hadn't watched the movie at all. On our way back to the hotel, I asked him if he had watched the movie and he said yes, but I still had my doubts since I hadn't seen him move his body at all during the entire two hours. All in all I was very impressed by this, and it occurred to me that he had accepted my invitation only because he didn't want to let me down.

Due to the nature of my work, smoking became unavoidable when I socialized with my clients. I smoked one pack a day for more than ten years. It had affected my health and I coughed a lot, and thus I wanted to quit. Dada encouraged me to take a vegetarian diet as far as possible, breathe deeply, get plenty of fresh air, and practice more asanas. I followed his advice, and after one or two months my health started improving and I was smoking less. By then I had become close to the Margiis. None of them smoked, and this gradually helped me to stop. Whenever I felt like smoking, I would hide in the bathroom. Sometimes I simply threw away the cigarette after one puff. Eventually I stopped smoking completely without even noticing it. I also used to be quite fat, more than ninety kilos, but after I quit smoking my weight dropped to sixty-eight kilos, and it has been more than twenty years since I last touched a cigarette.

When Baba came to Taiwan, I went to Taipei to attend the DMC. When I saw Baba at Chinese Culture University, I was very moved. It felt as if Baba were one of my family members. I couldn't help crying. When Baba gave varabhaya mudra, many people fell over. When I asked Dada what had happened to them, he told me it was natural and that I shouldn't be surprised. Whenever I saw

Baba, my heart was filled with so much gratitude that I couldn't hold back my tears.

Bholanatha

On the day Baba arrived, Mukta and I, along with some acaryas, were taken to the VIP lounge in the Taoyuan airport to greet Baba and His entourage. The garland that Mukta had made to give to Baba got damaged while moving through the crowd, which worried her, but the acaryas said it didn't matter and she presented the garland to Baba, who accepted it warmly and thanked her.

The day before the DMC, I got very sick and was confined to my bed in the dorm rooms of the Chinese Culture University, where the program was being held. Didi Rukmini was so concerned about my weakened condition that she offered to let me rest on her meditation blanket, something Mukta said was unheard of for a didi. However, I considered the act to be perfectly natural, since Didi Rukmini had shown up so many times in my life in the guise of a healing angel. I had a high fever and couldn't take any food or drink, so Baba's personal doctor was called in for a consultation. He diagnosed me with a serious stomach virus, prescribed some natural medicines, and predicted that I would recover quickly. He also added that he thought the illness might be due to the burning of karma, which sometimes occurred after close contact with the guru. Sure enough, within twenty-four hours I was back on my feet and ready to participate in the weekend's spiritual festivities.

The DMC program started much like the one in India, with singing, kiirtan, meditation, and Baba's General Darshan. Mukta was Baba's official translator and sat in the front. However, the Indian acaryas asked her not to interrupt His talk with immediate translations. Instead, the devotees were told that she and I would transcribe the tape recording afterward and read it out to the Margiis prior to the next darshan. Those hours that we spent transcribing and translating Baba's darshans, just the two of us,

were very special and very intimate. As we listened to Baba's words and carefully reflected on the word choices we would use, it felt as if He were speaking only to us.



Mukta reading Baba's previous darshan discourse in Chinese

After the final DMC talk, the Margiis slipped special marriage garlands around our necks that Mukta and her friends had made, and sprinkled flowers along an aisle to the stage. We then walked down that path and sat before Baba for a special ceremony. He gave us His blessing and wished us a happy and blissful life together. After the DMC program, we went on our honeymoon to Pear Mountain.

Laksmii

When Baba came to Taiwan, I invited my daughter to attend the DMC at the Chinese Culture University. She was very fortunate to be able to attend all the activities. At the time, my feet would shake during collective meditation. Sometimes my body would also shake. I tried to control it as best I could while all the while thinking that it was energy moving inside me. I also sometimes felt light coming from my head. During the program I was selected to do kaoshikii.

I have had ten car accidents over the years, but every time I felt that Baba was protecting me.

Champa

When Baba gave His varabhaya mudra during the DMC at Chinese Culture University, I saw some Margiis fall over on the floor. My husband's younger sister had just come from the US and she was attending the DMC with me. Her body also started swaying like the others. Afterward I asked her what had happened to her exactly. She said that she didn't know; she just felt a powerful energy moving inside her body, which was out of her control.

While in Taipei, Baba blessed me by placing His hand on my head. I felt very happy. Baba said that my name means "pure like magnolia."

Ishvarakrsna

After attending a few yoga classes at the Activity Center in Zhongshan Park in Tainan, I was initiated by Dada Sudhiirananda. It was in the fall of 1976; there was no jagrti in Tainan at the time. A couple of months later, I left for the Kinmen Islands to do my military service and discontinued my practices. A few months after completing my two-year military service, I got a job in Taipei. Late one evening, while I was walking home after work, I saw a Didi in her orange robes near my work place. I went up to greet

her and during our conversation I learned that the Ananda Marga jagrti and vegetarian restaurant were only a short distance from my work. I was very happy to find Ananda Marga again, and I started attending different functions. Soon after, Shaktideva told me that there was a vacant position in the restaurant, and thus I started working in the Ananda Marga restaurant.

When Baba came to Taiwan, I was assigned to the kitchen to assist Aruni in preparing the food for the DMC participants. I didn't register for the bus ride to the airport to receive Baba, so after the bus had left, I was strolling around the campus compound when Dada Viniit spotted me. He asked me whether I'd like to go with him to the airport — there was a vacant seat in the taxi, and he and some fellow acaryas were about to leave. Thus I was lucky enough to see Baba in the airport, even though I couldn't make it into the VIP room.

Though I and Aruni, the head chef, were very busy in the kitchen during the DMC, I was able to attend all of the darshans but one — I arrived late for that darshan and the VSS guard didn't allow me to enter. I remember the following incidents from the DMC:

After Baba's morning darshan on the first day of the program, the acaryas left for Omprakash's house to be with Baba. Later, I heard that Baba instructed some of the acaryas to stay at the DMC venue with the Margiis. This little thing showed me how much Baba cared for the Margiis.

Another time, when everyone was shouting "Param Pita Baba Ki," Baba said, "In Chinese, in Chinese," but the acaryas didn't know Chinese, so they asked Liila to lead Param Pita Baba Ki in Chinese. From then on, Liila was often the one leading it.

Ashok

In this world, people have different wishes. It's so rare to be blessed with the good fortune to see Baba.

Upon arriving at the DMC venue, I saw many people meditating. Some Margiis were crying loudly. Some of them started crying as soon as they entered the meditation hall.

When I saw Baba, He appeared to be very calm and peaceful. Baba was giving PC in Kaohsiung but He stopped before my turn came and thus I missed that special opportunity to have personal contact with Baba.

My family had financial difficulties at that time but I was always there whenever there were service activities. I sincerely wanted to help people.

Ashok's wife

DMC was held at the auditorium of Chinese Culture University in Taipei. Many people attended. I sat at the back, very far from where Baba was seated. I couldn't see very clearly but I remember that some people were in tears and some burst into loud cries, which startled me. I wondered what was happening.

I felt Baba was very dignified and very great. I kept hoping that He would come to Taiwan again so I could have another opportunity to attend DMC.



Collective photo on the DMC hall veranda

Personal Contact

Jiivan

I was the first person to have PC with Baba when He came to Taiwan, but I know that didn't mean I was more spiritual or at a higher level than the others; on the contrary, it could have meant the opposite. Baba asked me many questions but I only remember three of them. After asking my name, Baba said, "What is your duty?"

I answered, "I am the manager of the Ananda Marga Restaurant."

Baba then repeated, "What is your duty?"

Realizing that my answer was wrong, I said, "Baba, AMPS."

Some of Baba's other questions I didn't quite understand. At the end, Baba asked me, "What do you want to do?"

I said, "Baba, I want to become an acarya," and Baba smiled.

Dada Krsna Das wanted me to do tandava at one darshan, and afterward I was very happy because I felt that I had done pretty good tandava in front of Baba.

I regret that I didn't have very special experiences while Baba was in Taiwan; however, the spiritual energy that Baba emanated had a powerful effect afterward and those profound experiences have left a deep and lasting impact on me.

After Baba left Taiwan, the dada from the training center in India told me that before he left India, Baba asked him to set up an LFT training center in Taiwan with instructions to train the LFTs the same way they trained the WTs. When this dada was in

Taiwan, I was the only LFT trainee, so what I said to Baba about wanting to become an acarya did come true in a way.

Sanjaya

Before seeing Baba, I had heard a story about an acarya who had renounced family life to follow Baba. Before becoming an acarya, he met Baba by chance at an airport and wondered how could anybody in this world have a smile so sweet, so attractive, and so irresistible. Hearing this story, it was hard to imagine what that scene must have been like.

The Tantra sutras have mentioned that a disciple only has one opportunity in his lifetime to meet with his guru individually. Due to Baba's grace, I had that special opportunity to meet with Him. When I entered Baba's room, I did *sastaunga pranam*, then sat up and looked at Baba. Baba smiled, and at that moment the image of that acarya's story came into my mind.

Baba then asked me what were my duties in the organization. I said, "Publications."

"Publications is very important," Baba said. "Many people don't know English. You should translate my speeches into Chinese so that more Chinese people can understand what I have said."

This planted in me the *samskara* to take over Ananda Marga's publication duties as well as translating Baba's articles. Other than it being my mission, it is also Baba's blessing, since during the process of translating and proofreading, I am the one who benefits most.

Suresh

When it came my time for PC, I entered Baba's room and did *sastaunga pranam*. When Baba put His hand on the crown of my head, I completely left myself. For those moments I no longer existed. I was so moved just by the sound of His voice, it was as if I were entering into *samadhi*. Although it didn't last very long,

it was such a soothing feeling. I have no words to describe it. I closed my eyes and felt as if I were melting into that mystical force.

Rajendra

After the reception at the airport, we accompanied Baba to His quarters at Yangmingshan. All the Margiis wanted to see Baba, so the subsequent DMC was very crowded. The Margiis had been looking forward to this event with great anticipation — not only to have His darshan and listen to His talks, but hopefully to have a chance for Personal Contact, the most precious experience of all.

I didn't know if it was because of Baba's itinerary or problems with time, but the schedule for our PC kept being changed and the delay was causing us a lot of anxiety. Baba would go for field walk each day and we would be waiting, hoping for a chance to accompany Him on His walks but the VSS Dada didn't allow us to follow. We were very stubborn about it. We thought that even if we were not allowed, we were still going to follow. So we waited on the side of the road where Baba was due to pass. But Dada came running out and warned us in a stern tone of voice, "No, you are not allowed to follow! Nobody is allowed to follow! Anybody who follows will not be allowed to attend the program." That made us very upset. This was what all the Margiis had been waiting for. Many had come all the way from the south of Taiwan. It was only natural that the devotees wanted to follow their guru. But Dada was very stern, so we didn't dare follow. Baba went for His walk and came back, and we could do nothing but continue to wait at the same spot. The more I thought of it, the more wronged I felt. Tears started rolling down my cheeks. I thought, Now that Baba is here, why are you keeping us so far apart? If that is the case, I may as well go home.

Agitated and deeply frustrated, I gathered up my belongings. When I was heading out, Dada Rameshananda was surprised to see me leaving. "Rajendra, what are you doing?" he asked. "Why are you crying?"

I was very sad, but all I said was, "Nothing, Dada. I am going home." Then I left. Dada called out for me, but I didn't stop. He then called Dada Krsna Das and told him to bring me back. Dada was tall and strong and he picked me up like I was a little chick. Dada Rameshananda then insisted on knowing why I was leaving, so I told him how I was feeling. Dada said his heart was also crying to see me like this and he asked me not to leave. He said Baba was about to give PC, and so I stayed. Baba did indeed start giving PC and soon my name was called.

When I walked into Baba's room, I saw Him sitting on the bed, a short but very loving, venerable elder. I prostrated and called out "Baba," and as I sat up I couldn't stop crying. Baba said, "Don't cry, my son. Don't cry. Come here, come here." I went closer. Baba asked my name, and I told Him, and He asked me some other things. Above all there are two things He mentioned that I remember most:

First He asked, "Rajendra, do you want to be a great person?"

"Yes, Baba, I do."

Then, when He touched the crown of my head, He said that He forgave all the mistakes I had made. I felt like He was removing my samskaras. Baba was reciting something in Sanskrit while He touched my head, and at that moment all my thoughts stopped. I wished that moment could have been eternal. My long-desired guru, Baba, was right in front of my eyes, and He was blessing me. It was not a dream. To be able to be with the guru face to face is such a very rare opportunity, a joyful, unbelievable, and fortunate occasion.

Urmila

During the DMC, Baba gave many discourses. Although I did not understand anything, it was a great blessing to hear Baba's words in person. Baba also gave PC during that time. I was able to get PC with the second group of sisters. There were some eight to ten

of us. Baba was sitting on a large bed and we prostrated as soon as we entered the room. Then we knelt on the floor, doing our best to fit. Baba explained to each of us the meaning of our Sanskrit names while one sister translated for us. Baba said that Urmila meant a girl dancing on the ocean waves. Oh my! My name was so beautiful. I liked it so much and hoped that I could actually be a girl dancing on the waves of the divine ocean. This PC was the second time that I was close to Baba.

Krpa

I didn't go to the airport to receive Baba when He arrived in Taiwan, but I was overwhelmed with joy when I saw Him at DMC at Chinese Culture University. I was fortunate enough to have PC while I was in Taipei. When I entered Baba's room, I did *sastaunga pranam* and then sat in front of Baba. Baba looked at me and I looked at Him without saying anything. My wish had come true and I was very content and happy, though I was too overwhelmed by my emotions to speak at that moment. It was hard to keep the tears from rolling down my face. Baba said something but I didn't understand. One *dada* later translated it for me. He said that Baba had told me to cut down on greasy foods and take a lighter diet. After that, I returned to Taichung where I waited for Baba's visit.

Yudhisthira

When Baba arrived at the airport in Taipei He was received in the China Airlines VIP Lounge, but I wasn't able to enter. However, I did have the opportunity to do *kaoshikii* before Baba during the DMC program, and I was also fortunate enough to have PC. When I entered Baba's room for PC, Baba was laying on His side on the cot. I did *sastaunga pranam*, and when I got up Baba asked me to come closer. At a certain point He put His hand on the crown

of my head and intoned some Sanskrit mantras. He also touched my anahata cakra.

Tapeshvar

After the DMC, one dada made arrangements for some people to have Personal Contact with Baba, and I was on the list. That day happened to be a fasting day. One of the requirements to have PC with Baba was that one should be following the Sixteen Points and one of the Sixteen Points was that one should carry a small water bottle to use after going to the bathroom. We didn't have one, so on the way to Yangmingshan we stopped at a grocery store and each of us bought a bottle of Yakult. Since it was a fasting day, we gave the drink to the children and kept the empty bottle.

When I entered Baba's room, He was lying on His side on the bed, facing the door. The first thing I saw was His smile, like a full moon. I did sastaunga pranam, and when I got up, Baba had changed to a sitting position. He gestured for me to come closer. Then He asked me my name, the name of my acarya, and various other questions. The most important of these was, "Many people are suffering; are you willing to do something for humanity?" I answered yes. Some of the other things He said I either couldn't understand or I have forgotten. Finally, Baba called me even closer and blessed me by placing His hand on my sahasrara cakra while reciting some mantras. Baba's hand was very strong. During the blessing I closed my eyes and did my second lesson.

Yogendra

There were many Margiis waiting for PC in Taipei when I got in line. I thought I would have a very long wait, but right at that moment, SS Dada told me to go see Baba. I was both excited and extremely nervous. It was around ten in the morning. When I entered Baba's room, I could hardly see anything. The entire

room was filled with a dazzling bright light. I held my hand to my forehead to shade my eyes and then I seemed to notice a face. I looked again carefully. It was Baba. Slowly I was able to make Him out clearly and I saw that Baba was smiling at me. This was indeed a surreal experience.

I told Baba that I was very happy to be able to meet Him. I also told Him that my wife was also very eager to have PC and that she was waiting outside with the others. Baba said, "Don't worry, she will see me soon." How could that be possible? I thought. There were so many people ahead of her. Baba asked me whether I followed the Sixteen Points or not. "Baba, I do my best," I answered. Baba touched my crown cakra and blessed me.

After PC, I came out of Baba's room and told my wife about my experience, how I had seen a dazzling bright light everywhere, so strong that I couldn't see anything else, and that it was only after ten seconds that I was able to see Baba. Ten minutes or so later, one didi came up to my wife and said, "Lokeshvarii, would you bring the food to Baba's room?" She was thrilled and I thought, "How can Baba's words come true so fast!"

Baba was truly a very great guru. I'll never forget the experience I had with Him.

Lokeshvarii

When Baba entered the DMC hall at Chinese Culture University, everyone was doing kiirtan. As soon as I saw Baba, tears started running down my cheeks. I felt unspeakable joy.

When my husband, Yogendra, had PC with Baba, he told Baba that I also wanted to see Him. Soon after that, one didi asked me to bring food to Baba in His room. I brought in Baba's food and stood by to serve Him. I watched Him eating sweet potatoes and peanuts. He kindly ate a little and then left the rest for us to share as prasad.

Dada Ramananda

Indravashishta was the son of Didi Ananda Bharati. His daughter Reshama was married to an Indian margi named Moti who was living and working in Hong Kong. Reshama was a very strict margi, very good in sadhana, but her husband had a number of bad habits. She tried to get him to change and to some extent she was successful — he had been a chain smoker and under her influence he gradually gave up smoking — but he still had many defects. Finally, she thought that the best solution was to have Baba punish him. Throughout her life she had seen how Baba had rectified even the most inveterate sinners, and she wanted Moti to experience the healing balm of Baba's stick. When she heard that Baba would be coming to Taiwan she began insisting that they attend the program.

"It will be a perfect opportunity for you to get PC," she told him.

"We can see Baba when we go to India," he countered.

"Taiwan is much more convenient," she said. "It is only a short flight and whenever we go to India we have to spend so much time visiting our relations that we rarely have a chance to see Baba."

After going back and forth for some time Moti finally gave in. When they arrived in Taiwan, Reshama came to me and said, "I have brought Moti here for PC and he has agreed, but I want to ask one favor of you. Please tell Baba that he should be beaten very severely."

As you can imagine, I was quite surprised. "Whether Baba beats someone or not is his choice," I told her. Moti was equally surprised — he was standing close enough to overhear what his wife was saying. He was already scared about getting PC — he had heard many stories about how Baba would punish his disciples — and hearing his wife's request made him all the more anxious. As a result he started avoiding the PC line.

On the second day Reshama brought him to me and said, "Dada, the main reason we came here was for Moti to get PC. It will be good for him, and he promised also, but he is trying to change his stand. Please talk to him."

So I told him what a precious opportunity it was and after that he agreed to put his name on the list.

When it came time for Moti's PC, I told Baba that Didi Ananda Bharati's granddaughter was here and that she had brought her husband for PC. I didn't mention anything about the beating, however, because I knew that Baba would have jumped on me. Then I ushered him into Baba's room and shut the door. Once he was inside he did *sastaunga pranam* and went and stood in one corner of the room, as far away from Baba as possible.

"My boy, why are you standing in the corner?" Baba said. "Come here and sit in front of me."

"Baba, I don't want to get beaten," Moti answered. "Please promise that You won't beat me."

"Whether I beat you or not is my concern. Now come and sit down."

After much persuasion, Baba convinced him to sit in front of His cot. He asked him about his *acarya*, his *sadhana*, how many lessons he had, and so on, and then started enumerating all his bad habits. Moti readily admitted that it was all true.

"You have committed so many mistakes," Baba said. "You deserve to be severely punished, but you have admitted your mistakes."

"Yes, Baba, I am guilty of everything you say, but please don't beat me. I don't think I can take it. Even my parents never beat me."

"I am more than your parents. It is my responsibility to see to it that you become a good person and an asset to the society, and for this to happen punishment is a necessity."

Moti started crying. Actually Baba had not given punishment to anyone in Taiwan but he didn't know this, since the *sadhakas* had not disclosed their experiences.

"Should I punish you?" Baba asked.

Moti gathered his courage and said, "Baba, it is Your choice. I have accepted my mistakes and I will accept whatever punishment You decide to give me."

"Stand up."

Moti stood up and Baba pulled his stick from under the pillow. "Stretch out your hand."

Moti did as Baba asked and Baba tapped him on the hand with his stick. In a conspiratorial voice he said, "Okay, now you have been punished, but don't tell your wife that I only tapped you on the hand. Just tell her that Baba punished you. She brought you here because she wanted me to punish you, but it is only because she wants you to become a good husband and an ideal man. She is a good sadhaka and her intentions were good. You have some defects and she wanted me to remove those defects."

After his PC Moti was laughing. He told me what had happened but asked me not to tell his wife. After the last PC, Baba asked me what Moti had said. "Did he accept that I punished him?" he asked.

"Yes, Baba."

When Baba came out for field walk, Moti and Reshama were waiting near the car. Baba stopped just in front of them and said, "How are you, my boy?"

"Baba, your punishment has removed all my sins," Moti replied. When she heard this, Reshama became very happy.

Dada Krsnabuddhyananda

There is one PC story I should mention. Ramananda would take the candidates in his room and teach them the proper protocol for PC. You have to do sastaunga pranam, tell your name, and so on. In order to explain sastaunga pranam, full prostration, Ramananda would lift up his arms, as if he were stretched out on the floor, but of course he was standing. So one brother came to talk with Dada before PC, and Dada lifted up his arms and said, "Do you know this?" "Ok Dada, no problem." So the brother was called into Baba's room. After five minutes the bell rang and Ramananda went in to see what Baba wanted. Baba was very angry. "What is this, you nonsense fellow?" Ramananda asked what the matter was and Baba said, "He is coming in doing like this to me," and Baba

started lifting up His arms. Ramananda understood right away. After that he made all the brothers do full sastaunga pranam on the carpet so he could be sure they understood.

Field Walk

Sanjaya

Apart from PC, field walk was the best opportunity to get close to Baba. I would never willingly forego any opportunity to get close to Baba. Opportunity doesn't knock twice; therefore never let go of any opportunity. As such, Ganesh, Tapeshvar, Sharada and I became the "kamikaze" unit — we were always chasing after Baba.

At that time, only those who had had PC with Baba and had signed up and been approved could accompany Baba for field walk. We had a very close relationship with the SS, Dada Rameshananda, and he would let us know in advance where Baba was going for field walk. In addition, Baba's driver, Sandiip, would also tell us where Baba was going. With their help we were almost always able to catch up with Baba.

One day, Dada Rameshanandajii told us that Baba wanted to go to the National Palace Museum. We got there and waited, but nobody came. We were concerned that we had missed Baba and His entourage, so we hurried back to where Baba was staying and there we found out that Baba had instead gone to Rongxing Garden.

From then on, we got Baba's destination from Brother Sandiip. We would catch a taxi outside Baba's quarters and then follow behind Baba's car. This strategy never failed. We were able to go on Baba's field walks without being approved.

Once Baba left for His evening walk after eleven p.m. As usual, we stopped a taxi and told the driver to follow Baba's car, this time

without knowing where Baba was going. We followed and followed until we made a left turn and the surprised driver asked us, "Why are you coming here?" It was only then that we realized that we were at the Yangmingshan Cemetery.

After the taxi stopped, we asked the driver to wait for us there and then hurriedly ran after Baba. At one point Baba was looking down the mountain to the city below. "Look," He said. "How beautiful it is. It looks like a garland made of lights."

A little later Baba stopped at a grave and sat down while we surrounded Him. Baba started talking about the word "swastika" and asked for paper. Baba's doctor handed Him a small notebook and Baba drew a swastika and explained its origin, its evolution, and use. Baba's feet were so close at that moment that I could have easily reached out and touched them, but I didn't dare, even though I had a very strong desire to do so. That was the biggest regret in my life. Perhaps if I were an Indian Margii, I would have just started massaging Baba's feet. That would have been the smart thing to do. But we had been specifically instructed not to touch Baba.

On another walk, we were following Baba along a path in the Yangmingshan Gardens when Baba stopped on a step on the downward slope and asked a VSS volunteer to pick up two rocks from the ground and hand them to Him. Baba hit those two rocks together matter-of-factly and said, "Did you know? Nearby there is a volcano, sulfur..."

I was thinking, Baba, you didn't need to hit the rocks together; you know everything. You just did this as a lead-in to the story you were about to tell, like a movie director.

Later, Brother Sandiip brought the car to the side of the road for Baba. Just before He got into the car, Baba said to us, "Did you know that I fasted five years, four months and two days in the prison? It was very painful. I wish that my children will not have to suffer the same pain that I did. So you WT's only have to fast four days a month and the family people two days a month."

Baba's compassionate message will never be forgotten.

Dada Krsnabuddhyananda

All the didis and dadas, as well as the Margiis, were eager to have a chance to go on field walk with Baba. I was able to go twice. On one of those field walks we visited a graveyard on the top of a mountain somewhere but I wasn't very close to Baba so I didn't hear much of what was said. But the other time I rode in the car as security-in-charge. It was at noon and I was in the front seat of Baba's car alongside the driver, brother Sumitra, who was a very devoted Margii in his sixties who had gone to Fiesch to see Baba. He was a retired businessman with political connections. Dada Ramananda was in the back seat on the right and Baba was behind the driver. We were driving on the roads near Yangmingshan when Baba said, "Krsna Das, do you remember what I talked about in darshan last night?" I knew what Baba was doing, so I said, "Baba, I remember the first half." "And what about the second half of my talk?" Actually I had been very busy the previous night organizing the kiirtan and the brothers' dances and I had dozed off during the second half. I had been sitting in the front row on the far right, off in the corner of the hall. So I said, "Baba, I have trouble remembering what you said in the second half." Baba said, "Hmm, try to pay attention throughout the entire lecture next time, not just half of it." Even though I had been way, way over on the right, Baba had noticed that I was dozing and took time to point it out the next afternoon. I said, "Yes, Baba, I will do my best to listen to entire pravacan," and He said, "Very good." Then He asked me about Japan — previously I had been in charge of Japan — and I told him that there was one brother there who had been a great help to Didi and myself in Tokyo. His name was Suzuki. He was a martial arts grandmaster and he had met Netaji Subash Chandra Bose in Singapore. Ramananda asked if he was initiated and I said, "No, he is a Christian and a grandmaster, but he was very hospitable and he gave a lot of logistical support to Didi Girija and myself." He felt very close to Baba.

Baba closed His eyes and smiled. "Yes, Suzuki Sensei. He took very good care of Dada and Didi." Suzuki was blind and kind of frail, but he was a grandmaster in the martial arts and even though he was blind he could whip anybody with his cane and take them down because of his keen sense of hearing. He could see with his ears. He could also see auras a little and we gave him some Baba pictures to ask him what he thought: the gentleman's photo, Baba's passport photo, the straight-on smiling one, the one we sometimes called the don't-worry-be-happy photo. He touched Baba's forehead in the photo and said, "It is very bright right here. I feel some energy, some light coming from this point." Then we gave him the varabhaya mudra photo and he said, "This one is completely different. I sense two powerful spots in this picture." He touched both of Baba's hands. "This one is very special," he said.

He had a couple of spare rooms in his house, and for a while Didi was staying in one room and I was staying in the other. We would get up early each morning to do meditation, and one morning he said, "Dada, I had a dream last night and in that dream one Indian gentleman came to visit me. He was about sixty or late fifties, kind of short; he was wearing white, he had glasses, and he spoke to me and smiled. He had a nice, round face and he was about my height, five feet, five feet two. He looked at me and said, 'You must take very good care of Dada and Didi.'" Then Suzuki asked me, "Who was that?" and we said, "Well, by your description it sounds like Baba." "Yes, that's who it was. Baba came in my dream and said that I must take very good care of Dada and Didi." And those were the exact words Baba used in the car. Baba smiled and said, "Yes, Suzuki Sensei, he took very good care of Dada and Didi."

Then again He asked me about the progress of the work in Japan. All the good and bad points were running through my head at that moment, the pluses and minuses, the successes and defects, but the main thought I had was, Baba we are not taking the right approach in Japan in pracar. But I didn't say that. What I said was, "Baba, the dadas and didis are working very hard, but

we could do much more, much better.” Baba closed His eyes and said, “You know, you are not taking the right approach in Japan. The oriental people of the Far East, as a race, are the most evolved on the planet, so the style of pracar in China, Taiwan, and Japan should be different than in other countries. You must factor in the subtlety, the feelings of the people.” I said, “Baba, I understand,” and I did, because that was precisely what I was thinking. I hadn’t put it into words, but Baba put it into words.

Sumitra pulled up into a little park and we got out. There was a little gazebo there, a place to sit and talk, so we walked over to it and sat down. Then Baba said, “Does anyone have a map? Can I have a map of Taiwan?” I said I would ask Sumitra, and so I asked him in Japanese if there was a map in the car, since Sumitra didn’t speak English and I didn’t speak Chinese. Sumitra said, “Maybe, I don’t know. Why?” Then Baba said, “Because if you have a map, I will show you where the oil deposits are off the coast of Taiwan. There are lots of petroleum deposits in the ocean off Taiwan. If you bring me a map I can point them out.” So I translated this into Japanese for Sumitra. He ran to the car and opened the glove compartment and took everything out, but there was no map. Then he opened the trunk and by then Baba was laughing because we already knew there was no map. Baba was staging a drama. When Sumitra came back, he said that he couldn’t find a map but then he grabbed a stick and drew the outline of Taiwan in the dirt in front of Baba. “Baba, here is Taiwan.” Baba said, “This is not a very accurate map. If you have a proper map, then I can show you the oil deposits. But without a proper map I can’t.” Sumitra said, “Baba, I will go to Taipei and get a map,” but Baba said, “No, I need it right now. Let it remain a secret. I will reveal that secret when the time comes.” Thereafter, throughout the program, Sumitra was bringing maps and trying to get Baba to point out which places had oil. Even one month later, when I was taking reports to India, he brought me the maps and told me that he had friends in the China Petroleum Company. We could get a lease and it would help

the mission. I told him I would ask Baba, but I knew that Baba had been playing a game with us that day.

One day Baba also talked about earthquakes. That was another topic we had discussed in the car. Every time I went with Baba on field walk — my first time in India, later in the car — Baba always talked about earthquakes, the geology of the Northern and Southern Pacific, as He used to say. Since childhood I had always been fascinated by earthquakes. So in one of the workers' meetings, Baba talked about the three types of earthquakes — seismic, volcanic, and plutonic. When we were in the car I asked Baba about it. "Baba, You spoke about three types of earthquakes." "Yes," He said. "Seismic earthquakes are when the fault line shifts. The two tectonic plates slide laterally this way or that way. The motion of a seismic quake is side to side. Volcanic earthquakes are when the magma, the lava, boils under the mountain and forces its way up through the cracks. Sometimes the pressure of the volcanic magma, the molten core, affects the plates. This is more of a swinging motion. Seismic is more horizontal." Then I asked, "What about plutonic, Baba?" He said, "Pluto means 'the underworld.' Plutonic means when the epicenter is deep in the earth, miles down. So the source is plutonic. That kind of motion is up and down." That was Baba's comment about earthquakes.

Baba also mentioned Hiroshima and Nagasaki. I can't remember exactly in what context but we were talking about Oriental history. Baba commented, "Ah, Hiroshima, Nagasaki." He became very sober and said, "Two black marks on the history of humanity. Of course there is drama and there is war but those atomic bombs were definitely a great sin."

Didi Ananda Lalita

One morning, Dada Bhaskar told me, "Today you will take Baba to the National Palace Museum." I was taken aback by this sudden instruction. I had never been to that museum; I didn't know what it looked like or what it contained; how could I give Baba a tour?

But at the same time, I was excited to have the chance to accompany Baba to the museum. Thus I was both happy and worried, not knowing what would happen.

When we arrived at the museum, someone went to buy tickets while the rest of us waited. I stood very close to Baba. He said something to me in a sweet tone of voice, with the same radiant smile He had given me during my PC. I was so absorbed in Baba's smile that I didn't hear what He said. "What?" I asked naively. "Today you are taking me to this museum?" He repeated. I felt embarrassed and couldn't find any words to reply. After we went in, however, my anxieties and worries vanished. There was no need for me to say anything. It was Baba who explained to us what was on display, giving an eloquent, lucid account of all the different artifacts with His characteristic high spirits. What was most deeply imprinted in my memory are the following:

In one exhibition hall, there was a tiger inside a large transparent glass case. The tiger's body appeared similar to those we saw in zoos or films, but its head was different. It looked smaller and a bit rectangular, very different from my memory of tigers with broad faces. Tigers don't look like this, I thought sarcastically. At that very moment Baba turned, looked straight at me, and said, "Five thousand years ago, tigers looked like this."

In another exhibition hall, there was a huge canvas of Chinese calligraphy. I can't remember who the artist was. Baba stood in front of it for a while. Then He told us, "You should tell the museum authorities to take proper care of this."

On display in another exhibition hall were different articles excavated from certain ruins. Baba explained about Oracle bone scripts, their excavation, and other facts related to that ancient civilization. But the most unforgettable scene took place in the display room for musical instruments, which ranged from early primitive instruments to their later developed counterparts. One of them was a set of traditional Chinese bronze bells of different sizes. While we were there, Baba said that Lord Shiva was the

founding father of music. The seven musical notes we use today were discovered by Shiva. Baba also explained other music-related tidbits. While talking, Baba sang the notes do re mi fa so la si do, gesturing with His hand from the lower note to the higher. His sweet, magnetic voice still lingers in my ears, even today.

As soon as we returned to Omprakash's house, a didi summoned us sisters to get ready for group contact with Baba. I was the first in line. According to the protocol, I said my name and the name of my acarya, my duties, etc. Smiling, Baba told everyone in the room, "She brought me to the National Palace Museum today and taught me so many things." I was so embarrassed. It was exactly the opposite! Actually Baba had come to my rescue. He taught us so much valuable forgotten history and other information that could not be found in books.



Baba's visit to the National Palace Museum. Mamata: back left. Nirmala: to her left. Dada Ramananda to Baba's right; Dada Bhaskar to Baba's left; Dr. Pathak to Dada's left.

Tapeshvar

I remember that during one field walk Baba saw a rose periwinkle and said that this flower could be used to cure cancer. Unfortunately I forgot to ask Baba how to use it. Several years later, when Sanjaya's father fell sick, Priyadarshi asked Didi Ananda Karuna how to use it. She said to put the pure white periwinkle on the headboard of the bed.

Nirmala

Baba used to go for field walk each morning and evening, and I was very fortunate to have had the opportunity to accompany Him. Two of those field walks in the outskirts of Taipei left deep impressions on me. Once I was walking right behind Baba, thinking of Baba as the Supreme Consciousness personified, and I was curious to know how different His palm prints were from those of other people. As soon as I thought this, He crossed His hands behind His back and I was able to grab that rare opportunity to look at His palms. No one knew me better than Baba! He opened His hands so I could study the lines of His palms, then He closed them again. I protested mentally that I was not done yet, and again Baba opened His hands, even wider this time, and kept them open longer so I could have the chance to study them. This repeated itself several times. He was playing with me by opening and closing His hands to satisfy my inner desire. Baba's hands were indeed very beautiful and the lines of His palm were really very special.

Sometimes Baba would halt to explain something about the plants and flowers we passed. One time I saw lot of morning glories blooming along the roadside and it occurred to me that I should pick some for Baba's dining table. As soon as this thought flashed in my mind, Baba turned around and looked into the distance and then at me. I thought that maybe Baba didn't want me to pluck

those wild flowers, so I dropped the idea. After many years I read one of Baba's discourses and only then did I realize the reason. In this discourse He said that plucking a flower is like taking away a baby from mother earth. You can enjoy their beauty and keep them in your mind, but you don't need to pluck them. You can also pick them for spiritual gatherings and weddings or to eat.

Didi Ananda Karuna and I were taking care of Baba's meals while He was in Taipei, and I was fully focused on my duties. When Baba arrived, He gave darshan every morning and evening for three consecutive days at Chinese Culture University, and when the DMC was over, SS Dada arranged for Him to visit the National Palace Museum. When I heard about it, I felt a strong desire to go with Baba. I asked Didi Ananda Karuna if she would allow me to be absent from my kitchen duties for a few hours. She said yes, as long as the GV Didi allowed me to go on the walk. But when I asked Didi, she told me that three sisters were already preparing to go with Baba and there was no more space in the car. I hadn't yet accompanied Baba on any of His field walks, since I had been busy in the kitchen preparing His food and also cleaning His room. I tried to bargain with Didi, but she was reluctant to give me permission. Finally I said, "Let's do this: if there is any space in the car, let me go, okay?" Didi said she would decide when it was time for Baba to leave, so mentally I implored Baba to give me this chance to go with Him. Then I prepared Baba's coconut water, gave it to the security guard, and went back to my room to change clothes and wait for His departure. After some time, Baba came out of His room and got in the car. I hurried to the security vehicles to see if there was any extra space and, lo and behold, one brother had not arrived and there was no time to wait for him. It was Baba's grace, nothing more. He fulfilled my desire.

Another field walk took place in Yangmingshan National Park. Baba asked someone in the group to bring Him two pieces of

stones. Baba rubbed them together and said, "There is a volcano around here." Before getting in the car to go back, He stopped and said, "To uphold Dharma, I underwent fasting for five years, four months and two days. It was a very painful experience. I don't want any of you to suffer like me. It is enough for the renunciates to fast four times a month and householders two times a month." It was a fasting day and Baba was fasting together with everyone. Baba's compassion touched everybody.

Once during one of Baba's field walks, He said, "There is a large deposit of oil off the shore of southeastern Taiwan; it should be properly utilized." A good friend of my younger brother was working in an oil company in Miaoli. He was a senior oil explorer, so I asked him about it. He said, "Yes, there is indeed a big deposit of oil there. Even the American oil companies have detected it."

Ram Kumar

I had an opportunity to go with Baba on His field walk at Rongxing Garden. That was the first time I had seen Baba walking such a long distance. After entering the garden, He walked very slowly, as if He were afraid of falling. I later found out that Baba had a sore on His leg. Baba asked us to tell Him about the various types of flowers there, but nobody had the courage to say anything because we knew very little. Then Baba started telling us about them. Since there was a large patch of sunflowers to the right of the entrance, Baba began with them, explaining their origin, history, colors, and so on. Baba said that human beings named plants after the eight planets and the moon. In palmistry people also named various parts of the hand after these nine planetary bodies. Since I knew a little palmistry, I nodded while Baba was talking. I happened to be in front of Baba, and He pointed at me and said, "This boy knows a lot." I was very happy that Baba noticed me.

My English wasn't very good at the time, so I didn't listen to the

details carefully while Baba talked. The entire tour of the gardens took a couple of hours. When we were about to leave, I realized that I hadn't been thinking of anything at all during that time. I was feeling so blissful, I could only remember Him talking and making hand gestures, but nothing of what He had said. To this day I don't know where my mind had gone.



Field walk at Rongxing Garden. Ram Kumar: far left.

Suresh

While Baba was staying at Yangmingshan, He would go for field walk every morning and evening. When He went to Rongxing Garden, He told about the history of the different flowers and plants, what their original colors were, how they changed colors, etc. For example, lotus flowers have been around for twelve thousand years and underwent certain changes five to six thousand years ago. There was nothing He didn't know.

I was amazed at Baba's knowledge. The English words He used were especially profound. During a one-hour walk, Baba would talk for an hour; if it was a two-hour walk, He would talk for two hours. The dadas would pay particular attention to Baba as He walked, as if they were in school and He was the headmaster. Regarding geographical changes, He said that Taiwan and Japan were connected in the past. Later earthquakes separated the plates under the ocean and caused Taiwan to break away from Japan. He seemed to know everything from the beginning of time. He talked about so many different topics so fluidly and with such profundity, and when He stopped, it was with such ease, it was as if He possessed the power to control everything.

Dada Nityasatyananda

One afternoon we went somewhere on field walk with Baba. I no longer remember the name of the place. Nearby there was a small hill and we started climbing it up a narrow winding path. We were four or five wholtime workers accompanying Baba, some Margii brothers, and some volunteers. After going a little ways Baba stopped and took a few deep breaths. Standing beside Baba was a Margii brother, Omprakash (he was Italian by birth, but he was working in Taipei). Baba told him to pick up two small stones from the path and give them to Him. Immediately Omprakash picked up two small stones and gave them to Baba. Baba struck one stone with the other. Then He brought them to His nose and smelled them. He pointed with His hand to a portion of the plain below and said, "There is sulfur there."

Baba started walking again and we with Him. After going a little ways He again stopped. He pointed to a different part of the plain and said, "One can find mercury there." After pausing a bit, He said, "Remember what I said."

This was in August 1979, a long time ago. I don't know whether the Margii brothers who were with us that day on field walk still remember those words.

Ganesh

Most of the margiis loved to follow Baba on His field walk. I was kind of unattached in this respect. I felt it would be great if I got the chance, but if I didn't it would also be fine. In those days my feeling toward Baba was like father and son. I was never afraid of Baba, not even once. Instead, I felt like Baba's naughty son. One time, while I was walking behind Baba, I noticed that Baba's palms were rather thick. Curiously I leaned forward to take a closer look. Just then Baba closed His hands.

Once I went with Baba for field walk at the Yangmingshan cemetery. After walking for a while, the acaryas wanted Baba to stop and rest. They spread a blanket on the corner of a tomb for Baba to sit on. I was walking beside Him, so when Baba sat down I found myself standing in front of Him. Baba started talking about the swastika. He asked for paper and Dr. Pathak handed his small notebook to Baba. Baba drew a swastika on it and started explaining the direction of its movement by adding several lines. I was thinking that we knew all this already. I had read about it and also attended a class that one dada had given on the subject. My mind started wandering and then my eyes fell on the blanket Baba was sitting on. I started thinking how nice it would be to have that blanket. Then something happened and my mind got lost. I think Baba put me into samadhi. When I came out of my trance I was standing all alone by the tomb. Baba was gone. Then I saw the blanket. It was still there where He had been sitting. I was surprised. There were VSS guards with Baba and Dada Ramananda, Baba's personal assistant. How could they leave the blanket? Then I realized that Baba had left the blanket for me. I was so happy! It was a big, thick blanket. I gathered it in my arms and held it to my chest. Then I saw Baba walking with the group off in the distance. I started running to catch up with them, with the blanket still held to my chest. As I ran I could hear a "hum, hum" sound. It was the sound of my kundalini jumping.

I had to go everyday to Baba's headquarters for my work so later on I returned the blanket.

One time Baba was standing between me and Dada Rameshananda. Baba was asking many questions as we walked. I was listening like a fool. Suddenly He turned to me and asked me the difference between rudimental and fundamental. I was dumbfounded. I hadn't paid attention to what Baba had said during His discourse, and even if I had, I wouldn't have understood it. I slowed my pace and let Baba pass, hoping that Dada Rameshananda would answer for me. But Dada turned his head and looked away from me. I had no choice but to follow Baba in silence, without speaking a word. Later on, Baba gave the explanation Himself.

Indradeva

When Baba was in Taiwan, He went on field walk each morning and evening. One day, when Baba was walking in Yangmingshan National Park, I was fortunate enough to accompany Him. I asked Baba a question that I had been pondering for some time. "Presently there are hot topics in biology," I asked, "such as test-tube babies, genetic engineering, and so on. Does such scientific research violate nature?"

"Science is good as long as it is for the welfare of the whole universe and is directed toward the good," Baba replied. "Such scientific research should be strengthened. Nowadays scientists are very interested in exploring the cosmos. They are studying the possibilities that there are living beings on other planets. In the universe, there are higher forms of life on some planets. When they evolve to a certain level, they will accept spirituality."

Then I asked Baba about the life and works of Rabindranath Tagore. Baba said that Tagore was a great person. He was born in Calcutta and published many works. Most of them were written

in Bengali. His *Giitanjali* (Song of Offering) reflects the essence of Ananda Marga philosophy. Tagore was essentially a Margii.

Baba also mentioned that the land masses of Japan, mainland China, and Taiwan were originally connected. Later, due to subsidence, they were separated. There is a volcanic line that starts from Mount Fuji in Japan and passes through Taiwan. For that reason, Taiwan has sulfur mines. Sulfur can be used to treat digestive diseases through inhalation, and hot sulfur springs can cure skin diseases.

After walking with Baba, I recognized my own ignorance. I took the determination that from then on I would cultivate a wide range of interests and study hard in the fields of history, geography, astronomy, archeology, anthropology, medicine, biology, geology, and so on, so that I might be able to keep up a conversation with Baba.

Urmila

Then there was another time when I accompanied Baba on His evening field walk in Yangmingshan public cemetery. I was in my GV uniform. I didn't know what was happening, but I was so happy to follow. Even now I still feel very happy whenever I recall it. I watched Baba very closely throughout the walk and was left with a very vivid impression. For a spiritual aspirant, it is really fortunate to be able to come in close contact with the guru.

Yangmingshan

Dada Krsnabuddhyananda

So the three-day program finished and in the meanwhile efforts were being made for Baba to travel to the US. They were planning to fly into San Francisco but Baba needed a US visa. Baba was going to stay in the Los Altos jagrti and the Margiis there were working to prepare His room, which is now the meditation room. So all these efforts were going on but the US government wasn't cooperating and things were being delayed. After the third day of the program we got a call saying that it would be a few more days, so Baba said, "Let's stay on in Taiwan." Most of the Margiis went back to their various places, and of course the various bhukti pradhans had invited Baba to visit their respective towns, so Baba had open invitations to visit a number of places in Taiwan. There were lots of phone calls going out from Omprakash's house.

After the DMC, Baba's routine continued as normal. He took reports in the morning, went on field walk twice a day, and gave darshan in the evening. Some volunteers stayed in the guesthouse near the garage and some of us slept in the living room, and there were many people coming and going. The atmosphere was very informal, as it had been during the DMC, so different from the way things were in India. In India there were so many people, so much formality, it was hard to get close to Baba. But in Taiwan Baba was just like everybody's grandpa. He would go in His room and take off His formal kurta and dhoti that He wore for darshan

or meetings, and put on a T-shirt and a lungi. Then He'd open His door and come back out in the hall and say, "There is nothing to do in there. I like to talk with some people." He'd lean against the wall and start chatting with the Margiis and the dadas and didis. You never saw such informality in India.

Now that the DMC was over, Omprakash had to go back to work. He'd come home in the evening and change into his VSS clothes. He'd put on his cap and he had his stick and his braids, and like a Prout soldier he would go out with Baba on field walk. When they returned, Baba would sit on the sofa in Omprakash's living room and give evening darshan. Omprakash's little daughter, Anindita, was about two at the time. She was already talking. She would come and see Baba when He was going out in the morning and everybody was shouting "Parama Pita Baba ki, jai." Baba would stop in the doorway and everyone would shout "Parama Pita Baba ki" and she would raise her hand and say "jai." Now she must be forty-three or thereabouts, living in Italy most likely. I don't know if she remembers that time.

Sanjaya

While Baba was in Taipei, Sister Nirmala was responsible for arranging Baba's meals and for cleaning His room. Because she changed Baba's bedsheet every day, Nirmala suggested to some of her Margii friends that we each purchase a new bedsheet for Baba, and afterward she would give us back the bedsheet that Baba had used. Thus we bought some white cotton sheets and gave them to her. Now, whenever I look at this faded bedsheet that is filled with Baba's sweet spiritual vibration, the sweet memories of those days spring into my heart.

Yogatma

Baba stayed at Omprakash's house during His visit in Taiwan. Once when I was there I was quietly observing Baba's every movement. I

had been pondering a particular question for a long time without getting a proper answer. Baba was waiting to go for field walk and I thought that it would be a great opportunity to ask Baba for the answer. So I asked Baba, "Baba, could you tell me when Taiwan and China will become one?" What I really wanted to know was the exact time — the actual date of unification.

Without any hesitation Baba gave a long reply. My English was very limited then, so when He finished talking, I said, "Baba, did you mean that unification will happen only when both sides change their views?" Baba nodded, implying that I had understood what He meant.

Shortly thereafter I left Omprakash's house. While walking down the road I thought to myself, Only when both sides have the same views can they truly unite, isn't it? I felt then that it had to start with spiritual practices.

One time when I did sastaunga pranam to Baba, I felt as if a wave of electric current passed through my body.

Part Three:
The South

Cihu

Dada Krsnabuddhyananda

After a few days, when the visas for America still hadn't come through, Baba decided to tour the island, beginning with Taichung, the third-largest city in Taiwan. Unfortunately the airport was closed for construction so Baba couldn't fly to Taichung, which was about halfway down the island on the western side. There was a good expressway linking Taipei and Taichung, the Sun Yat-Sen Freeway, that had been completed the year before, so we didn't think it would be a problem; however, Baba had developed a boil on His leg that was giving Him pain, perhaps from having given so many PCs and absorbed so many samskaras, and He was having some trouble walking. Dr. Pathak (the father of Dada Dharmadevananda) was traveling with Baba in His entourage and he told Baba that He shouldn't travel more than three hours at a stretch. SS promised Baba that it wouldn't take more than three hours, two and a half to three hours at the most. Baba said, "OK, but I will not go one minute more than three hours." However, plans were made to stop on the way at the Chiang Kai-Shek Mausoleum in Cihu, since the president of The Republic of China Yoga Association had invited Baba there on behalf of the government when Baba had first arrived.



Chiang Kai-Shek Mausoleum

Didi Ananda Lalita

After the plans for Baba visiting Southern Taiwan were finalized, Dada Ramananda asked me whether there was any place of tourist interest that we could take Baba to. Baba is a great and perfect guru, I thought. He knows everything. What need is there for Him to go sightseeing? Besides, I was never keen on tourism, so I didn't have any good place in mind that I could recommend. Fortunately, Mamata was standing next to me. She was warm-hearted and devoted. She strongly recommended that Baba visit the Cihu Mausoleum, saying how beautiful the area was, how it was on the way and thus would not take extra time, and so on. Other than her, none of us had been to Cihu, so we trusted what she said.

Before leaving for Cihu, SS Dada assigned me an extra duty. After accompanying Baba to Cihu, he wanted me to return to Taipei and

hold a press conference. Though deep inside I very much wanted to follow Baba to the south, I always used to follow the acaryas' instructions. I also thought that this was an important task, so I obeyed his order without saying a word.

After we exited the highway and headed toward Cihu, I started feeling that something wasn't right. We were driving on a country road, which slowed us down, and I was worried about the delay. When we arrived at the mausoleum it was much later than we had expected. As Baba got out of the car, I noticed that He looked displeased. Later I found out that Baba had a sore on His leg. He couldn't sit in the car for an extended period of time; otherwise, it became a torture for Him.

Since this was my first visit to Cihu, I was not aware of the rules and regulations. It turned out that visitors were expected to pay respect by bowing to Chiang Kai-Shek's portrait and his mausoleum. When the superintendent told us this — "Please pay your respects, thank you" — I didn't know how to explain it to Baba. I felt uneasy about asking Baba to follow the same rules as common visitors. In the meantime Dada Bhaskar whispered a few words to Baba. Then Baba started walking composedly around the mausoleum. When He came back to the center, He gazed at Chiang's portrait and brought His folded hands to His heart. Then we walked toward the side door, ready to leave. There were Chinese sofas there and an end table for guests, and we requested Baba to take a seat. Later, when Baba tried to get up, I could see that He was having great difficulty. He needed a cane for support, but we didn't have one at the moment. Without thinking twice, I knelt down by His side so that He could place His hand on my shoulder. After Baba stood up, I accompanied Him for ten some steps with His hand still on my shoulder. At that moment I felt the heavy load Baba carried for humanity. The only thought in my mind was to do what I could to lighten His load, even if it was only being a momentary substitute for His walking cane.

When we were back in the parking lot, getting ready to leave Cihu, Baba told us, "My visit today should be recorded." Unwilling to part from Baba, I did namaskar to Him. He responded with namaskar and asked me, "Are you coming with us?" I looked at SS Dada but he kept silent. Reluctantly I said, "No, Baba. I have to go back to Taipei for some work." Baba smiled and nodded, saying, "Such a little girl can do great work." I felt very embarrassed, feeling that I didn't deserve such a compliment, and in retrospect, I often ponder what Baba meant by "great work."

When I arrived back at the Taipei jagrti, it felt desolate, even though a few Margiis had stayed to work in the Ananda Marga restaurant and the office. I missed Baba deeply, but I tried my best to complete the work SS Dada had assigned to me. I conducted the press conference to the best of my abilities, though not many journalists showed up. One newspaper did publish the news that the guru of Ananda Marga had visited Chiang Kai-Shek's mausoleum in Cihu on such and such date. Sanjaya was also present at the press conference, but he disappeared as soon as it was over. Later I found out that he had left for the south the minute it finished. Looking back, I couldn't understand why I hadn't done the same. When Baba asked me, "Are you coming with us?" I had said no, despite having the feeling that Baba was telling me to come. How could I have been so dumb? My brain must not have been working! SS Dada only told me to hold the press conference in Taipei. He didn't say that I couldn't go south after it was over. It was my own foolishness that I didn't follow Baba to the south, and it has become a lifelong regret.

Sandiip

I had no idea about guru at the time, and though I was Baba's driver I didn't as yet have any special feeling. Baba's visit to Taiwan was like an initiation for me. I could hardly speak English but I also knew Baba mostly spoke either Hindi or Bengali in the car. This

experience kindled my interest and determination to learn English and later enabled me to travel to many places in the world. Thus my samskara of driving Baba around had a profound impact on my life.

The incident I remember the most happened during the trip from Taipei to Taichung. On the way, we stopped at Cihu in Taoyuan and visited President Chiang Kai-Shek's mausoleum. It was very hot that day and once we were back on the freeway I started dozing off. All of a sudden, Baba said loudly from the back seat, "Speed up!" Although I didn't understand any English at that time, Baba's forceful command instantly banished my drowsiness. I became fully awake. I slammed on the accelerator and the car sped up to nearly 160 kph. We reached Taichung in no time. Later I found out that when I sped up, the cars behind us couldn't keep up. When we arrived at the Taichung railway station, none of the other cars had arrived. Later they asked me, "What was going on? You were flying!"

Afterward I thought to myself that since Baba knew I didn't understand English, He expressed Himself in this way, which was both direct and effective.

Taichung

VSS Dada

After Baba and His entourage left Cihu, His car stopped on the shoulder soon after it entered the highway. The VSS car, which was following just behind, also stopped, and Dada Bhaskar got out to see what had happened. He found Baba giving instructions to return to Taipei in an angry tone of voice.

The night before, SS Dada had promised Baba that they would reach Taichung within three hours, but by the time they left Cihu, more than three hours had already passed and the pain in Baba's leg had become unbearable. Meanwhile, the Margiis in Taichung had made the preparations for Baba's visit and were waiting for Him to arrive. Dada Bhaskar, thinking on his feet, instructed Sandiip in Chinese to speed up. Baba's car took off at high speed and the other cars had a hard time keeping up. They were two to three hours behind schedule when they arrived at Taichung Railway Station, where they had arranged to meet Dada Viniit and the Margiis, but there was no sign of them. In the meantime Baba was still insisting that they go back to Taipei. SS Dada got out of the car to look for Dada Viniit in the station. When he couldn't find him he called the Taichung jagrti but no one answered because they had all gone to the place prepared for Baba's stay. After a while the VSS car arrived and Dada Bhaskar got out to assess the situation. Baba was sitting in the back seat of His car, demanding that they return to Taipei and SS Dada was nowhere to be seen. Dada then

went into the railway station to look for SS, and he finally found him at the main bus terminal. It took some convincing to get SS Dada to go back to Baba's car.

Once SS Dada was back in the car, he asked Sandiip to start driving, even though neither he nor anyone else knew where to go. No one knew where the venue for the function was and thus everyone inside the car was mentally praying for help. As the cars were moving aimlessly through the city, Dada Bhaskar suddenly spotted a Margii walking along the road. He stopped the car and that Margii gave him directions to the Taichung Teachers Hostel, where the program was being held. It turned out that Dada Viniit had waited at the railway station for Baba to arrive, but due to the long delay he had gone back to the hostel, thinking that Baba might have gone directly there.

Dada Krsnabuddhyananda

The detour ended up taking a good two hours, and as a result there was no way they were going to get Baba to Taichung within the three hours that SS had promised. A whole drama ensued in the car when the three hours were up and they still hadn't reached Taichung, but I wasn't there to witness it. Suffice it to say that Baba wasn't happy with SS. I had gone ahead with the security volunteers to receive Baba when He arrived and I was there waiting when the car pulled up. When I went to open the door on Baba's side, SS was bearing the brunt of Baba's displeasure, but the moment Baba turned, He looked at the Margiis with a blissful smile and gave them a beautiful namaskar. He got out and He was standing and smiling, so happy. Right then and there He gave His blessing: "The future of China is bright, as long as it doesn't descend down the slope of materialism." I was standing right next to Him and those were the words He used. Again He smiled and gave His namaskar to everyone. Then He walked through the entryway of Taichung Teachers Hostel and

into the lobby, where the Margiis crowded around Him. The bhukti pradhan gave Him a garland, and Baba said, "Where is the lift? It's been a long drive."

"Baba, there is no elevator," he said.

"Okay, then where is the stairway?"

The Margiis said, "No, Baba, don't take the stairs."

"But there is no lift, so I will take the stairs." Just then the Margiis spread apart and there was this big rattan chair to which they had strapped two bamboo poles. They had outfitted it with cushions and silks, flowers and a pratik. It was like a palanquin or a divan. Baba looked at it and said, "I can't ride in this chair."

They said, "Baba, your leg is sore, so we made this for you."

Baba said, "I can't. Only popes and kings get to ride in this. I am not a pope or a king. I am an ordinary man."

There was one Margii brother named Krpa who was pushing sixty and spoke very little English. He was standing right next to the chair on VSS duty. He was taller than Baba and he had his VSS cap on. He didn't know how to speak softly and politely. He said, "Baba."

"Yes?"

"Sit down." And just like a little boy, Baba said "Okay" and sat down in the chair with a big smile. We lifted Baba up and carried Him up the stairs. We did it that night and again the next day for field walk. He stayed one night in Taichung. We brought Him up and then in the morning we brought Him down for field walk. Again we brought Him up after field walk for darshan and again one more time we brought Him down. Four times all together. We have some famous photographs of that.



Baba in the rattan chair.
Krupa is the VSS volunteer to Baba's right.

Yogatma

On the way to Taichung, Baba paid a visit to Cihu. I didn't go with Him, but as a teacher I was able to rent the facilities at Taichung Teachers Hostel for the program. Baba also stayed there. Baba had a painful boil on His leg that made it difficult for Him to walk and unfortunately His room was on the second floor, so the Margiis improvised a sedan chair by attaching bamboo poles to either side of a rattan chair. Dada Rameshananda requested Baba to sit on the chair but Baba declined. He asked, "Has this been made for me?" The Margiis responded simultaneously, "Yes, Baba!" Still Baba wouldn't budge. He said, "I won't sit unless someone gives the order." SS Dada looked at me, urging me to say something. Unclear of the proper protocol, I was flustered and mumbled, "How could I?"

Ishvarii

Baba arrived late at Taichung Teachers Hostel on August 19, 1979. The Margiis had prepared many garlands and flower arrangements to welcome Baba. They also arranged a traditional Chinese sedan chair for Baba, who had difficulty walking at the time. The next afternoon, several Margiis and acaryas accompanied Baba on field walk around Chung Hsing Lake in Chung Hsing University. After walking around the campus, Baba took some rest under a banyan tree. The Margiis were standing around Baba and enjoying His talk, which was as pleasant as a spring breeze. From what He spoke, Baba time and again manifested His fathomless knowledge, modesty, and affable demeanor. Baba blessed everyone affectionately before His departure from Taichung around 5:10 pm.

“The future of this time-honored land of civilization is very bright; the only thing that you should remember is that you must not deviate from your great cultural heritage. I have gotten much goodwill from this land and I am sure that its future is bright.”

Nirmala

There was no elevator in the hostel building in Taichung, and Baba had a boil on His leg and thus had difficulty climbing stairs. With much devotion, the Margiis prepared a bamboo sedan chair to carry Baba to His room upstairs. Several Margiis and dadas repeatedly pleaded with Baba to sit on the sedan chair. Touched by their sincerity, Baba at last smiled and sat on the chair and let the margiis and dadas carry Him to His room. It was a very sweet, heart-melting scene showing the relationship between the father and his children.

The next day, after a simple breakfast, the Taichung Margiis arranged for Baba to take His field walk around the lake in Chung Hsing University. During His walk, Baba talked about the different plants and flowers on the campus. Baba then sat on a rock under

a banyan tree. We all sat in front of Him. One Margii offered Baba a glass of fresh coconut water to quench His thirst. Baba was smiling as He looked at us and we at Him. Then He started explaining the history of banyan trees in Taiwan. He said, "You know, the fruits of the banyan tree are cryptogamic." Baba asked one Margii to take a fruit from the tree and open it to prove what He said. He also said that banyan trees can be used to treat liver disease. "The liver is controlled by the manipura cakra, which controls ten different glands and their associated mental propensities, including shyness, sadistic tendency, jealousy, inertia, melancholy, avarice, peevishness, blind attachment, hatred, and fear." Baba then asked one Margii to stand in front of Him. With His finger, He pointed at that brother's navel area and explained the location and functions of these ten glands, one by one. At the same time, He mimicked the corresponding emotions with His facial expressions. It looked so vivid, so real. Were it not for His unfathomable spiritual attainment, how could Baba have possibly controlled His facial muscles so perfectly! Everybody was enjoying the blissful vibrations, children melting in the tremendous love from their loving father. It reminded me of His words: "So our first duty as disciplined human beings is to do as per the desire of the Supreme Controller, of that Maheshvara. Doing according to the desire of that Controller is a must for all spiritual aspirants. But while obeying Him, while doing as per His desire, one should always remember that Supreme Entity is not the boss; that Supreme Entity is the loving Father. The relationship is not official, the relationship is purely personal ... Love is the first word, love is the starting point, and love is the last point." This is a scene that can indeed never be forgotten.

While in Taichung, Baba gave Personal Contact before His darshan. Among those who applied for PC were two Buddhist nuns, and they were granted Baba's blessings. Baba was so compassionate. He demonstrated the equality of all beings. He looked upon all as

His children regardless of their religious background. I was very deeply moved. The topic of Baba's discourse was "The Nucleus of the Universe."

Didi Ananda Gaorii

There were two Buddhist nuns who had been initiated. One of them was the head of a temple and had a devotional nature. She spoke Taiwanese and Japanese but no Mandarin Chinese or English. She heard that Baba was coming, and she wanted to meet Baba.

She came to the place where we were all gathered in Taichung and she brought along the younger nun too. At first the dadas and didis who didn't know them were surprised to see them with their shaved heads and black robes. The central workers started questioning us as to why these nuns had come. We replied that they had been initiated and were doing sadhana and that they had come to see Baba in group contact. After it was confirmed that they were initiated, they were given permission to join the group contact.

During that group contact Baba paid a lot of attention to the older nun. He called her "Mother." She spoke to Baba in Taiwanese but Baba answered her in English. Somebody was translating for her but not for Baba. I don't remember the whole conversation but I remember that at one point Baba asked, "Mother, do you know the Pali language?" When she replied that she did not, He advised, "Mother, it is good if you learn it because all of the original teachings of Lord Buddha are in Pali. If you understand Pali you can read the original teachings and understand more deeply what Lord Buddha taught."

I believe she had a deep experience during her meeting with Baba because once when I brought her prasad from Baba after I'd been in India, she asked me, "Didi, the next time you go to India to see Baba, please ask Him when can I get liberation."

She always used to welcome us to the temple and would help us with donations. I think some of the other nuns did not understand

or approve. Because she was the head of the temple, the large pockets of the loose grey tunic that she wore were always stuffed full of notes, since the many Buddhist followers who visited the temple would put donations in her pockets. Whenever I went to visit her she would ask me secretly to follow her to the office or to a corner of the temple, and there she would empty her pockets into my bag without letting anybody else see.

Didi Ananda Rucira

While Baba was in Taipei I asked Dada Ramananda if I could have Personal Contact. He dismissed the idea, so I did not ask again. When Baba visited Taichung, two Buddhist nuns whom I had initiated came for Baba's darshan. They also wanted PC. Baba said that He was not too busy that day, so He could do some PCs. The protocol was not followed as strictly that day, so we didis were allowed to sit in on the PC. Needless to say, we took advantage of that opportunity. Myself, Didi Giriija, Didi Ananda Karuna, Didi Priiti, and one other didi were in the room. PC had started and Baba was talking with the two nuns who were dressed in their full habits. I believe Baba was talking about Buddha. I still harbored that inner desire for PC and I noticed that the two nuns could not follow what Baba was saying because they could not speak English. I was able to speak some Mandarin so I made the audacious move to sit beside them, although I had never done any translating. Didi Ananda Karuna saw what I was up to and nudged me forward, encouraging me to sit there. As soon as I sat there, Baba changed His mood. He said, "You know I was busy in Taipei. I did not have enough time to bless everyone on the head, but today I have time." In fact, during the DMC Baba had touched all the brothers on the head during PC and the sisters had complained that they did not get that blessing. There were two rows of women in this PC, including the two nuns. I was in the second row. My focus was that I was there to help others. Baba blessed the sisters in the first

row one by one. When He came to the second row, I pushed the first girl forward. "Is there anyone else?" He asked. So I pushed the second girl forward. Baba again asked, "Is there anyone else?" So I pushed the third girl forward. Then Didi Ananda Karuna shouted, "Rukmini, Baba." So I also leaned forward and got my blessing. It was so sweet.

I went on one field walk with Baba. That was in Taichung. During the walk, He sat under a tree and told us its name in Chinese and then added that it had medicinal properties. The first wonder was that Baba knew the Chinese word for that tree. He then told its name in Sanskrit and explained the etymology of that word.

Baba said that the medicine from that tree was good for the manipura cakra and gave a short talk about the cakra. He said that the controlling gland for the manipura cakra is the pancreas. Baba then called one Margii forward. The brother stood next to Baba. Using the brother as a model, Baba pointed to his abdomen to show where the pancreas was located. Then He pointed out the location of the manipura cakra and began explaining the name and the meaning of each of the ten vrttis of that cakra. Continuing to use the brother as a model, He pointed to their individual locations around the cakra. It was a very interesting talk that day.

What I found most unusual in this little philosophical discourse was how Baba explained the vrttis. He took into account that many Taiwanese Margiis did not know much English. He spoke slowly and defined each vrtti in simple terms. But not only that — He illustrated these meanings with mimes, scowls, frowns, and other gestures. How delightful it was! How sweet!

Sanjaya

When Baba arrived at Taichung Teachers Hostel, the Margiis brought out the sedan chair that they had converted from a rattan chair. I remember that Baba was smiling happily and that dasas

and Margiis were happily carrying Him in the chair to His upstairs room. After Baba was in His room, somebody came out and said that Baba wanted to read Chinese newspapers, so somebody went out and got two different papers.

The next day, Baba went for a walk by the manmade lake on Chung Hsing University campus. There was a huge rock on the slope by the lake and next to it a banyan tree full of seeds. Baba sat on the rock and asked, "Do you know what tree this is?" He started talking about the history of the banyan tree, when it was brought to Taiwan, what botanical family it belonged to, and so on. Baba then asked somebody to pluck a seed from the tree for Him. Baba opened it and looked at the structure of the seed. Then He said that banyan trees could be used to heal liver problems and problems associated with the third chakra. Baba went on to explain that the third chakra at the navel area consisted of ten different glands that controlled ten different emotions or propensities. Baba called for a volunteer to come forward and Brother Ganesh went up to Baba. Baba pointed out the location of the ten different glands and explained the ten different emotions while simultaneously demonstrating those emotions with His facial expressions: shyness, sadistic tendency, envy, staticity, melancholy, anger, craving, infatuation, hatred, and fear. His expressions were so lively, so vivid, and so beyond description!

Ganesh

"Field walk" are words imbued with His grace. In Ananda Marga everybody is familiar with these two words. At noon on Monday, August 20, 1979, I was lucky enough to accompany Baba for field walk in the campus of National Chung Hsing University in Taichung. Brother Indradeva rode with Baba in the car to give directions. It was a hot, sunny day and the campus didn't have a shady boulevard. Both Sanjaya and I thought that the walk might be cancelled for that reason. At that very moment, however, Baba

got out of the car. Dada Ramanandajii and Dada Bhaskarjii led the way and arranged a seat on a rock under a tree. Baba sat on the rock and began to talk. He asked what kind of tree it was. Someone replied that it was a banyan tree. Baba then asked where the banyan tree came from. One Margii said Guangzhou, and another Margii said Guizhou. Baba nodded and said, "Yes, five thousand years ago the banyan tree came from China." Baba went on to say a lot about banyan trees. He said that there are three species of banyan trees from China. It is a cryptogam and can cure many diseases, especially liver and pancreatic diseases. He told us its name in Latin and Sanskrit and said that its leaves could be used to cure certain diseases, its trunk to cure other diseases, and its roots to cure yet others. He pointed toward Dr. Pathak and said, "He is a doctor," and then He pointed toward Himself and said, "And this person is also a doctor." Everybody laughed.

I was kneeling in front of Baba and at some point while Baba was talking I nodded off. While I was asleep, I heard His voice saying, "One of you boys come forward." Still on my knees I immediately shimmied up right in front of Him. Baba told me to stand up and asked me to show Him my navel. I uncovered my navel and He gently tapped it with His finger. Baba then began to describe the major glands and secondary glands of the manipura cakra, which has ten glands that control ten vrttis. While He was talking, Baba pointed out the respective positions of those glands by touching the exact spot that corresponded to the different petals. Each time He touched one of those spots I felt a peculiar warmth in that area. I knew from that sensation that He was adjusting my manipura cakra and the different associated vrttis. While He was doing this, He was simultaneously demonstrating the expressions of those vrttis, making different faces and gestures, such as anger and so on. After Baba finished His talk, He said that I taught Him many things that day. I was so embarrassed, I didn't know whether to laugh or to cry.

Every time I walked with Baba I learned something new. After walking with Baba, many Margiis said that they wanted to read more books or study again about geography or history and so on. But there is no end of pursuing worldly knowledge. Did Baba really want us to do this?

Priiti asked Baba about the future of China, and Baba said, "The future of China is bright. The only thing you should remember is that you must hold fast to your great cultural heritage and not be engulfed by the trends of Western culture. You are to establish a new culture." This concluded that pleasant field walk.

Rajendra

When Baba came to Taichung, the darshan was held at the teachers hostel. I was one of the ones who had prepared to do tandava to welcome Baba. We had also turned a rattan chair into a sedan chair to carry Baba up and down the stairs and I was one of Baba's sedan-chair porters. It was such a nice feeling to be carrying Baba. Once again my guru was so close. How blessed I felt!

In my heart, I carried a little secret, just between Baba and me. I felt Baba knew everything, even those emotions that I didn't verbalize. Before Baba's darshans we would do tandava, but before this particular darshan I didn't feel like doing tandava, I didn't know why. I was feeling moody, almost like I wanted to go on strike. Strangely enough, on that day, Baba didn't tell us to do tandava. Instead we went straight into the next activity. I was shocked. I looked at Baba and it felt like Baba was saying, "You don't want to do tandava? Then I don't care to see it either." It was a strange and unique feeling. If you don't want to do it then He won't force you. I believe many people had a similar experience.

The blissful feeling of Baba in Taiwan reminded me of the Buddhist tales of how fortunate Buddha's disciples were to have been able to be by his side. And now we were just like Buddha's

disciples. Having the chance to be by Baba's side and receive His grace — it was an experience we will never forget!

One final word: Baba's voice was very clear and it sounded like it was being transmitted from afar. It had a special magnetism to it. Whether you understood His words or not, they touched your heart.

Krpa

The program in Taichung took place at Taichung Teachers Hostel. I had VSS duty, and it was very late when Baba arrived. Baba had some discomfort in His leg, and since His room was on the second floor and there was no elevator, we brought a rattan chair and two poles and turned it into a sedan chair so that Baba wouldn't have to climb the stairs. As soon as He arrived, we brought out the sedan chair and requested Him to sit. I remember that one time, while we were carrying Baba down the stairs, Baba said, "Higher in the front, higher in the front."

I was selected to accompany Baba on a field walk at Chung Hsing University. The university campus was not as large then as it is today. There was a banyan tree by the lake and a big rock to the side of the tree. Baba sat on the rock and I held an umbrella for him. Baba mentioned that banyan trees were very useful trees. Their leaves could be used to treat illness and the roots as well. The rock is still there on the campus.

Seeing Baba was an experience I will never forget for the rest of my life. And my interaction with Him was beyond words.

Jayaliila

That blissful feeling I experienced from seeing Baba continued to fill my heart even after I returned to Taichung with my grandchildren, whom I had left with relatives in Taipei and Taichung. Then I received a call from the jagrti saying that Baba was coming

to Taichung. I was very excited and immediately started to help with the preparations. I invited Dinesh to help clean the jagrti for the dadas to stay, but he said that he wanted to plant some papaya trees and didn't have time. Later, when the time for PC came, his wife got PC but he didn't. That showed me the importance of devotion. Papaya trees can be planted anytime, but Baba wasn't coming to Taichung every day.

I had heard that Baba often praised the Chinese people, so the day Baba arrived in Taichung I wore a traditional Chinese gown when I went to see Him. The next day, when Baba was about to get into the car to go for field walk, I rushed forward to give Him my namaskar. Baba returned my namaskar and that made me very happy.

Yudhisthira bought a tremendous amount of fresh flowers to receive Baba. We decorated the entire path where Baba walked with flowers, and afterward I packed up the unused flowers and brought them by bicycle to the Buddhist temple. The abbess of the Zheng-Jue temple brought a disciple of hers to see Baba and both of them received PC. They were very happy.

It was in Taichung that I finally got my PC with Baba. That night after the PC my body jumped during meditation. I felt a tremendous flow of spiritual energy. I have never desired liberation. I have only wanted to lead a peaceful life, and I felt very blessed and very happy when Baba put His hand on my head and recited mantras during my PC.

After Baba left Taichung, I brought home one of the bamboo poles that were attached to Baba's sedan chair and kept it on the roof of my house to protect my family. Everybody laughed at me for following the modern trend and learning yoga at this old age, but when I look back at everything that happened during Baba's visit to Taiwan, I can still remember it all so vividly. The memory has never faded, even as the years have passed. I am indeed the most fortunate and happy person in the world to have had such precious experiences in my life.

Yudhisthira

When Baba came to Taichung, I accompanied Dada Viniit to a shop across from Taichung Teachers Hostel to buy a rattan chair. We then found two bamboo poles and tied them to either side of the chair to turn it into a sedan chair. After Baba left, I kept this chair in my house for some years. Later on it was kept in the Taichung jagrti.

Everybody was very happy to be able to attend Baba's darshan in Taichung. The various experiences I had with Baba are deeply engraved in my heart. I will never forget them.



Rattan chair, now at the master unit in Tainan

Girish

When Baba came to Taichung, we rented one of the buildings in Taichung Teachers Hostel. Baba stayed there and gave a discourse and PCs. The sedan chair was made out of necessity. Baba stayed in the first room on the left on the second floor, which is now Room 3207.

Minaki

I attended the DMC at Chinese Culture University, and I also went on field walk with Baba. When Baba came to Taichung, He stayed on the second floor of Taichung Teachers Hostel. The day He arrived, I was one of the persons who carried Him upstairs in the sedan chair. Looking back, I felt very happy to have had that chance.

I was very nervous when I received my PC. When Baba touched my head and blessed me, my mind went blank. Later I went to India for DMC. When Baba gave His mudra, His smile looked as pure as an infant's.

Yogendra

In Taichung my wife and I offered a garland to Baba and received His blessing. I was filled with joy throughout that week, just thinking of that moment. It was such an honor that amid so many Margiis we were able to garland Baba. I felt very touched and very grateful to have had such good fortune due to Baba's love.

Tainan

Dada Krsnabuddhyananda

From Taichung we went to Tainan. Baba went by car because there was no airport. It was not as far as Taipei to Taichung. A lot of us went by public transportation and the rest drove to Tainan, where we all stayed in a big house belonging to one Margii. I don't have many stories from there. Baba stayed one night.

Krsna Kumar

After the DMC I had to go back to work in Kaohsiung. I packed my bag and came to the big hall to bid goodbye to SS Dada and Dada Viniit. They tried to persuade me to stay. "Krsna Kumar, do you really have to leave? You will surely get PC. Don't go." When I heard this I started crying — not because I didn't get PC but because I didn't want to leave. Still, I had no choice due to my job. Before I left, I went back to Baba's house and waited outside again until the last possible moment, hoping against hope, until the bus was about to leave. Then I left with a heavy heart. I couldn't stop crying all the way back to Kaohsiung.

I went to work the next day after returning to Kaohsiung. The moment I punched my card in, the Kaohsiung Margii organizer called to tell me that Baba was coming to Tainan and that I had to reach there as soon as possible. "No way," I said. "I just had my days off. I can't get any more." How could I request

a leave when I had just had one? Nevertheless, I bit the bullet and applied to my boss for another day off. I told him that I needed to go to Tainan and reassured him that I would stay in touch around the clock, and that if anything urgent arose, I would take a taxi and come back immediately. Thus I was able to see Baba again in Tainan.

In Tainan I waited until I finished night sadhana, but I still couldn't get PC. SS Dada wanted me to wait till the next day. I thought if I could get PC at eight a.m., then I could rush back to work by taxi and it wouldn't be a problem, even if I arrived late.

The next morning, to my utter surprise, those who wanted to get PC had already formed two big long lines. There was no way I would get a chance before noon. I also felt awkward to have Personal Contact with Baba since I had never worked for the mission. However, a strong desire pushed me forward, so I pestered SS Dada, asking him to help me out. He said, "Baba is going to Kaohsiung; everyone will get PC there." I begged him. "What if I am unlucky and something happens to me on the way and I can't reach Kaohsiung? I'll lose the opportunity forever. Please arrange it for me." Finally SS Dada was convinced and he personally put me in the front of the line.

When I entered Baba's room I prostrated myself and then started crying involuntarily. Baba asked me to sit near Him. I moved forward a bit. He again asked me to come closer, so I went and sat very close to Him. I couldn't have been any closer.

After Baba asked me my name and duty, He placed His hand on my head and gave me His blessing. I was still crying. I felt a kind of energy spiraling down from my head into my body. After a while Baba said to me, "My boy, do more service for the society." Then He told me I could leave.

My acarya, Dada Bhaskar, saw me coming out of Baba's room with tears in my eyes. He came over to console me. He put his arm around my shoulder and took me aside to meditate.

Suresh

Although I followed Baba south to Tainan, I was so exhausted by the work in Taipei, I couldn't do any work while I was in Tainan. But I did visit Baba at the house where He was staying.

I felt Baba had a very special power. I saw with my own eyes that everybody who attended His darshan was very devotional and totally engaged. Every time, after talking to those young brothers, Baba would say, "I learned so much from you young boys." How humble He was!

Although Dada Bhaskar forbade me to take pictures, I took them anyway whenever I had a chance, concealing my camera. The bed that Baba slept in was in my house for some time. It felt so wonderful to sleep in it.

Ram Kumar

Dada Rameshananda sent me to Tainan to make arrangements for Baba's visit to the south. We found a stadium but it wasn't an ideal venue, so we continued looking. Later, one Margii's relatives agree to let us use a house of theirs that had no adjacent buildings. Baba stayed there and conducted darshan there. Baba also gave a marriage blessing to the Margii couple who arranged for the house.

The next day, while I was busy with the program, one dada told me to get in line for PC. When my turn was about to arrive, the PC stopped for Baba to go on field walk and after that He continued further south to Kaohsiung. In the end I waited for half a day without getting PC.

I later came to know that after I left Taipei to make the arrangements in Tainan, all the VSS guards got their PC — all except me because I had to go to Tainan. At the time it didn't bother me too much because I was focused on my duties.

We also took Baba to the Confucius Temple near Tainan, but the gate to the temple was shut, so we couldn't drive in. Baba

stayed in the car and didn't enter. We then headed south to Kaohsiung.

Sanjaya

Baba stayed at a Margii's house while He was in Tainan. The original plan was to hold the darshan at a stadium in Tainan, but after checking out the venue, it was decided that it would be better to hold the darshan at the house where Baba was staying. The living room wasn't particularly big, however, so it was very crowded. When Baba came into the living room, Dada Rameshananda brought the owners of the house to Baba for His blessing. All of a sudden, Baba became very angry and started scolding Dada. Everybody was stunned. None of us knew what was going on. Afterward I asked Dada why Baba had scolded him. He told me that Baba had said, "You know nothing." Maybe the timing or the procedure for asking for Baba's blessing was inappropriate, or perhaps it was something else. Either way, Dada said he didn't know the reason.

Baba's room in Tainan was facing the hallway that led to the living room, and His PA, Dada Ramanandajii, was right outside the room. All of a sudden, Baba opened the door and called out, "Ramananda, soap." While Dada Ramanandajii hurried to get Baba a bar of soap, I had a glance of Baba in an undershirt. Then Baba took the soap and closed the door.

After visiting Tainan, Baba's plan was to fly back to Taipei the next day, so at about five in the morning Sandiip, Ganesh, and I left for Taipei in Baba's car so that we could pick Him up at Songshan Airport when He arrived. But Baba changed the plan and went further south to Kaohsiung, from where He flew back to Taipei after holding darshan for the Margiis there. During the trip Ganesh and I took turns sitting and meditating on the back seat where Baba would normally sit. Finally Sandiip protested. "It is my turn now!" Recalling those special occasions still makes me happy.

Kaohsiung

Dada Krsnabuddhyananda

Then we went to Kaohsiung, which was even a shorter distance, maybe a one-hour drive. Kaohsiung is the second-largest city in Taiwan. It is a port city and also has an international airport.

One Margii sister was a real estate broker. She had purchased a bungalow near Chengcing Lake in the suburbs of Kaohsiung, and it was vacant at the time, so she let us use it. Baba had His own room with an attached bathroom, and the central workers had their room upstairs. I believe the didis stayed in another house.

Baba was supposed to give PC that night and one brother, Ram Kumar, was waiting outside Baba's room doing meditation and praying and praying that Baba would give him PC. He had missed out on PC in Taipei and the next day he had to go home to his family for a day or so before returning to the army. He was very devoted, and so he was waiting outside Baba's room, sitting in meditation the whole time in lotus posture and crying. Baba never gave PC and finally he had to go. But even though he didn't get PC, Baba blessed him so many times with samadhi. He was famous for falling over in kiirtan, especially akandha kiirtan.

We sat up that night in one of the upstairs rooms till about one a.m. doing reports. Baba was flying back to Taipei the next morning, and the rest of us were going by bus or train. We were traveling but the organizational work was still going on. Dada Nityasatyananda was trying to get a report from Dada Viniit. Dada

Viniit was famous for talking and saying nothing, avoiding the topic of discussion. If you asked him for details he would go off on a tangent and after five minutes he still wouldn't have answered your question. Nityasatyananda was pulling his hair out. "This boy is impossible. I can never get a report out of him. I have never met such a fellow." Just then there was a knock on the door. I was next to the door so I went and opened it. It was Baba. He came in and said, "Oh, you boys are still up. Tomorrow is a busy day, you must get some proper sleep. Stop all this reporting. Everybody take rest. I am lucky. I get to go back by plane but you boys are going back by ground transportation, so you must be rested before you travel. So everybody take rest, go to sleep. Okay?" We said, "Okay, Baba," and then I said, "Baba, I will take you back to your room." Baba said, "That's okay. I know my way." Then He closed the door and walked back to His room. He was just across the hall, so of course He knew His way, but I wanted to take Him back. He said good night and closed the door.

Baba got to be a family member while He was in Taiwan, instead of the distant guru that He had to be in India. He could just be a grandpa, come and talk with the people, no strict formality. He trusted that the people respected Him enough that they wouldn't do any nonsense, nothing out of hand.

Krsna Kumar

I heard that Baba was going to Kaohsiung after Tainan, so I hurried back to Kaohsiung to help clean the house where Baba was to stay — arranging His bedroom, installing the air conditioner, and so on, hoping that Baba would have a comfortable stay. Baba stayed for two days and two nights near Chengcing Lake in Kaohsiung. In those days that area was a suburb; it was full of rice fields and didn't have paved roads. It was hard to ride a motorcycle or bicycle there when it rained.

The house Baba stayed in had a strong magnetic field. Champa's relatives who lived across the street said they saw the house glowing

at dawn, especially near the place where Baba gave darshan. Those Margiis who couldn't concentrate in meditation were able to sit there for one or two hours. One Margii's daughter who had a short temper was also able to meditate for an hour in that house.

Later on Champa kept this house for Didi Ainjali to run a kindergarten because Baba had instructed Lokeshvarii during her PC to start a school.

One night during Baba's stay in Kaohsiung, I was busy running errands. Suddenly SS Dada came and grabbed me. He rushed me to a car, opened the front door, and pushed me in. I turned my head and found Baba sitting in the back. He was about to go on field walk. I was in the car with Baba! Maybe Baba was a little tired that day, because He didn't get down when we arrived at Grand Hotel. We circled around the golf course near Chengcing Lake and then headed back. During the ride I kept turning back to look at Baba.

After the field walk, we went back to Bao Yang St., where Baba was staying. After Baba went to His room on the second floor, there were no more programs and most of the Margiis dispersed, other than those who had some duty. SS Dada came up to me and asked me to look for Brother Garga, who had just left on his bicycle, so I got on my motorbike and found him and he came back. Garga was ninety-one years old and he often gave treatment to the Margiis. He later told me that he had treated Baba for boils. SS also said later that Baba was feeling better and was very pleased.

When Baba was in Kaohsiung, I snuck off from work twice a day to see Him, both days. However, when Baba was leaving Kaohsiung early in the morning, I didn't dare leave work again to see Him off. But then, after checking in at work, I again left and rode my motorcycle to Baba's house. The dadas used to tell miraculous stories of Baba delaying the take-off of an airplane or train and I was keeping a glimmer of hope alive that this miracle would happen. It was raining and I was overcome with emotion. Tears kept running down my cheeks, mixing with the rain. I hoped Baba had not gone yet, but when I arrived, the house was empty. I

went upstairs and walked into Baba's room. A cup of orange juice was sitting on the table beside His bed. I wondered how the half-drunk juice could be still there. Then I closed my eyes, did my second lesson, and drank the remaining juice. I was so grateful that Baba had left some juice for me. It was the most delicious juice I had ever drunk in my life.

Though all these memories have faded after so many years, one thing that is still clear to me is that I was completely transformed after meeting Baba. For many months after seeing Him, I couldn't help crying, no matter what I was doing — meditating, working, walking along the road. I could hardly function. As soon as I thought of Baba, I felt tremendous love in my heart. I couldn't bring myself to hurt even an ant or a blade of grass. Even now when I see dedicated Margiis or acaryas, the loving vibration radiating from their eyes makes me feel that Baba's love always stays in my heart.

At that time, I had a very demanding job and my health was not great. Sometimes I had no energy at night, but whenever I sat for meditation I could continue for three hours. I am not sure what force gave me that energy. The more I sat, the better I felt. That was Baba's grace. I was really fortunate that I didn't have to search for a guru in the high mountains; instead He came to me and revealed Himself before me. I felt so blessed to have ridden in the same car with Baba. In fact, I felt very lucky in many ways.

Ram Kumar

After arriving in Kaohsiung, Baba went to His room to rest. The next morning I had to return to my military base to resume my service, and I wanted to visit my parents in the evening because I had been so busy helping to organize Baba's visit during the previous two months that I hadn't been able to spend any time with my family. I was sad and didn't want to go, but in the end I decided to leave quietly so that no dada would stop me. I walked softly downstairs and was nearly out the door when Dada Krsna

Das saw me and stopped me. I told him I had to go home, but he said, "No, no, you haven't gotten your PC. You wait upstairs. I'm going to ask about it." We were standing in the stairwell and when he said this, a pain stirred in my heart that I hadn't gotten PC. I literally cried out loud. The moment I cried, I felt a strong force lifting up my heart and slowly my mind started to calm down.

Dada went into Baba's room to inquire and told me to wait in a room upstairs. When he came out he brought Baba's varabhaya mudra picture and explained that Baba had a boil on His leg and His doctor was treating him, so I had to wait until after the evening darshan to get my PC. I had never seen Baba's varabhaya mudra photo before, and as I looked at it my mind went into a very deep and peaceful state. Afterward I thought that since Baba was not feeling well and I had things to take care of, I shouldn't bother Baba. So I left Kaohsiung and returned to Tainan. Baba's blessings went with me. I had encountered some problems during my military service and when I returned to my base they were all resolved without any misfortune.

Although I returned to my base without getting PC, I felt Baba was always with us and was looking after us. Once I dreamed that several Taiwanese Margiis and I entered Baba's room for PC. Brother Jitendra was the last person to enter. Baba called him to come closer and then pinched his cheek and said, "My sweet boy." I was sitting next to Baba, watching enviously, so I grabbed Baba's hand and put it to my face. The moment His palm touched my face I fell into samadhi. When I woke up, I had a blissful feeling that lasted throughout the day. Although I didn't physically get PC, Baba gave me PC in my dream. Brother Jitendra never met Baba in person, but he also got PC in my dream.

Champa

My family had a country house near Chengcing Lake. No one lived there at the time. When we knew that Baba was coming to Kaohsiung, we tidied it up for Baba to stay. A relative of mine

who lived across the street had the habit of going out for morning exercise shortly after four a.m. She was shocked on that day to see the house beaming with a bright orange light that illuminated the sky. Only after some time did she tell me about the incident. When I asked her why she didn't tell me earlier, she said she was too scared to tell me right away because she was afraid that I would also be scared. But I knew what had happened.

When I sat in front of Baba, I kept thinking, "Baba, I really want samadhi." Baba smiled a little. He seemed to know what I was thinking. For the next few days I noticed light coming out of my eyebrows when I woke up shortly after 4 a.m. to do half bath and meditation. However, it disappeared when I touched meat later in the market.

Ram Das

I was a taxi driver and my health was not good. Sister Champa once rode in my taxi. It was she who introduced me to yoga. I started learning and I especially liked meditation. Soon after, I heard the news that Baba was coming to Taiwan. Thereafter everyone was busy preparing. I attended the DMC in Taipei. It was very magnificent, very great. Baba was so loving.

Later we heard that Baba was going to come to Kaohsiung. We started organizing and getting things ready for His visit. Champa had a new house at Bao Yong street No. 59. It was nicely decorated and Baba and His entourage stayed there.

I got PC in Kaohsiung. When I entered Baba's room, I did sas-taunga pranam. Baba then asked me a few questions. I couldn't understand very well what He was saying. Whatever He asked, I answered yes, thinking that He was teaching me something.

Janak

I went to the DMC at Chinese Cultural University in Taipei. Baba was so luminous that I dared not look straight at Him.

When Baba came to Kaohsiung, I had a strong desire to leave everything behind. I only wanted to see Baba.

Ansumari — Baba's driver in Kaohsiung

Baba went for field walk at Grand Hotel and the golf course. He didn't enter Chengcing Lake. I got PC in Taipei but I can't remember much.

Yogendra

While Baba was in Kaohsiung, I had the opportunity to join Him for field walk at Chengcing Lake. I was very curious about Him. I thought He must be a great man. Baba was sitting under a tree, and I went over to Him and asked Him presumptuously, "Baba, everybody says You know everything." Baba looked at me and responded calmly, "No, I know nothing."

Lokeshvarii

When Baba came to Kaohsiung, my husband and I offered a garland to Baba. I also got another chance to do kaoshikii in front of Baba. Baba was sitting only two or three feet from me.

There were only four of us during my PC: myself, Champa, her sister, and one other Margii sister. Baba lovingly instructed us to start a kindergarten. After Baba left Taiwan, Didi Anjali was posted in Kaohsiung. We helped her to start a kindergarten in the house where Baba had stayed.

When Baba was leaving for Taipei, some of us went to the airport to see Him off. It rained very hard that day. Baba was waiting for Yogendra to buy the tickets and take care of the boarding procedures. I and the other sisters were sitting and meditating in front of Baba. It was my great honor to be able to sit so close to Him. I felt very blessed and happy. It felt like He was my own father.

Part Four:
Back in Taipei

Yangmingshan

Sanjaya

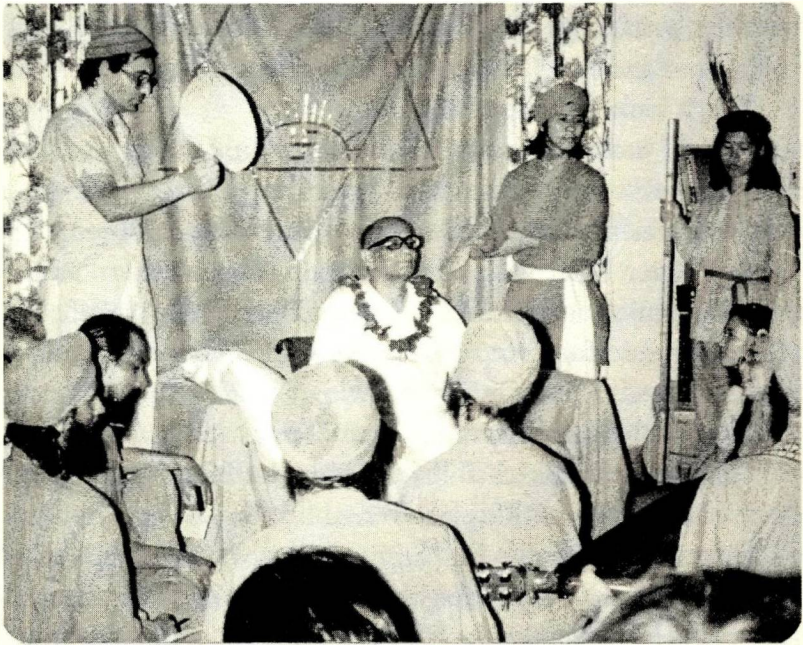
When the program in Kaohsiung ended, Baba flew back to Taipei and we went to Songshan Airport to pick Him up. I garlanded Baba and then was about to return to Yangmingshan in a different car when Dada Rameshanandajii pushed me into the front seat of Baba's car. This was a ride I will never forget, a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to be in the car with Baba. Sandiip was driving pretty fast and it wasn't long before we would reach the road that would take us to Baba's quarters in Yangmingshan. I realized that if I just sat there quietly and didn't talk to Baba, I would be sorry for the rest of my life. My English was very poor at the time, but nevertheless I was determined to talk to Baba. So I turned my head and said, "Baba, welcome to Taiwan." I said a little more after that, but due to my poor English I didn't know what to say or how to chat with Baba. So I decided to ask Baba about the future of Taiwan and mainland China. That was in 1979. The Cultural Revolution in China had just ended and there was chaos in mainland China. Then Baba said, "There is an internal struggle going on in China. Leave it alone. The most important thing is to strengthen yourselves from within. There is the Taiwan Strait between you. It would require tremendous resources to return to the mainland. Taiwan has many resources, such as wind energy, minerals, and rich oil deposits along southeastern coast. Strengthen yourselves first and let nature take its course.

Dada Krsnabuddhyananda

After Baba came back to Taipei, He would sit on the sofa and give darshan in the evening. We would usually have about twenty Margiis and maybe twenty workers, and many of the subsequent Taipei talks were these evening lectures. Usually the air conditioning would be on, but sometimes it would go off and Omprakash would grab a fan and fan Baba. Omprakash was a tough Italian guy, like Marcello Mastroianni, a soldier type, very strict and very serious about his VSS duties. There were forty, fifty, sixty people in his house. It was like something out of a Fellini movie, bordering on chaos sometimes, and after a few days Omprakash was getting tired. After working in the hotel all day he would come home and he wouldn't have time for a bath or meditation. He'd change into his uniform and go right out for field walk and then come back and stand behind Baba during darshan.

So one night, Baba was talking at the end of the darshan about how we should offer our good actions to Parama Purusha. But we don't want to offer our bad actions. We should offer our good ones to Parama Purusha and keep the bad ones for ourselves, for purification, something like that. When the darshan finished, people dispersed and Baba went back to His room. About five minutes later I walked by the hallway and Omprakash was standing outside the door to his bedroom and Baba was standing there, repeating the last five minutes of His darshan word by word to Dada Bhaskar. Baba had taken off His formal clothes. He just had on a lungi and a T-shirt, looking totally relaxed, and Omprakash was crying like a baby. Here is this tough soldier crying like a baby. We didn't know what was going on, why he was crying, but what had happened was that right after Baba went to His room, Omprakash went to his bedroom to meditate. Suddenly he heard the repetition of the darshan going on and he became angry because he thought that the PRS, Dada Jagadishvarananda, who was in charge of recording the darshans, was playing the tape recorder very loudly right

outside his bedroom door. So he stormed out of the room to go across the hallway and scold the central das and tell them to turn down the tape recorder, and when he came out he smashed into Baba. It wasn't the tape recorder; it was Baba standing outside his door repeating the last five minutes word by word. Omprakash was ashamed because he was so angry, and out of shame he started crying like a baby.



Omprakash fanning Baba in his house

Omprakash was the general manager of the Ritz, the most exclusive European hotel in Taipei, and one night he wanted to serve Baba European-style. Some Western-style vegetarian food was prepared for Baba that night and Omprakash got permission to serve the meal. Everyone went along with it. Omprakash told the kitchen staff what kind of plates to put the food on — a round plate with a cover on top — how to arrange the water pitchers, the flowers, the

carts, everything. Then he rang Baba's bell and informed Baba that dinner was ready. Baba said, "Yes, please bring it in." Omprakash entered Baba's room wearing his maitre d' tuxedo, like the waiter in a five-star restaurant, with the white coat and band, the tails, black pants, shiny shoes, and a towel over his arm, very elegant. He rolled the cart in and said, "Baba, dinner is served."

"Oh, it looks very delicious. What do we have tonight? Can you please tell me what is on the menu?"

Omprakash began to describe the items one by one. He took off a cover and said, "You see, we have this and that."

"Oh, it looks scrumptious."

"Would you like some water, Baba?"

"Oh, yes".

Omprakash took the pitcher, bent forward, and poured Baba a glass of water. Then he stood at attention like a head waiter. Baba was really enjoying it. He had a knife and fork in the Western style. "Oh, so wonderfully prepared. Please extend my compliments to the chef."

"Is everything to your liking, Baba?"

"Yes, yes. It is so delicious, the best I've had. You have very high-class service in this place."

Omprakash was playing the European waiter and Baba was playing the patron — praising the cook and so on. They were both playing the game and enjoying it.

Didi Ananda Lalita

One afternoon, after Baba had returned from the south, everyone was very relaxed. Dada Sudarshan started playing kiirtan on his violin while Dada Krsna Das accompanied him on guitar. It was very melodious and pleasant. Everyone started singing along joyfully, filling the entire house with an intoxicating devotional flow. Suddenly, Baba came out of His room. He seemed to have something to tell us. Both dadas stopped playing and turned their

attention to Baba. Baba smiled and spoke lovingly in His unique, magnetic voice: "Mysticism is a never-ending endeavor to find the link between the finite and the infinite." After saying this, He went back to His room. The *dadas* resumed playing and we started singing *kiirtan* once again. The atmosphere was so sweet, it was like heaven on earth. It was the only time I saw Baba wearing casual clothes — a *lungi* and an undershirt. He was without His glasses, like a father relaxing at home. I didn't fully understand what Baba said at the time, however. It was only later that I was able to grasp its deeper significance.

Baba was in Taiwan for two weeks. Most of the time He stayed at Omprakash's residence, except for those few days when He visited Taichung, Tainan, and Kaohsiung. The *didis* and *dadas* and some LFTs also stayed there.

Before Baba came to Taiwan, I used to keep a respectful distance from the guru and the *acaryas*, because that was how we were raised. But after those two weeks of living with them, I realized that Ananda Marga was indeed a huge universal family and Baba was the head of the family. The *didis* and *dadas* were like His children, and like all children they could sometimes be naughty.

One afternoon I passed by the *dadas*' room and heard thunderous snoring. Never had I heard such loud snoring before. I felt funny about it, to the point that I thought it must be fake. Suddenly one *dada* rushed out to ask if anybody had a tape recorder. After finding one, he rushed back to the room. I was puzzled by this, wondering what game they were playing. Later I came to know the whole story. Many *dadas* stayed in that room and one of them was known for his loud snoring. It was so loud that the other *dadas* were not able to sleep and no one knew what to do with him. They complained about it but he never admitted that he snored. The *dada* who borrowed the tape recorder was mischievous — he recorded the snoring and played it to Baba to prove their case.

Didi Ananda Gaorii

Many people used to talk about Baba's fragrance, how His hands or feet smelled like sandalwood or jasmine or some other fragrance. Or that after massaging Him, the masseuse's hands would emanate some sweet fragrance. I was quite curious about this phenomenon. One afternoon in Taiwan, Baba called four of us into His room — Nityasatyananda, myself, Karuna-di and Dada Bhaskar. He was wearing a lungi and an undershirt. He was sitting on His cot and He motioned for us to sit on the floor in front of Him. Then He started to talk to us about flowers. He explained that different flowers and plants originated in different places in the world and that travelers and explorers and migrating populations had carried these plants with them to other countries. That was why we now find similar flowers and plants in many different countries. He gave many examples. I don't know if I remember correctly, but I think He said that the rose came from Persia, the potato from South America, the long white radish (daikon) from Japan, and the chrysanthemum also from Japan or else China. Then He said that human beings are also like this, that they originated in one place but that they also migrated to other places.

He said, "You know, I can tell by looking at a person where they are originally from. For example, Ganesh's family originally comes from Canton." Then He asked Dada Nityasatyananda to go and ask Ganesh, so Dada went off to ask, leaving the three of us sitting by His cot. Baba pointed to Karuna-di and said, "This vegetable comes from ...", and He told the name of her village in Bengal. Then He pointed to me and said, "And this vegetable, she comes from Japan." Then He pointed to Dada Bhaskar and asked, "And this chrysanthemum, he comes from ...?" He paused and cocked His head, encouraging Dada to answer. Dada said, "America, Baba." Then Baba shook His head and smiled. "No, not from America but originally from Southern Ireland and transplanted to America." Dada Bhaskar conceded that his ancestors had indeed been from Ireland.

By that time Dada Nityasatyananda had come back. He reported that it was correct that Ganesh's family had originally come from Canton, not from Taiwan. Then Baba started talking about flowers again. He said that there are aromatic flowers and non-aromatic flowers, explaining that "aromatic" means that they have perfume and "non-aromatic" means that they don't have perfume. He went on comparing different types of aromatic and non-aromatic flowers. Then He looked at us and said, "You know, I will tell you something very unusual. Sometimes when I was in prison I used to wake up in the middle of the night because there was such a strong perfume filling the whole cell. It was so strong at times that I couldn't go back to sleep. I was puzzled and wanted to know where it was coming from. So I started to look, to search, to find out from where this perfume was emanating. Then one night I found out that it was coming from me!"

He was sitting on His cot with one leg folded over the other. From there He looked at each of us in turn, smiling as if daring us to understand the mystery He had revealed to us. Then He reached out and rubbed the inner side of one of His feet and said, "That strong fragrance was coming from here. You see, how very strange." Then He leaned toward us and sort of whispered, "I will tell you something else in secret. I will tell you because you are my children. Sometimes, when I go to the toilet, there is also a very strong perfume. Very strange, isn't it?" He was smiling and His eyes were twinkling conspiratorially.

Then He revealed the reason for His sweet fragrance. He explained that a human being's higher glands are developed through sadhana, and that because of spiritual practice there is increased hormonal secretion from those higher glands. It is these hormones that emit that sweet perfume. When these hormones are expelled from the body through perspiration or urine, persons who are spiritually developed may emit a sweet fragrance. Thus Baba satisfied my curiosity about His fragrance. It was a very close and intimate sharing with Him. He was so cute when He pretended

that He Himself did not know where the strong perfume in His cell was coming from.

For some years, whenever I went to India I had to go through Nepal because my name was on the black list. One time in Taipei, Baba asked me if I were coming to India for the next RDS. I said I would. Then He said, "So you will come like this?" and He made a gesture, arching His right arm over the top of His head. I didn't know what Baba meant. I thought He might have meant "in a roundabout way," i.e. not directly, or maybe He meant wearing a sari draped over my head, because normally when I traveled from Nepal to India I wore a sari. Either interpretation would have been correct so I said, "Yes, Baba," but I was still not 100% sure what Baba meant. In the end I convinced myself that Baba meant wearing a sari and I also became really confident that the next time I went to India I wouldn't have any problem if I wore a sari because Baba had told me to dress that way.

But that was the time I had the worst problems ever! The next time I went to India I was walking past the village after having passed through immigration at a small out-of-the-way check post. There was a customs booth and they noticed my bag. Since I was confident that I wouldn't have any problem, I had a nice, clean, foreign-looking bag. Normally, if I was going overland to India, I wouldn't carry anything from Ananda Marga, but that time, again due to overconfidence, I had Ananda Marga things with me. So when the customs guys opened the bag and saw the orange uniform and some Ananda Marga books they detained me and took me back to the immigration checkpost.

Seeing a foreigner being led away by officials caused a lot of commotion in that small village. The villagers and children crowded around to see. The men escorting me, however, were very crude. They shouted at the people to go away and even spat at them. I felt disgusted.

The senior immigration officer wasn't in the office, so those men said I'd have to wait. They didn't know exactly what to do. After

sitting for a while in the office with them I started getting impatient and feeling uncomfortable because of their crude manners. Finally I stood up, took my bag, and said, "Well, if you don't want me in India I'm going back to Nepal." When I started toward the door, one guy grabbed my wrist in order to stop me. I slapped him in the face and screamed loudly, "Don't touch me!"

As part of my sari disguise, I was also wearing the glass or plastic bangles that Indian women often use. So when he grabbed me, he also grabbed the bangles, which broke and cut his hand. He jumped back in shock and cried out to his companions, "She knows karate!" Then the three of them grabbed me and pushed me onto the chair and tied my arms to the arms of the chair.

I was kept like that for about twenty minutes until the senior officer arrived. He was an educated, more refined person, and he was shocked to see a foreign woman tied up in his immigration office. He made them untie me and apologized profusely for their behavior. However, he also did not know what to do with me, since he had never had a case before with a "captured" Ananda Margii. He explained to me that he had to telegram Delhi and wait for a reply. In the meantime he invited me to stay in his house where his wife and children could look after me. I spent the rest of the day there. They offered me food but I didn't accept. It was quite late when he finally got the telegram telling him to send me back to Nepal. He insisted that I spend the night in his house and that he would accompany me to the border in the morning but I told him that if his country did not want me then I wanted to leave immediately, and thus I took my bag and left.

It was dark but I walked back to Nepal where I found that the immigration office was already closed. I banged on the door and one of the officers came out. He told me they were closed and asked me to return in the morning but I told him I could not go back to India and insisted that he let me sleep in their office. I slept there on the desk while the immigration guys slept in the back room.

So I was back in Nepal and had to find another way to reach India. I'd heard of one border where one could cross without any passport check, so I made my way there and got through, though not without incident and not without being quite scared that I'd be caught again. By the time I got to the didis' place in South End Park in Kolkata, I was already late for RDS. I had phoned on the way and reported that I was having problems, so they knew something had happened. Shortly after I arrived, Dada Ramananda, Baba's personal assistant, came to the didis' house to say that Baba had sent him to ask how I was. I still had rope burns from the rope which they had used to tie my arms to the chair. I showed them to Dada but told him that otherwise I was fine, and he reported back to Baba. But the whole drama was because of Baba's enigmatic gesture and the way I interpreted it.

When I remember such events they seem like fairy tales. I look back and think, Did that really happen to me; did I really do such things? Life in Ananda Marga has never been dull.

Didi Ananda Rucira

Baba told us how to have sweet dreams. He explained that since workers shouldn't use a pillow, they can instead write their mantra using their finger on the place where their head goes and use that unseen imprint of the mantra as a pillow. Sleep will then be very sweet. We all started doing that, and of course, the Margiis too.

In the next darshan in Taipei, Baba was sitting on a couch with the devotees crowded around. Only the Taipei Margiis were still in Taipei. In this darshan Baba was in a teaching mood and He was asking questions. For example, Baba asked different grammatical questions and people stumbled over the answers. Then Baba started to talk about *moksa*. Baba asked, "What is moksa?" I was sitting in the front row, very close to Baba, and I thought, liberation. Then Baba said, "Moksa is salvation." I thought, Phew, lucky Baba wasn't looking at me. Then Baba, who had been looking

in the other direction, swept His gaze across the room and looked straight at me. "Not liberation," He said. "Salvation. There is another word for 'liberation.'" I was so surprised. Baba had heard my thoughts. I thought that if He had heard that one thought of mine, then what else did He hear? Then I had a revelation: He hears all those other thoughts, the hidden thoughts, yet He still loves me unconditionally.

We were all delighted whenever we could get a bit of Baba's prasad. On one such occasion, a number of wholetimers were crowded in the corridor outside Baba's room awaiting our opportunity. On that day, Baba had been served a local soda. Baba did not drink it all, and it was with the rest of the prasad. When the door opened, Baba's PA came out holding the bottle of soda, ready to dispense it. We all lined up eagerly with our hands cupped, ready to receive a blissful sip. Dada chuckled at us when he saw this. He pointed his finger at us, sweeping it down the line of didis and dadas, and said, "Baba told me that none of you can have this. Sannyasis should not drink soda. This is for the Margiis." Dada walked past all of our stunned faces and into the next room to distribute it to the Margiis who were waiting there.

Didi Ananda Suveda

I remember one afternoon while Baba was in Taiwan that I returned with the dadas to the Taipei jagrti to inspect the office and then went back to Baba's house. During the inspection, Dada Girijananda said something that upset me. So when I returned to Baba's house, I went out back and sat with my arms around my knees, still feeling upset. Just then, I heard somebody say, "Baba is coming out." When I heard Baba's sweet voice, the tears started rolling down my cheeks and I was too embarrassed to go into the house to see Him. When Baba came out of His room, He was wearing a vest and He didn't have His glasses on. He was speaking

loudly, facing the front door. I didn't dare stand up because I was afraid that Baba would see me if He turned His head.

Baba was talking about mysticism. "It is a never-ending endeavor to find the link between the finite and the infinite," He said. After that, Baba returned to His room. At that moment I felt that Baba had come out just to comfort me, as if He were saying, "I know, I know how you feel." Although I was still upset, I was happy because Baba cared about me. After Baba returned to His room, I wiped away my tears and felt much better.

Girish

I had a strong desire to have PC with Baba but I didn't get the opportunity during DMC. I was disappointed, thinking that I might not have another chance. However, I still had a very strong desire, and in my mind I told Baba, "I want to see You." Baba received my thoughts, and at the end of the DMC, Baba turned and pointed a finger at a dada sitting near Him. I was sitting in the front and felt waves of vibration coming toward me through Baba's finger. Then I fell over. I heard later that Baba instructed a Margii to massage me and take me to where He was staying.

I finally got PC when Baba came back to Taipei after His visit to the south. When I entered Baba's room, Baba was sitting on His bed with one leg on the bed and one on the floor. He asked me loudly, "What is your name?" I told Him and then He asked me, "What do you do?"

I was working at the Ananda Marga vegetarian restaurant at the time, but I didn't know what kind of work I would do after that, so I hesitated, not knowing what to say. The dada who was standing by the door told Baba that my family was against my practicing yoga and that I had problems with my breathing during meditation. After hearing this, Baba brought His palms together and then put His hand on the crown of my head. Then He touched my shoulders and tapped my chest in rapid succession. I didn't know

the purpose of Baba's movements but I saw the dada standing at the door smile and wave his hand at me, so I got up and left Baba's room. Once I was out the door, that same dada told me to meditate for a while. He also told me that I should fast the next day, since Baba said that that would heal my breathing problems.

Harish from Japan

I came to Taiwan in August 1979, while Baba was in southern Taiwan. Baba was due back in two days so I stayed in Omprakash's house, waiting for Him to return. I had only been initiated for one year and was fascinated by the prospect of seeing Baba.

When Baba arrived, everybody rushed out of the house to receive Him. I stood at one edge of the crowd, but when Baba passed by, He looked towards my direction. It was my first time seeing Baba and I wondered why He had looked at me.

The following day Baba gave darshan. We were some twenty to thirty margiis and acaryas. It was my first darshan and I was very excited to listen to what Baba had to say, though my English wasn't very good and I could hardly understand what He was saying. Baba didn't give PC right away after coming back because He wasn't feeling well. For the following four days I spent most of my time meditating in the garden and then, surprisingly, I was given the chance to have PC with Baba. I never expected this and neither was I mentally prepared for it.

When I entered Baba's room, He was lying on His side. After I did sastaunga pranam, He beckoned me with His hand and said, "Come closer, my boy." I moved forward a little and again He asked me to come closer and then still closer. Eventually I was sitting right in front of Baba. Baba asked where my home was and I told Him that I lived in Okinawa. Baba then started talking about Okinawa, its diversity and cultural history. I can't remember all the details. Baba also asked about my organizational duties. I remember being very nervous. Later Baba blessed me by touching

my heart and crown cakras. He also touched my left shoulder and arm, which were bothering me at the time.

When I came out of Baba's room, the Margiis surrounded me. They wanted to know what had happened during my PC, but I didn't have the desire to talk. I only wanted to meditate. Even when Omprakash's wife, Janaki, asked me, I declined to answer, even though she was my host. I went out back to the garden to meditate and there I had my first experience of deep meditation.

The next day, when Baba went for field walk, I got the chance to go with Him. When Baba was coming out of the house, Omprakash called me and said, "Come, are you the Bhukti Pradhan from Japan? Get in." Omprakash sat in the front seat and I squeezed myself in next to him. Baba sat in the back seat alongside His PA, Dada Ramananda. I heard Baba ask, "Who is the boy in the front seat?" and Dada replied, "Harish from Japan."

During the field walk, Baba held a white flower in His hand and asked me, "Do you know its Japanese name?" I recognized the flower but I had forgotten its name. In fact, I didn't remember anything during the walk, so I couldn't answer any of Baba's questions. All I could do was look at Him in fascination. Several years later, however, I discovered that those same milky white flowers were growing naturally all around my house. For most of the walk, I was walking behind Baba. Watching His movements and expressions was a great joy for me.

Afterward I attended another of Baba's darshans at a Margii's house in the downtown area. We waited for a long time until Baba arrived. I was so looking forward to seeing Baba again that I was nervous throughout the day. During the darshan, He once again held up a flower and asked its name, this time its Chinese name. When Baba was about to leave, we all stood up and started doing kiirtan. I was standing in the crowd with my hands folded in namaskar. When Baba passed by, He stopped for a moment in front of me, smiled, and shrugged His shoulders, as if to tell me to relax.

During my PC Baba was also full of smiles. I will never forget Baba's smile.

Darshan at Mamata's

Dada Krsnabuddhyananda

So we came back to Taipei. By then nine days had passed, which set the record, because Baba had never stayed in any country outside India so long. He visited the Philippines twice but He hadn't stayed that long during either of those visits. They were still calling America, trying to find out if they had gotten the visas yet, but they still hadn't come through. Again one more day passed, then another. In the meantime, Sister Mamata, who had been a great help throughout, including lending her car for Baba to use, had a special request. She wanted Baba to give darshan in her house, and it was agreed. Her place was in Fuxing South Road, not far from Taiwan National University. I had security duty and it took a while to get there. When Baba's car arrived, I received Him at the car and took Him up in the elevator. I believe it was on the fourth floor. The elevator wasn't very big so it was just me, one VSS, and Dada Ramananda going up with Baba. It was a very nice condominium, like the ones you see in New York on Fifth Avenue, and the elevator had marble floors and a white-stone interior, well lit, very high class. As we were going up, I was looking down at Baba and I couldn't understand why He was looking so young. Then the thought crossed my mind that He looked like a bellboy in a hotel. I couldn't understand why I thought that. Maybe because of the lobby, the entry hall, going up in the elevator, and the fact that Baba was looking so neat and trim. Naturally I didn't say it, I just thought it.

Mamata had decorated her living room with white silk. The whole room was covered in it, making it seem like we were among the clouds, in heaven. You couldn't see her furniture. She had moved some pieces out and draped others with this cloth, and she built up a little dais for Baba. Everything was super well done. I don't remember exactly Baba's talk, but afterward, when He stood up and gave namaskar, He asked, "Well, what do you think?" What did we think? About what? We were not paying attention but Baba was wearing a tunic and pants. It was a traditional formal Chinese tunic, reminiscent of the Nehru style: short collar, braided buttons, loops, and longer at the hips, with trousers and black cloth shoes. Then I thought, Oh, now I know why I thought He looked like a bellboy. Because of all the little decorations on the front of His tunic. It was an ivory-colored silk tunic that Mamata had had especially tailor-made. "What do you think?" "Oh, Baba, it looks wonderful, really great." "Are you sure?" "Yes, Baba." We had just realized it. When He got back to His room, He said, "They didn't like it, they didn't like it. You know, I haven't worn trousers since doing army duty in the Indian army during WWII. They didn't like it. Never again will I wear trousers." Then Ramananda said, "They liked it, Baba." "No, they didn't like it. Never again will I wear full pants."

Didi Ananda Lalita

Mamata was a new Margii when Baba came to Taiwan, yet she had a natural devotion and love for Baba. She supported wholeheartedly all the preparatory work to bring Baba to Taiwan, and during His stay in Taiwan she offered her best car for Baba's use.

Several times she confided her two wishes to me: first, she wanted Baba to wear a traditional Chinese outfit, and second, she wanted to request Baba to give darshan at her home. I told her it was next to impossible due to many factors, but she wouldn't give up trying. She approached the acaryas time and again to enlist

their support, and sure enough Baba fulfilled her desires after He came back from His tour in the south.

Once the date was fixed for Baba's darshan in her house, Mamata started preparing her place with great delight — rearranging the space, cleaning and decorating. She also employed a special tailor to stitch a traditional Chinese silk outfit for Baba. That evening the didis, dadas, and Margiis came early to her house to wait for Baba's arrival.

One dada had organized a field walk for Baba at National Taiwan University before going to Mamata's house but he didn't inform Baba about it. There was a traffic jam on the way, and when Baba finally arrived at Mamata's residence He refused to get out of the car, perhaps due to the delay. He started scolding SS Dada the moment he appeared in view. SS Dada was at a loss what to do. We felt great empathy for him, yet we didn't know how we could help. Dada Krsna Das went up to Baba and requested Him to get down from the car. While Baba was getting out of the car, He continued scolding SS Dada. The moment Baba turned to the Margiis, however, He was all smiles, greeting everyone with a sweet namaskar. This reminded me of Lord Shiva, who seven thousand years ago manifested five different faces to his disciples, ranging from extremely severe to extremely loving. After Baba got out of the car, everybody was amused to see that He was wearing the traditional Chinese outfit and shoes that Mamata had gotten made for Him.

Dada Krsna Das and Dada Ramananda accompanied Baba to the elevator to go upstairs to Mamata's apartment. She had rearranged her living room and filled it with flowers. It looked so beautiful. In His discourse Baba reiterated that everything is within Parama Purusa. There are two things Parama Purusa cannot do: He cannot create another Parama Purusa and He cannot hate anyone. I had the feeling that Baba was saying this especially for SS Dada. Baba also mentioned the Yellow River of China, using the Mandarin words, Huang He.

That evening, I was assigned GV duty. After the darshan, when Baba was about to leave, I went and stood by the elevator as the GV guard. I was very serious; I did not dare relax, even one bit. Baba's heavy scolding of SS Dada was still fresh in my mind. Before entering the elevator, Baba paused in front of me with His arms akimbo and winked at me like a father teasing his little daughter. I almost burst into laughter and all my lingering fear and worries vanished.

The Chinese traditional outfit that Mamata ordered specially made for Baba turned out to be a little small for Him; also Baba had not worn trousers since WW II. Later on, Dada Tapeshvarananda told us that when the acaryas presented the Chinese outfit to Baba and told Him that the Margiis of Taiwan had requested Him to wear it, Baba didn't agree at first. It took some persuasion to convince Him. After putting it on, Baba couldn't help but laugh as He stood in front of the mirror. But when He arrived at Mamata's house to give darshan, He had to maintain a serious look as best He could.

Sanjaya

On August 24, Baba accepted Sister Mamata's invitation to give a darshan at her home. That day, Baba wore a traditional Chinese outfit. When Baba's car arrived at Mamata's house, SS went up to the car and opened the door for Baba. We didn't know why, but Baba didn't get out of the car. He remained in the back seat and scolded SS very forcefully. Then He told the driver to turn around and leave. It was a very tense moment. All the Margiis and acaryas were waiting in a line, not knowing what to do. All of a sudden, Sister Purnima said loudly, "Everybody, get down on your knees and beg Baba to come out." The moment she said this, Baba solemnly opened the door, smiled, and started walking toward the welcoming crowd. I had a deep realization when I saw that: no matter what happens, the devotees' devotion will touch

the universe and move Baba. When Baba entered Mamata's house, He once again displayed that sweet, irresistible smile. The subject of the darshan that day was "The Two Human Approaches."

Dada Nityasatyananda

While Baba was in Taipei one devoted Margii sister by the name of Mamata used to come to see Baba. She very much wanted Baba to give darshan in her apartment and eventually Baba agreed.

That evening Baba's PA, Dada Ramananda, had to go out for some work and the duty of bringing Baba His evening snack fell to me. Baba called from His room a little later than usual, and I brought Baba's snack to His room. As far as I remember there was parched rice and biscuits on the plate. Baba was seated near the table. I placed the plate on the table and looked toward Baba, and I saw that He was laughing. Seeing Baba laughing, I was surprised. Why was Baba laughing? What was there to laugh about? Baba supplied the answer. He said, "You don't know why I am laughing? Take a good look at me." I looked Baba over from head to toe. What a surprise! Baba was wearing Chinese clothes.

"Tell me, how do I look in these clothes? Baba said.

"Very beautiful, Baba," I said. "Wonderful. You look like a man from this country."

"Right you are. In this outfit I have become a real Chinese man."

Baba again began laughing and I also.

That night, Baba was supposed to go to Mamata's house. I don't know why, but He left quite late. We spent some time on the grounds of a university. It was very close to Mamata's flat. A few of us went ahead in a car to Mamata's flat to convey the news that Baba was coming. It was only a few minutes away by car. Her flat was in a multistory building. It had a big hall that was beautifully decorated. The hall was full of Margii brothers and sisters waiting for guru darshan. Many of them were holding cameras.

Fifteen or twenty minutes passed and Baba still hadn't arrived and I began to get anxious. Had something happened? Why hadn't Baba arrived yet? He was supposed to be right behind us. Suddenly Dada Girijananda and one Margii brother rushed into the room. The Margii brother said in an agitated voice that Baba wasn't coming. Baba was angry because it was so late. Then he started talking in Chinese. I drew Dada Girijananda close. He told me that Baba had said that it was very late. "If I go someplace now when am I going to come back? When am I going to eat dinner?" Girijananda told me that Baba had said that it was our fault. Why didn't we take Him on field walk earlier? If we had left earlier this situation wouldn't have arisen.

"But we didn't make Baba late," I said. "We were ready to go long before. We left for field walk as soon as Baba was ready. How is it our fault?"

Just then I noticed that some Margiis were crowding by a window. They were leaning their heads out, watching something. I went to the window and saw some cars down at street level with their lights on. Some twenty or twenty-five people were standing nearby.

I don't know what was said to Baba, but after a short time Baba and the others entered the hall. Seeing Baba's smiling face and beautiful eyes there was no way of knowing that a short while earlier He had put everyone in such tension. Baba gave darshan and then gave everyone His blessing and left. Girijananda went with Him.

Soon afterward a few of us returned to our quarters. I don't know why but I was feeling a little uneasy about what had happened that night; however I wasn't uneasy for long. The dark clouds of unease that had accumulated in my mind were soon removed. How? Let me explain.

When I saw Girijananda, he said, "What's the matter? Why are you looking so solemn?"

"You know why. Because of us, Baba had to take His night meal very late. Besides that, He is displeased with us."

“It’s true that He ate late, but He is not displeased with us. Anyhow, going late to Mamata’s flat was part of His drama. You will be surprised to hear that He was performing a drama with us the whole time. It was a perfect performance. Being angry or unhappy with us was all part of the drama.”

I was surprised. “He was playing a drama with us! What do you mean?”

“Yes, a drama. When you hear the real story you won’t be able to help but laugh. Girjananda paused for a moment and then said, “When we left Mamata’s apartment, I went in the elevator with Baba down to the ground floor. Baba said, ‘Did you see, Girijananda, the drama I made? Many people had cameras in their hands but no one was able to take a single picture of me.’ Then Baba began laughing. I was stunned. So Baba was making a drama the whole time! Getting angry, showing that He was annoyed about coming back late — it was all part of His drama. He didn’t let us catch on for a single moment that He was putting on a drama with us all this time. I was silent for a few moments and then I also started laughing.”

After pausing for a few moments, Girijananda said, “So I say, no more long face. Please laugh a little.”

This time I started laughing.

Ganesh

I was there when Baba took His field walk on the grounds of National Taiwan University before going to Mamata’s place for darshan. I was walking in front of Baba. I remember that He asked Ramananda if the outfit He was wearing looked okay. Baba was wearing a traditional Chinese outfit. I looked back and to me it looked a bit short in the sleeves and pants.

When we got to Mamata’s place for darshan, the car I was in arrived before Baba’s car. When Baba’s car pulled up, I could hear that He was shouting. We didn’t know what He was saying

because He was speaking in Bengali but it was clear that He was scolding Dada Rameshananda and wouldn't get out of the car. Dada Ramananda was sitting next to Him quite calmly with no expression on his face. No reaction at all. At some point Baba said that He wasn't going to give darshan. Then one sister, Purnima, said something to the Margiis. At that precise moment Baba stepped out of the car and gave everyone a blissful namaskar.

Field Walks

Didi Ananda Suveda

After Baba returned from Kaohsiung, I requested GV Didi to allow me to go on field walk with Baba and I was allowed to go on three separate occasions. The first two times were at night and both times it was very dark. We GV sisters were following behind Baba. Looking at Baba's back, I had a strange feeling in my heart, hard to describe, a kind of shyness in face of Baba's greatness.

During that first field walk, Baba talked about the geography and geology of Yangmingshan. I was thinking, Baba, I really would like to hear you talk about spirituality. Why are You only talking about this geographic and geological history, things You know I am not interested in? So I purposely stopped listening, but Baba's voice was so sweet, I couldn't help but start listening again, though I didn't completely understand what He was saying.

The third walk was Baba's last daytime walk in Taiwan. Baba usually took His breakfast around ten and then He would go for a walk around eleven. I arrived at Baba's quarters that day at about ten and Didi Ananda Karuna gave me breakfast. All of a sudden, I heard someone saying that Baba was going for His walk. Didi asked if I wanted to go. I said yes and was about to go change into my GV uniform, but I was too late. Baba had already come out of His room and His car was waiting at the door.

I rushed out to tell Baba's driver, Sandiip, to drive very slowly. He caught my intention and nodded in agreement. I also asked

him where they were going and he pointed his finger up toward the mountains. At that moment Baba came out the door, so we stopped talking.

Baba got into His car, we did namaskar, and Sandiip, true to his word, drove away slowly. I hurried into the house to change into my uniform, then rushed back to the door with Aruna and Didi Rukmini. Baba's car hadn't gone far but we didn't have a car and we didn't know what to do. After waiting for a while a taxi came by, but Didi Rukmini said, "We are not going to make it, I give up. We don't know where Baba has gone."

But Priiti and I wouldn't give up. We looked at each other and hopped into the taxi, praying that Baba's car hadn't gone too far. We felt sure that if we just kept going, we would eventually catch up to Baba's car. But not only did we not see Baba's car, the road split up ahead and the driver asked us if we wanted to go right or left. Priiti looked at me for an answer. "I don't know," I said, but then I felt Baba giving me the answer and without hesitation, I said, "Go right."

A little ways further on we arrived at the entrance of Yangmingshan Gardens and there was Baba's car, parked near the entrance. Baba was still in the car, talking and looking at us. Only when we pulled up did Baba get out of the car and start walking. One brother later told us that Baba had been intentionally waiting for us. What a warm feeling that gave us.

There was no VSS during that field walk and I was the only GV. I stood next to Baba, pretending to be brave while feeling so nervous I could die. As we walked leisurely through the gardens, Baba was talking about the Silk Road and other topics. I found myself thinking, "Why is Baba talking so long today? We should go back soon." We stayed in the gardens for a good forty minutes. I didn't understand at the time that being able to be with Baba for so long was indeed His blessing, both for Priiti and myself. Priiti had been going through a rough time in her life. She was having serious clash at the time with one sister, but when that sister had

a heart attack, Priiti put aside her feelings and went to take care of her. After her PC, Baba told Didi Ananda Karuna that Priiti had a very kind heart. She had seen Baba in Bangkok before He came to Taiwan and Baba had blessed her by placing His hand on her crown cakra.



Didi Girija leading kiirtan with the Margiis
at the entrance to Omprakash's house

Dr. Pathak

While walking in the Yangmingshan cemetery, Baba talked about the ancient Dravidian culture. He said that they used pictorial scripts at that time, which later became extinct. Those Dravidian pictorial scripts could be found by excavating a certain soil stratum in Magadha province of India.

We were walking along a slope overlooking Taipei. It looked like a map with countless twinkling lights. I said, "Oh, Baba, it's so

beautiful!" Baba replied, "Yes, like a garland wreathed by lights." Someone made a comparison with the Diipavali festival in India. In India the new-moon night in September is Diipavali, when every house and street corner is lit in all the cities and villages, big or small. Baba said, "The founder of Jainism, Vardhamana Mahaviira, passed away on that day. Therefore both the Hindu and Jain religions honor that day as Diipavali."

Afterward, Baba talked about the origin of the written scripts of different countries. He said that it was a very interesting subject and a Renaissance Universal topic. Baba mentioned that the Tibetan language and Bengali shared the same origin. Their scripts are also similar. The mantra *om manipadme hum* written in Tibetan looks like Bengali. During Buddha's time, Tibet linked India to China. China, Tibet, and Bengal have the same Tantric heritage. Only the names are different, since different places adopted different names. Mantrayana, Tantrayana, and Kalachakrayana are the respective names for Vajrayana in these three areas.

Baba said that Lord Shiva had three wives: Kali, who was Dravidian, Parvati from northern India (Parvati in China is called Tara), and Gaunga from Mongolia. India and China, two great ancient civilizations, are linked together by the same spirit based on historical facts.

Baba further talked about different races in the world. He said that the Americans are migrants from Europe; Polynesians in the northern Atlantic islands are a mixture of ancient Chinese and Austrians; and the Mongolian race has five sub-races: Chinese, Japanese, Indo-Tibetan, Indo-Burmese, and Malay.

The old Chinese for Bangla is Bangjala.

In ancient Tibet, the king had two wives: one was Chinese; the other was Nepalese, a princess from Nepal.

Baba then talked about research on these great civilizations: Chinese literature — ancient Chinese history and culture; Indian literature — ancient Indian history and culture; and Egyptian literature — ancient Egyptian history and culture. These are all classical

studies and include the development of the science, sociology, and philosophy of that era. The present-day youth should study them. These subjects should be taught in the universities.

Didi Ananda Lalita

Dr. Pathak was a devoted Margii. His son, Dada Dharmadevananda, was a senior acarya. When Baba was traveling in Europe and Taiwan, Dr. Pathak accompanied Baba as His personal doctor. While he was in Taiwan, Dr. Pathak suffered from indigestion, maybe because he was too fond of Chinese food. Baba instead became his doctor and advised him what to eat.

While Baba was In Taipei, He took His daily field walks most often in the Yangmingshan area. By the time of His departure He had left His footprints all over the mountain. Wherever He stopped, He would discuss astronomy, geography, history, culture, flora and fauna, and so on. He also told many stories. It was a pity that most of the VSS guards didn't know much English at the time. When asked about what Baba said, they invariably replied that they couldn't understand what Baba was talking about.

The other places where Baba took His field walk were Rongxing Garden and the campus of Taiwan University. When Baba was walking in Rongxing Garden, He explained many things about the flowers and plants. Dada Nityasatyananda took notes while Baba was talking but unfortunately those notes are nowhere to be found.

One time, when Baba went for field walk, I was on GV duty, trailing behind. There were not many people that day. While walking, Baba pointed at a commonly seen plant that grew alongside the road. I didn't know its name at the time. Baba said that this plant could cure cancer. I was surprised and happy to know that such an ordinary, nondescript plant could save someone's life. Later on I found out that it was periwinkle. Unfortunately we didn't get the chance to ask

Baba which part of the plant should be used and how to prepare it.

In 1992 I was posted to Vietnam. One day while walking I saw some periwinkle plants. I told the Vietnamese Margii who was with me that Baba had said that this plant could cure cancer. He became excited and told me that a French company had invested a large sum of money to grow periwinkles on a big piece of land in the countryside.

Girish

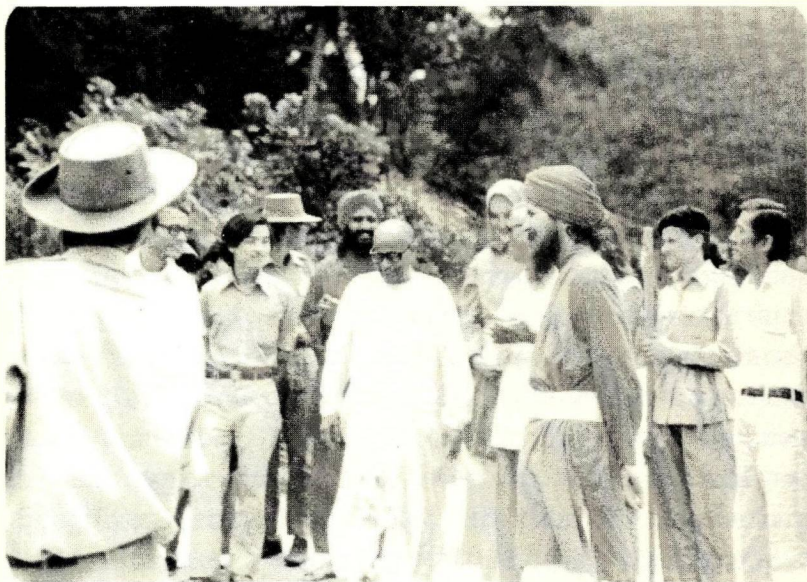
One day, SS Dada said I could go with Baba on field walk. I had some questions and had hoped that I would get an opportunity to ask Baba. When I came running out, Baba was already in the car and the car had begun to pull out. Baba saw me running and made a gesture from the car, as if to say, "Take your time; there is no hurry. I know your condition fully."

The field walk that day was at Yangmingshan Park. During the walk Baba said to me, "Girish, come to India." Later, Baba looked somewhat displeased, I didn't know why. Perhaps He was bothered by the crowd in the gardens. He said something to the two dadas and then started walking so fast that two other LFTs and I couldn't keep up. During the walk, I heard Baba talk about some Chinese musical instruments that were brought to China by certain people during certain dynasties.

Afterward, Baba slowed His pace and Dada told me that I could ask Baba a question or two, but no more than that. After some reflection, I combined my questions into one: "Baba, what are the differences between your philosophy and that of the Science and Consciousness Research Institute of the Republic of China?" Baba said, "Everything has been written down in my books; you should read my books." Although Baba didn't answer my question directly, He led me to believe that I needed to do further research before I would be able to understand. He also reinforced my determination to continue my spiritual practices.

Sanjaya

One day, while several Margiis were accompanying Baba on His field walk at Yangmingshan, Baba stopped and said, "You need to translate all my lectures and compile them into a book. What should the book be called?" Everybody was silent. After a few seconds, Baba said, "What about *Baba in Taiwan*? Do you like it?" All the Margiis said enthusiastically, "Yes, Baba. It's great!"



Field walk at Yangmingshan. Sanjaya is to Baba's right, and Indradeva is to Sanjaya's right

One day, a group of us Margiis and some acaryas accompanied Baba for a walk along the coconut tree-lined path near the entrance to National Taiwan University. At one point Baba asked, "Where is Rameshananda?" When somebody told Baba that he hadn't come, Baba said, "He is a very good dada because he doesn't have much attachment to his family."

After the walk, I told Dada about Baba's compliment. He was very surprised and could scarcely believe it after Baba's harsh and unexplained scolding at Mamata's house that had left him exhausted and confused. He couldn't understand why Baba would praise him, but the guru's tests and His liila are beyond comprehension.

Last Darshan

Didi Ananda Lalita

The night before Baba's departure from Taiwan, around twenty to thirty Margiis came to Omprakash's house to see Baba. No one expected that Baba would give darshan, but suddenly Baba informed the acaryas that He wanted to meet with everybody. Immediately the Margiis and acaryas gathered in the living room. Baba spoke on cause and effect. He explained that everything that happens in this universe has a cause. There is no such thing as accident or coincidence. Baba was in a sweet, lighthearted mood. He continued affectionately: "Say a few years ago, none of you knew that Baba was on this Earth. None of you knew that Baba loves you. But Baba was there, and Baba loved you, though you were not acquainted with Baba. Is it not the fact? And I think, now some of you feel that Baba loves you, at least a little. Don't I love you a wee bit?" Baba made a pinching gesture with His fingers. "And I also realize that you love me very much." Now Baba spread His arms wide open. Instantly there was laughter from the audience. Baba had spoken to the feeling in some people's hearts that Baba had neglected them despite how much they loved Him.

He continued, saying that perhaps some thousands of years ago we were together like this on another planet. We pointed to a small planet called Earth and decided: let's go there and do some work. And just to fulfill that pledge, we have come here.

Baba's words touched me very deeply; it was like a far distant memory. Since I was little, I had often asked myself, "Who decided that I would be born here?" Baba's talk answered my ancient question.

Yes, there is no coincidence; we have come on this earth to fulfill an ancient promise.

Didi Ananda Suveda

I was the caller for kaoshikii at Baba's last darshan in Taiwan. It went on much longer than usual and I had the opportunity to sit very near to Him. The topic of Baba's discourse was "Cause and Effect." I was thrilled when I heard Him say, "A few years ago, none of you knew Baba, but Baba knew you all ... now some of you feel that Baba loves you a little (He held two fingers very close to show a wee bit).... I also know that you love me very much (with His arms wide open)."

At this point in His talk, I felt a huge flow of LOVE emanating from Him. It hit me so strongly, I was totally absorbed in that sweet, spiritual attraction. Nothing else mattered to me anymore. It lasted until after the darshan. By then it was too late to take the bus home, so I stayed at the same house where Baba was staying.

Didi Ananda Gaorii

The night before Baba left Taiwan, He came out of His room unexpectedly and sat down to talk with those who were present. There were not so many Margiis there, maybe thirty or forty rather than hundreds, because it was a totally impromptu appearance — nothing had been announced. We were gathered in the living room of the Yangmingshan house and Baba was in casual clothes, not in His formal "discourse" attire. The discourse He gave that night is in Ananda Vacanamrtam Part 14; it is very beautiful and one that touched me personally very deeply. In that darshan Baba

talked about cause and effect, that nothing happens by accident, that everything has a reason.

To summarize what touched me so deeply, and I'm sure everyone else in that room, He said that the fact that we are sitting in this room today with Him also had a cause. He joked a little that maybe some of us didn't know a few years ago who Baba was and that Baba loved us, at least a little bit, but that now we know it, and He made a gesture showing with His thumb and forefinger to show "a little." He continued, "And I also realize that you love Me very much," and this time He spread His arms out wide. Then He went on, still a little jokingly, that we didn't know the cause of our being here with Him that evening, because maybe it was five thousand years ago, or ten thousand years ago, and maybe it was on another planet. He said that maybe we were there together on that other planet and we pointed to a star in the sky and we said, "Let us go to that small planet known as Earth, and there we may do some work." I think everybody in that room really felt that we had been on another planet with Baba before. The vibration was so strong, He had us all mesmerized.

For me the concept of being on another planet with Baba or going to another planet had been like a total fantasy. Even though I'd heard other workers or Margiis saying that they will go with Baba when He goes to another planet, I never really considered it. It was an alien thought to me. But being in that room with Baba and hearing Him talk about it that day, I felt at the core of my being that I had been with Him before in another time and in another realm.

Sanjaya

During the August 28 darshan, Baba said:

"Nothing is non-causal in the Universe. You came in close contact with Me, I came in close contact with you. This is also not

non-causal. Certainly there is some cause behind this actual happening. The cause may or may not be known to you. There are so many people in this world. Why did you, boys and girls, come in close contact with Me, but not others? Certainly there is some cause. And perhaps this cause or seed germinated in long past, say, 5000 or 10,000 years ago. The seed was there and it germinated, and finally, when its sprout was out, you came in contact with Me. What is sprout? The white portion of the tree that first comes out of the seed. So, when nothing is non-causal, your coming in close contact with Me is also not non-causal. There is some cause, you do not know. It may be that in hoary past you were also in close contact with Me. It may or may not be on this Earth, on this planet. It may be on some other planet that you were known to Me. It may be that on that planet, we sat like this and decided that, 'Let us go to that small planet known as Earth, and there we may do some work.' And, just to fulfill the pledge of ours, we have come here. So nothing is non-causal."

This deeply touching statement is still ringing in my ears.

Departure

Didi Ananda Lalita

The date of Baba's departure from Taiwan and His itinerary after Taiwan was finalized with very short notice. Once the flight was booked, everyone was busy with the different preparations and no one thought of reserving the airport VIP lounge in advance. As soon as we realized our negligence, we contacted Vikash, who was working in the foreign affairs ministry, and asked him to make the arrangements. He did his best but it was to no avail. By then it was too late. There was nothing we could do but to have Baba wait in the departure lounge while someone took care of the boarding formalities. As a result, the Margiis had more time with Baba, waiting with Him and talking with Him until the boarding announcement was made.

Dada Krsnabuddhyananda

Finally the news came that the US had refused Baba's visa. Then Baba said, "They have refused? Well then, we will have to go to some alternative place. Maybe Jamaica, but I will not fly through the US to get there. I won't set foot on the soil of those countries who have refused me, like Great Britain, the Philippines, and now the US. Not even in the transit lounge to change planes. So let us go to Hong Kong and back to India."

We took Baba to the airport the day He was leaving, and Baba sat with the Margiis in the departure lounge. I remember some Margiis

mentioned that they thought that Baba understood Chinese very well, or at least the Chinese way very well. Baba was very sensitive to the local culture.

Girish

When Baba was leaving Taiwan, I went with the other Margiis to the airport to see Him off. I was feeling sad about Him leaving, so I didn't listen what He was saying. I spent that time staring at Baba, thinking that it might be a very long time before I could see Him again. After talking for some time, Baba fell silent. Then He smiled and got up to board the plane.

The time Baba spent in Taiwan became history the moment His plane took off; however, the memories He left us with will remain forever.

Tapeshvar

The day of Baba's departure from Taiwan, I didn't see any other Margiis so I went to the airport by myself. When I went upstairs to the departure lounge, I saw from a distance that Baba was sitting there alone. There was no one else around. Unfortunately I felt too shy to go close to Baba, so I turned away and made a round through the airport. When I went upstairs again, Baba was surrounded by Margiis, dadas, and didis. I could only stand behind the crowd and take some photos. In retrospect, I was a big fool.

In May of 1986, I made my first trip to India. There I attended DMC in Calcutta and it was then that I really felt Baba's love and attraction. It is something I will never forget. It happened the morning of the second day of DMC, when it was time for Baba to go for field walk. I was singing kiirtan along with the Margiis and we had formed two lines on either side of the passage to Baba's car. While we were singing, Baba

came out dressed in white and walking very slowly. Everyone cried, "Baba, Baba." All at once the atmosphere became highly charged. Baba had His hands folded and He was all smiles as He greeted the Margiis on either side of Him as He walked. My eyes were totally focused on Baba. Suddenly a sweet feeling that I had never experienced before surged up inside me. My eyes could not bear to look away from Baba. Within and without my existence, the only thing that existed was His incomparable sweetness. Finally Baba got in His car. I followed behind the car until it left me behind. I didn't even notice that my tears had rolled down to my lips.

This was my first spiritual experience. It made me understand how intimate the relationship is between Baba and His disciples. My previous shyness and hesitation had been completely unnecessary.

Yogatma

The day Baba left Taiwan, there was no arrangement for a VIP room, so He waited for His flight in the departure lounge. I was thinking how to utilize time properly while sitting there, rather than just let the time slip away. I approached Baba and asked a question: "Baba, we have encountered a problem when translating Sanskrit into Chinese. Should we use the Buddhist style of phonetic translation or create our own terminology and translate according to the meaning?"

Baba understood my point and started giving a lengthy and detailed explanation. Due to my poor English, however, I was not able to properly grasp what He said. Fortunately, Dada Nityasatyananda was sitting beside Baba taking notes, so I was confident that the conversation would not be lost. Or so I thought. Perhaps it was my own naiveté. Afterward what Baba said that day was nowhere to be found. Such a great loss.

Ishvarakrsna

The day Baba left Taiwan, Sanjaya asked me whether I'd like to accompany him to the travel agent to collect the tickets for Baba and His entourage, and then continue on to the airport. Thus, I was fortunate enough to see Baba off in the airport. When we arrived, Baba was sitting by Himself near the China Airlines check-in counter; Didi Priiti was standing a few steps away. Sanjaya went up and knelt in front of Baba, and I was right behind him. Soon after, other Margiis and acaryas arrived and started crowding around Baba. Since I was so close to Baba, Nirmala gave me a tape recorder and asked me to place it in front of Baba to record His voice. Seeing me with the tape recorder, Baba asked, "My child, do you want to record me?" My English was very poor back then. I didn't understand what Baba said and thus I didn't know what to say. Everybody laughed, but afterward, someone translated for me. Later on, we discovered that the tape was blank. The batteries were low and nothing was recorded.

When Baba was about to depart, He gave me the garland He was wearing. At the time, I had no idea how precious Baba's garland was, and what a special grace He had showered on me by giving me His garland. Ganesh asked me for the garland after everyone dispersed, and I naively gave it to him. It took me decades to realize who my guru was — He was Taraka Brahma; and He had been right in front of me. Looking back, I realize that Baba had been looking after me all along, even though I was new and spiritually ignorant. He graced not only those who knew Him, but also those who didn't know Him.

Sanjaya

The day Baba was to leave Taiwan, Brother Ishvarakrsna and I rushed to the airport. None of the other Margiis had arrived yet, but Baba and His entourage were already there. I saw Baba

sitting alone in a chair near the China Airlines counter. A didi was standing about ten feet away. I was thinking, How come Baba is alone? I stood there for a moment and then realized that this was a rare opportunity that I shouldn't miss. So I hurried over and knelt next to Baba without remembering to do sastaunga pranam. Ishvarakrsna followed close behind. I felt it was rude to just look at Baba without saying anything, so I said, "Baba, please come again."

"You know? I have been here once," Baba said. "The next time, you should come to see me in India. It is difficult for you to get an Indian visa at this time, but you can come to India through the Nepal border; then you will be all right. You can come to see me in India this way."

I asked, "Baba, do you think we may be able to have DMC in mainland China someday?"

"It is hard to say."

After a while, the Margiis gradually arrived and gathered round Baba, but we were still the closest to Him. I don't know why, but at one point Baba started to talk about Sanskrit and He recited the fifty Sanskrit sounds. The vibration was so strong I felt stunned.

Since I was responsible for the finances, I had the airline tickets for Baba and His entourage. But I was so engrossed in the sweetness of being with Baba that I totally forgot about them. Dada Tapeshvaranandajii was about to check in for Baba but he couldn't find me because I was blocked by the Margiis. When Dada Tapeshvaranandajii finally saw me, he called me in a furious tone of voice. That brought me out of my trance. When I got up and handed the tickets to Dada I forgot to do pranam to Baba.

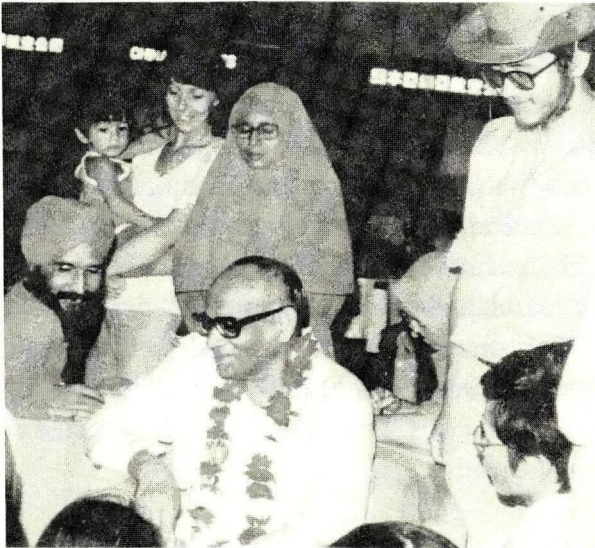
As I am writing this, I remember that Baba once said the following in a darshan:

You should always remember that although you have come to this world for a very short span of time, you will have to be responsible for doing so many different things, including social service. Thus you will have to equip yourself in intelligence and wisdom in all

possible ways. And at the same time, you must fulfill your duties and responsibilities. Once your duties are over you will have to bid adieu to this world with a smiling face...

When a child is born, the members of the family laugh joyfully, but the child itself cries. You should live such a benevolent life and do such glorious deeds that when you leave this world, smiles will blossom on your face while the people mourn your departure with copious tears. The people will feel bereaved at the loss of a person who truly helped them in their hour of need. All of you should take such a vow to do noble deeds as long as you are alive, and thus leave this world with a smiling face.

I am so fortunate to have met such a special guru. Only by doing my very best to fulfill my duties in this lifetime can I be a good human being and not deviate from Baba's teachings and expectations.



Baba in the departure hall. Didi Ananda Karuna is behind Baba and Ishvarakrsna is sitting to the left of Baba

Epilogue

Dada Krsnabuddhyananda

After Baba left, we went back to Taipei and shortly thereafter we got a call from Hong Kong that Baba was surrounded by the security police in the airport and British Airways didn't want to let Him get on the plane to go back to India, so there was a chance He might be sent back to Taiwan. So we thought, Good, Baba may be coming back if He cannot go anywhere else; let's get ready for another round. But eventually we got another call informing us that British Airways had agreed to honor His ticket and fly Him to Calcutta. One of our Margii brothers was in the airport in Hong Kong while this drama was taking place. He was working for Japan Airlines at the time. I forget his name, but he later emigrated to Canada. Since he was working for Japan Airlines he had to pass through the transit lounge. There were security guards all around, so he posed as an airport official and went and stood right next to Baba. Since he was supposed to be airport staff, he couldn't talk with Baba. But he did get to stand next to Him and Baba smiled at him. They did exchange a few words, but I don't know the details.

The rest is history. Baba went back to India, and from there He went to Jamaica.

Before Baba left Taiwan, He gave a special order that someone should bring some camellias to India for the next RDS, like the camellia bushes that were in front of Omprakash's house. Then, two

days after Baba left, Dada Rameshananda called me into his office and started giving me all the sectorial files, one by one. I couldn't understand what he was doing. Then he took his bag and said, "I am going south for a few days." He left and never came back. I called India and said, "We lost our SS. What should we do?" They asked me who was there, and I said that everybody else had gone to the field, so they said, "Okay, you are the SS now. Bring all the reports to India." Of course, I also had to bring the plants, Baba's camellias. Baba had used its Latin name, *camellia japonica*. It is a Japanese plant but it was in Taiwan. So I got some camellias, put some mud around the roots to keep them wet, and then stopped in the sectorial office in Hong Kong on the way to Bangkok. I couldn't get many reports but I got what I could. When I landed in Bangkok I met the new SS, who was on his way to Taiwan, and I handed over the charge to him. Dada Sumitananda was there, so I handed back the SDM chief secretary duty to him.

After one day in Bangkok, I flew to Calcutta where I got stopped in immigration and deported back to Bangkok. I was on the blacklist so there was nothing I could do. I asked the immigration officials, "Can't you at least take these camellias to Baba's house?" "Sorry, we cannot do that," they replied. I was worried about the plants, so when I arrived back in Bangkok I kept them wet and then flew to Kathmandu. I had to get a new passport, so I planted the camellias in the garden of the Kathmandu training center — it had already been five days by then and I knew I would need some time to prepare my documents. The US consulate gave me a new passport, but the consular officer warned me that I might not have any luck. "If you are blacklisted in Calcutta," he told me, "you may be blacklisted elsewhere." Anyhow, by Baba's grace and another set of miracles I was able to get into India without the trouble of a passport. I had two camellias inside my attaché case. Baba had called me for avadhuta diksha but since I was four or five days late I missed the reporting session and I also missed the avadhuta diksha.

Baba's new Lake Gardens house was just finished but the yard was empty. It was just bare soil, and they were bringing a truckload of topsoil for the plants. That Calcutta soil was not very good so they put a good foot of topsoil over it. The lorry was offloading the topsoil when I got there, but there were no plants yet — maybe one or two small ones but no trees. If you go there now it is like a jungle, thirty-foot-tall trees, palms, green, green, green, birds all around, but at that time it was like a desert, completely empty. So I delivered the plants, these two lonely camellias, but they had already been away from Taipei for seven days — seven days of trying to keep them alive, transplanting them, watering them. When I got to the house that day Baba was out walking in the future garden, walking around the house, doing a survey, giving directions, do this, do that. The garage was on the west side, next to Baba's side entrance, and the jagrti entrance was on the south side, near the front gate and the driveway. The little room where they managed the plants was on the east side, off a little veranda. Baba was walking on that side and He pointed and told His gardeners, "See right here, you must plant Krsna Das's camillias." Then He walked around the house and when He came back He said, "You boys remember, right here, this is where I want Krsna Das's camellias. Don't forget. Put his camellias here."

Didi Ananda Lalita

Dada Rameshananda was the first acarya who came to Taiwan to propagate the teachings of Ananda Marga. He was very devoted and honest and had a pure heart, always putting himself in the shoes of others. The Margiis respected and loved him very much. According to Margiis from the early days, he went back to India after a few years because he missed Baba so much.

In 1978, before Baba came to Taiwan, Dada was transferred back to Taiwan as the sectorial secretary of Hong Kong Sector. According to Didi Ananda Suveda, who was working as an LFT

in the Taipei jagrti in those days, when Dada came back from a visit to India in May 1979, he told the Margiis after one collective meditation that Baba had warned him that he would encounter some difficulties after coming back, but that he should not be worried, Baba would help him.

During Baba's visit to Taiwan, Dada had a very heavy workload. Due to Dada's organizational role and responsibilities, Baba was more strict and severe with him than anybody else. Baba scolded him for every mistake that occurred or whenever things were not taken care of in a timely fashion, even for the negligence of other people. Nevertheless, Dada kept on doing his duties very sincerely, often sacrificing himself to care for the visiting Margiis and acaryas. He especially did all he could to arrange for PC and field walk for the Margiis.

Dada fell ill shortly after Baba left Taiwan. He looked very sad and downcast. One day at the Taipei jagrti, he expressed his sorrow to Didi Rukmini and myself. "Baba was so, so sweet to every one of you, but He scolded me every single time He saw me." We fully understood his situation and empathized with his pain and heartache. Shiila (who later became Didi Ananda Suveda) consoled him and reminded him of Baba's warning and advice a few months earlier. However, Dada was too devastated to be consoled.

Oftentimes I wonder if that was Baba's way to exhaust Dada's heavy samskaras from previous lives.

Baba gave a lot of importance to recording and translation work. After every darshan, when Baba returned to Omprakash's residence, He would always enquire whether or not His discourse had been recorded and translated into Chinese. If it wasn't done, He would not give darshan the next day. Due to Baba's insistence, His darshan discourses were compiled into a book, *Baba In Taiwan*, which was printed in both English and Chinese soon after His visit.

Lokeshvarii

Once Yogendra was driving the car in which Baba had ridden while He was in Kaohsiung. When he stopped at the traffic light, he was hit by a truck. The car rolled over several times and was badly damaged. All the doors were locked but fortunately they were able to open the door on the driver's side and he was rescued.

Another time he was hospitalized for surgery. The IV was administered too quickly, which caused his heart to fail. He was kept in the ICU but was released after only three days. The doctors commented that it was a miracle.

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NB: The original color versions of the photos included in this book can be found at https://www.flickr.com/photos/baba_in_taiwan

Glossary

Acarya: Someone who teaches others by his or her conduct; a spiritual teacher. The monks and nuns of Ananda Marga hold the title "acarya," as do some lay members.

Anandamurti: Shrii Shrii Anandamurti is the founder and guru of Ananda Marga. Shrii is a title of respect. Anandamurti means "the embodiment of bliss." His disciples refer to him as Baba.

Ananda: Unlimited bliss.

Ananda Marga: The Path of Bliss; the socio-spiritual organization founded by Baba in 1955.

Ananda Marga Pracaraka Samgha: AMPS; the society to propagate the path of bliss; the formal name of Ananda Marga.

Avadhutika: A senior Ananda Marga nun, also initiated into kapalik meditation.

Baba: The nearest and dearest one. The guru of Ananda Marga is lovingly addressed as Baba by his disciples.

Baba Nam Kevalam: "Everything is divine love." The kiirtan mantra of Ananda Marga.

Bhajan: A spiritual song expressing love for God.

BP: Bhukti pradhan.

Bhukti pradhan: The district secretary of Ananda Marga.

Dada: Respected elder brother. The monks of Ananda Marga are referred to and addressed as Dada.

Darshan: Literally, "the sight of the guru." Darshans are usually formal gatherings in which disciples listen to the teaching of a guru. Darshan is often used to refer to Baba's talks.

Dharma: Spirituality.

DMC: Dharma Maha Cakra. "The great circle of Dharma"; gatherings during which Baba would address the Margiis and give his varabhaya mudra.

Dhyana: Meditation.

Didi: Respected elder sister. The nuns of Ananda Marga are referred to and addressed as Didi.

DPS: Dharma pracar secretary.

ERAWS: The Education, Relief and Welfare Section of Ananda Marga; it is responsible for running schools, children's homes, and other social projects.

GS: General secretary of Ananda Marga.

Gurudeva: A respectful way to refer to or address the guru.

Guru Puja: The offering of mental colors to the guru.

GV: Girl Volunteers.

Half bath: An ablution before meditation; washing the arms, legs, and face.

HPMG: Hari Pari Mandala Ghosti; a branch of SDM responsible for propagating kiirtan and bhajans.

Jagrti: Spiritual center or ashram; literally, "a place of awakening." The Ananda Marga centers are called jagrtis.

Kaoshikii: A yogic dance introduced by Shrii Shrii Anandamurti in 1978.

Kiirtan (or kirtan): The chanting or singing of mantras, often combined with a traditional dance.

Kundalinii: Spiritual energy that resides at the base of the spine and is elevated up the spinal column during the course of spiritual practice.

Liila: Divine play.

Local Full Timer (LFT): A non-monastic, full-time volunteer for Ananda Marga, who normally works in their home country.

Lungi: A sarong-like piece of cloth of any color or pattern used as informal dress by Indian males.

Manipura cakra: The third cakra, located at the navel.

Margii: A member of Ananda Marga.

Moksa: Spiritual emancipation or salvation; spiritual liberation of a permanent nature.

Parama Purusa: Supreme Consciousness.

Pracar: The effort to spread the philosophy and teachings; literally, "propagation."

Prasad: Food that has been blessed by the guru.

Pravacan: Discourse.

Pratiik: The emblem of Ananda Marga, consisting of an upward-pointing triangle, a downward-pointing triangle, a rising sun, and a swastika. The pratiik is displayed in the books of Shri Shrii Anandamurti and on the meditation altars in Ananda Marga centers.

PRS: Public relations secretary.

Prout: Acronym for the progressive utilization theory; the social philosophy of Ananda Marga and the social and economic system described by that philosophy.

RAWA: Renaissance Artists and Writers Association.

RU: Renaissance Universal, a branch of Ananda Marga that publishes journals and organizes discussions on contemporary issues.

Sadguru: True guru.

Samskara: The unexpressed reaction of a previous action or thought, commonly referred to as karma.

Samadhi: A state of trance-like absorption into the Cosmic Mind or Cosmic Consciousness.

Sadhana: Spiritual practice or meditation; literally, "the effort to complete."

Sadhaka: Spiritual aspirant.

Sastaunga pranam: Full prostration.

Sectorial Secretary (SS): The organizational head of one of the nine Ananda Marga administrative sectors. These sectors usually comprise a continent or subcontinent and are named after a key city in that sector.

Sattvik (also spelled sattvic): Pure or sentient.

SDM: Seva Dharma Mission. The wing of Ananda Marga responsible for the training centers and kiirtan.

Shiva: The codifier of Tantra. He lived in India, 5000 BCE.

Tantra: The practice that liberates a person from worldly bondage through expansion.

Tandava: A vigorous jumping dance taught by Shiva that builds courage and mental concentration.

Taraka Brahma: The Supreme Consciousness in its role as liberator.

Varabhaya Mudra: A special gesture through which Baba emanated his spiritual force at the end of certain gatherings, principally DMCs. It provides protection and removes fear.

VSS: Volunteer Social Service.

Wholetimer (WT): A full-time worker of Ananda Marga; an Ananda Marga monk or nun.

WWD: Women's Welfare Department.

SPIRITUALITY

In August of 1979, Shrii Shrii Anandamurti spent an unprecedented fourteen days in Taiwan, where He was received as an honored guest by the Taiwanese government. It was the longest period of time that He spent in any country outside of India during His lifetime. In the words of one of His Taiwanese disciples, "The time Baba spent in Taiwan became history the moment His plane took off; however, the memories He left us with will remain forever." *A Garland of Lights: Baba's Love for Taiwan* tells the story of those two weeks as seen through the eyes of His devotees, an enchanting weave of their stories and experiences revealing the great love of the guru for His disciples and their great love for Him.

Baba's blessing when leaving Taichung:

The future of this time-honored land of civilization is bright; the only thing you should remember is that you must not deviate from your great cultural heritage. I have gotten goodwill from this land and I am sure that its future is bright.

— Shrii Shrii Anandamurti

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