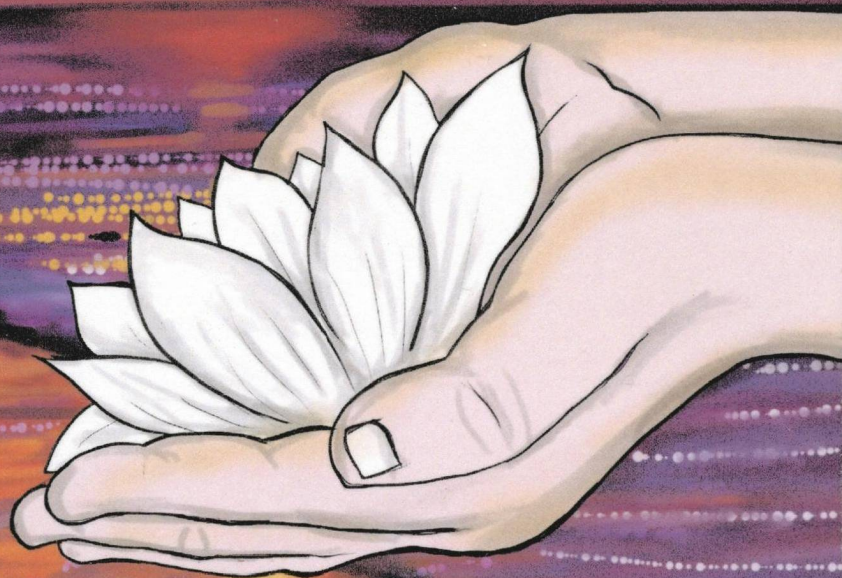


SAMARPAN

AT THE FEET OF THE MASTER



Ac. Nityashuddhananda Avadhuta

SAMARPAN

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ACHARYA NITYASHUDDHANANDA
AVADHUTA

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Samarpan means “offering” or “surrender”

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Initiation

I WAS BORN IN 1944 in the village of Jagdishpur, in Bhagalpur District, a little over two hours by train from Baba's birthplace of Jamalpur. During my boyhood, I would stay with my paternal grandfather whenever we visited my father's village, some fourteen kilometers south of the city. My grandfather was religious-minded and quite regular in his spiritual practice. He used to keep a collection of spiritual magazines that I would read whenever I was there. The one I read the most was called *Kalyana*. It was published by the Gita Press in Gorakhpur, and I used to love the stories of Krsna. I would often daydream that I was playing with Krsna, especially when I was alone in the house. I had the habit of sitting there and thinking about Krsna for long periods of time. Later, when I grew older and got caught up in school and playing games with my friends, I gradually lost that habit, but years later Baba would tell me that I had been with Krsna in a previous life, reminding me of those long-forgotten daydreams of my boyhood years.

We lived in an extended family, which was common in those days in India, and when I was sixteen or so my cousin, who was two years older than me and with whom I shared a room, took initiation in Ananda Marga. I was vaguely aware of Ananda Marga at the time—it was well known in Bhagalpur—but my cousin was very quiet about it. He never mentioned to me that he had joined Ananda Marga, nor did I ever see him doing sadhana, and though I knew about his initiation I didn't give it much thought. We went to school together each day, studied at the same desk at home, and

used to skip classes together from time to time to go to the movies or walk around town, but he never brought up the subject of Ananda Marga and I didn't ask. But all of a sudden, in 1962, when he passed his Bachelor of Arts exam, he left home to become an Ananda Marga monk. This sent shock waves through the family. He was my paternal aunt's eldest son, and losing him to Ananda Marga was a traumatic experience, though my uncle had a guru and perhaps found it easier to understand than my aunt.

After that I became curious about Ananda Marga. I wondered what it was like, what had prompted my cousin to go off and become a monk. I heard a lot of stories from friends and acquaintances, both good and bad. People would joke and laugh about it, but I heard some serious, intriguing stories as well, and these left an impression on my mind. Then one day the following year, I was walking in the Bhagalpur train station with some friends when a crowd of a hundred people or more started gathering and chanting slogans in support of Ananda Marga. I inquired from somebody in the crowd and learned that the guru of Ananda Marga was on the train that was about to pull into the station, the Danapur Fast Passenger, on its way to Calcutta, and they had come to see their guru during the train's brief stoppage. When the train pulled in, Baba was sitting by the window in one of the compartments. I was at the back of the crowd but I managed to push my way to the front. I wanted to see this guru who had inspired my cousin to renounce the world and leave his family. When I saw Baba, I raised my hands out of reverence. I can't say that it was pranam exactly, but it had some of that feeling. Then Baba looked directly at me. It was a penetrating look, something I could not explain. I felt a kind of thrill pass through my body, and I even wondered if it were due to the cold. It was a look I could not forget.

About this same time, a friend of mine from my grandfather's village started talking to me about Ananda Marga. We had played together when we were young, and we had gone to high school together. He was in the army now, but he had taken initiation at some point, and he was full of inspiration and very insistent that I should also learn sadhana. Whenever he would come home on

leave, we would meet and argue and talk philosophy, and he would invariably try to convince me to accompany him to see an acarya for initiation, something he was doing with all his friends. I resisted at first, but by the following year, 1964, it became impossible to ignore him any longer. By then I was feeling that something was missing in my life. I felt a void within and I had become hungry for guidance. I had gone for qualification and had stood second in my class, but I had lost all interest in my studies. Nor had I any interest in finding a job or beginning a career, so one day I told my friend, "Ok, let's go for initiation."

He took me to the house of Acarya Pashupati, who was a highly respected family acarya in Bhagalpur. Pashupatiji talked to me about the importance of meditation and the role of karma, jinana, and bhakti in spiritual life. Then he explained the pratik and proceeded to initiate me. When the initiation was over, we meditated together for a few minutes, and I had a very peaceful, blissful meditation. That convinced me that this meditation really worked. Then he said something that made a deep impression on me. He said, "You know Krsna and you know Shiva, don't you? Well, you are going to find the same thing here." I still thought of Krsna as my guide and my friend, so Pashupatiji's words had a powerful impact on my mind.

It was difficult at first to find a proper environment for meditation. I had no separate room in the house where I could close the door and be alone, but I used to practice at night as often as I could, and I would search out lonely places during the day where I could meditate. I also started attending regular dharmachakra and that was a big help. I wasn't so regular in my sadhana, due to the lack of a conducive environment, but I kept it up as best I could, though not twice a day, not yet.

I was a college student at the time of my initiation, in the process of completing my Intermediate degree, and shortly thereafter I enrolled in a technical school in Bhagalpur, the Industrial Training Institute. From there I went to Calcutta for further studies at the beginning of 1965, and for about six months I lost my way, spiritually speaking. I was staying in the house of a friend of my father. He was a wealthy landlord and his house was very luxurious.

I had my own room now, but I somehow fell out of the habit of meditation. I didn't have any Ananda Marga contact in Calcutta and certainly that was a contributing factor. After some time, however, I started to feel again that something was missing in my life. I had a lot of idle time on my hands, much of which I spent alone in my room, and then I remembered meditation and the good feeling I had had after my initiation. So I wrote my acarya in Bhagalpur, telling him that I wanted to become regular again in my meditation and asking him for whatever advice he could give me. While I was waiting for an answer, I started meditating again. Then I got a letter from him telling me that Baba would be coming to Calcutta on such and such a day to conduct DMC. On the day that Baba was due to arrive at Howrah Station there was a big football match between India and Russia and my father's friend had arranged a free ticket for me, but I told him that even if he offered me a kingdom—the whole world, in fact—I could not attend the match; I would rather go see my guru. That was how strongly I felt about the chance to see Baba again.

I went to the station that day and it was much like the time I had seen him in Bhagalpur station, only stronger. I also met my acarya there and touched his feet, and the next evening I attended my first DMC. It took place in Haryana Bhavan on Vivekananda Road, in the month of November. The topic was "Dhruva and Adhruva." I don't remember much about the talk, but what happened after Baba's discourse I will never forget. Baba started to chant samgacchadvam. That was the chant to begin meditation in dharmachakra, so I assumed that it was time to do collective meditation. I sat in the full lotus posture, closed my eyes, and started meditating. All of a sudden I heard margis throughout the hall weeping and crying out, "Baba, Baba, Baba." I opened my eyes, not realizing that Baba had just given his varabhaya mudra. I had missed the mudra, but when I looked at the dais, Baba was not there. In his place I saw an immense radiant effulgence. Just that soothing light and nothing else. It last a few seconds, and during those few seconds I felt a profound sense of peace and bliss. Then the light disappeared and I saw Baba sitting there, telling us to do meditation. I was dumbfounded. What had I

just experienced? What had happened to me? What had happened to Baba? Then Baba got up and left the dais.

Afterward I told my acarya about my experience and he just smiled. He tried to get me personal contact with Baba but it didn't happen. I was, however, able to get the addresses of several margis and workers in the city, and after the DMC I started attending DC in different places, at least two or three and sometimes four times a week. One of those places was the office of Nutan Prithvi in Jiivanmukta Lane, an Ananda Marga newspaper that was being run by two young dasas, the future Jagadishvarananda and the future Lokeshvarananda. Neither of them were avadhutas yet. Another DC was in the Shyambazaar area at the house of a senior margi, and yet another at the house of another margi, I forget the exact location. Thenceforth I was regular with my daily meditation.

At the end of December, I went home for my school vacation. I got my second lesson while I was there, and afterward my acarya told me that Baba was the reincarnation of Shiva and Krsna. I didn't feel the slightest resistance when he said this. Krsna was my hero and my guide, and I accepted right away that I had found him in the form of Anandamurti.

I attended a spiritual conference in Bhagalpur, and afterward, on the twenty-seventh, I went to Jamalpur to have Baba's darshan and hopefully PC. While I was on the train, three other students came up to me and introduced themselves. They were also margis who were going to see Baba, and they had divined who I was by my vibration and my face. They asked me if I was Vishokananda's cousin, and when they found out that I was, they became even more friendly. We spent the entire journey talking. I had yet to meet my cousin since he had joined Ananda Marga—he had not yet become Baba's personal assistant and thus hadn't attended the DMC in Calcutta—but he was very well known in the organization.

All four of us on that train would later become avadhutas. One of them became Dada Nigamananda, another Dada Sharanananda, who has been at Benares training center for many years, and the third became Dada Advetananda. They had been to Jamalpur before, and after I met Baba they took me all around: Death Valley, the

Kali temple, the tiger's grave, all the places that I had heard about in the stories, such as the one about Baba riding a tiger. Then we rode back together to Bhagalpur on the evening train. But that was after I had my PC.

Personal Contact

PERSONAL CONTACT WAS VERY important for my spiritual journey. Even today I get a thrill when I remember it. It was the morning of the twenty-seventh and I was second in line. After I entered Baba's room, I did sastaung pranam and then sat up. Baba was sitting on a wooden cot in his room in the Jamalpur jagriti, dressed in a white dhoti and kurta. He addressed me in Angika, my mother tongue, and asked me my name and the name of my acarya. Then he fixed a penetrating look on me. "You have made some mistakes in your life," he said, "but you have repented so I will not punish you." He did pull my ear a little but it didn't hurt. In fact, I enjoyed it. His entire mood was very loving. At one point he said, "You know, I was with you before, when you used to think about Krsna." The moment he said this, that whole episode from my childhood flashed in my mind, the days when I used to daydream about playing with Krsna. I was surprised but Baba just smiled and then he embraced me. Afterward he made me take three oaths. One was to work for humanity and another was to become a great person. I found the oaths very fulfilling. I thought right away that yes, I will work for humanity to the best of my ability, though the idea had not yet formed in my mind to become a wholotimer. But I did feel right then and there that I would not marry or lead a family life. It was a conviction that came into my mind at the very moment that Baba had me take those oaths. The oaths took four or five minutes, and afterward I knew that I had found my guru. My trust in him was complete.

When I came out of the room I did sadhana and my mind was filled with the feeling of surrender. It occurred to me that perhaps Baba had not punished me because when my acarya told me that he and Krsna were the same entity, I had accepted it right away. There was no resistance in my mind.

After I returned to Calcutta, I found myself thinking about Baba all the time. I couldn't *not* think about him, so strong was the impression he had left in my mind. A strong desire arose in me to find a way to become closer to him. This persisted for the next few months. Looking back, I now realize that I was in a type of bhava samadhi during that whole time.

In April, Dada Krsnananda came to Calcutta and attended one of the dharmachakras where I was a regular participant. Afterward he visited me at my lodgings, and at some point in the conversation he said, "Why don't you cooperate with us." He meant the work of the organization, the work of the mission. I replied that no one had ever asked me that before. He was encouraged by my answer and suggested that I dedicate my life to Baba's mission by going to the training center to become a wholetime worker. I agreed immediately, without any hesitation. All I could think of was that this would help bring me closer to Baba, and by then that was all I desired. I left with him the very next day. I didn't inform anyone, neither my guardian nor my parents. I even left all my luggage in my room. Since I was about to renounce the world, it seemed only fitting that I should take nothing with me.

Up until that time I had not really thought about becoming a sannyasi, but nevertheless I think that possibility had been somewhere there in the back of my mind. Shortly after I took initiation, my mother came to know. She said it was okay, just so long as I didn't become a sannyasi. I think she was afraid that I might follow the example of my cousin. I remember quite clearly that I told her that if I did become a sannyasi it would be my great luck. I hadn't thought about it since then in any conscious way, but the moment Dada said "why don't you cooperate with us," I felt immediately that it was the right thing to do. This was where I had been heading all along, the one thing that I was meant to do with my life. I just hadn't recognized it until then.

Later I heard from my acarya that he had gone to Jamalpur in February, a few weeks after my personal contact, and while he was there Baba had asked about me. Baba told him that it seems I would not stay in family life for much longer. Baba also said the same thing about the future Nigamananda. Clearly Baba had a plan for those he wanted to bring to the mission.

Dada Krsnananda took me first to Jamalpur to see Baba, hoping to get me a second PC. While that didn't happen, I did have a chance to go on field walk with Baba that evening. I was in group B, the group that accompanied Baba from his house to the tiger's grave. Group A would sit with Baba on the grave, while group C would wait at some distance and then accompany Baba back to his house.

There were four of us in group B waiting for Baba to come out from his house, myself and three other margis. Dada Dasarath was also there waiting for Baba. When Baba came out to the gate he asked us to move a little distance away so he could talk with Dasarath. We moved away but not very far. Then he repeated himself, this time in a stronger tone of voice. It was clear that he wanted to maintain the secrecy of his talk with Dada. So we went and stood underneath the tree opposite Baba's house, far enough away that we couldn't overhear what they were saying. It seemed quite normal to me. I automatically assumed that it was an organizational matter. The seniors were talking and they needed their privacy.

When they were finished, Baba called us and we started walking by his side in the direction of the railway station, a distance of a couple of kilometers. As we were walking along the main road, approaching the station, Baba said that in the past the river Ganges had come up to that point. That was why the lane was at a significantly lower level than the road. Then we took the footpath bridge by the side of the station that crossed over the tracks. While we were on the bridge, Baba asked me to explain the seven secrets of success given by Lord Shiva. Just a week or two earlier one margi from a Muslim family had attended DC in Calcutta, and he had spoken on that topic after meditation, so it was fresh in my mind, but when Baba asks you to explain something it is quite a different matter. In that

situation it is much more difficult to remember and I was at a loss for words. Then Baba himself started explaining the seven secrets, especially the fourth secret: samatabhava, balanced mind. By then we had crossed the bridge and there was a cow walking along the side of the road. "See that cow," he said. "It is not just a cow, it is Brahma in the form of a cow. That feeling is samatabhava. That is the real meaning."

After a few minutes he started talking about different stars and things concerned with astronomy. I felt that he was fulfilling the aspirations of the other brothers who were with me, just as he had talked about the seven secrets because they were in my mind. At one point I asked him about palmistry, what was the significance of the lines in the hand, but Baba didn't seem to give palmistry much importance. "It is nothing," he said. "The lines keep changing. If you have the grace of the guru then nothing can happen to you." That made an impression.

When we left the road and entered the field, Baba told us that Krsna and Arjuna had once walked on that very path. That was thrilling to hear. I had accepted Baba as Krsna, and I felt that just as Arjuna had walked with Krsna on that very path, now I was doing the same. Baba continued to talk about Krsna all the way up to the tiger's grave. It was magical. When we reached the grave, instead of heading back as group B normally did, Baba asked us to sit on the grave as well, and all three groups became one. There were about a dozen or so of us all together, sitting with Baba on the grave while he talked, and we all walked back to Baba's house together.

Krsnananda and I spent the night in the jagriti and the next day we caught a train for Patna. We reached in the morning and it was there that I met my cousin, Acarya Vishokananda Avadhuta, for the first time since he had left home to join the mission. He was the Proutist Universal chief secretary and the Prout office was in Patna. I also met Dada Parameshvarananda there for the first time. He was the PU office secretary but he wasn't yet an avadhuta. That afternoon, after a very nice sadhana, Dada Krsnananda and I left for the training center in Benares. It was only after I reached the training center that I wrote my parents to inform them of my decision. I

also returned the watch that my father had given me, with the same feeling of complete renunciation. I found out later that they felt bad that I had returned the watch.

I Become An Acarya

IT WAS LATE APRIL when we reached Benares, and the summer heat was in full force. Between that and the difficult conditions at the training center, my health was affected, especially my digestion. The food was very poor—adulterated rice, watery dal, and whatever leftover vegetables we could get donated to us from the local market. The portions were also very small. As a result I came down with chronic constipation. In those days we had to go into the fields every morning to relieve ourselves, which didn't help matters. After a couple of weeks they put me in charge of the kitchen, and I made sure that everyone had enough to eat—as much as they wanted, in fact. This didn't sit well with the trainer, Dada Advetananda. He was my friend, one of the ones who had been on the train with me the first time I went to Jamalpur. In those days one became an avadhuta very quickly. He called me to his room and explained very gently the financial predicament of the training center. There simply wasn't enough money to be liberal with the food; otherwise we would run out completely. So after a day or two of liberal rations we went back on our spartan regime of watery dal and adulterated rice.

That year the Ananda Purnima DMC was held in Patna, and the GTS, the general training secretary, took most of the trainees to Ghazipur to attend the biannual VSS camp and from there to Patna to attend the DMC. I suspect that he got some special instruction from Baba, since I am not aware of that ever happening on any other occasion, either before or after. I was a young man at the time, barely twenty-two, lean and athletic, and I really enjoyed the camp. There

was plenty of sports and PT parade. I participated in everything and even came in first in the high jump.

When we arrived in Patna, we went first to the airport to receive Baba. During the DMC I got to witness an unusual incident. One acarya, Dada Apurvananda, had been married before he became a sannyasi. His wife and her family came to the DMC and they created a rather sizable disturbance. I don't think any of them were margis. They were claiming that he had been kidnapped by the organization, taken away by force from his wife and family. There was a veterinary hostel near the DMC site, and they stirred up the students with their spurious claims, nearly inciting a riot. People were shouting and trying to grab the dada, and fisticuffs broke out. I was staying nearby and an old school friend of mine from Bhagalpur was a student in that hostel; thus it all happened right in front of me. The altercation got very heated, and in the end Dada Raghunath, a family acarya, had to step in to protect that family from the ire of the margis and acaryas, including Dada Apurvananda. Dada Raghunath actually took a bit of a beating himself to protect one non-margi. The DMC program was taking place in a field near the hostel, and as I understand it, Dada had been eating in a nearby shop when he saw what was going on.

The DMC itself was very powerful. The title of Baba's talk was "Bhakti Rupa Setu," and it created an intense devotional wave. Midway through Baba's speech, one margi in the middle of the crowd jumped up and ran to the front to try and touch Baba's feet. One dada had to hold him back—I think it was also Dada Raghunath. As a new person I found this very inspiring. I felt that Baba was the nucleus and that he was drawing us all toward him. That person simply couldn't resist Baba's power of attraction.

The attending secretary during the DMC was Acarya Kshitij and there was a rule that the trainees were not to go before Baba. Baba always asked about a wholetimer's posting and since they didn't have one yet, it wasn't allowed. But I had a strong desire to see Baba personally and somehow—I don't remember quite how it happened—Kshitij gave me permission to enter Baba's room. Baba asked me how I liked the DMC and I said, "Baba, your voice

and your darshan lifted us into another sphere that only you can explain." I felt very blessed to have that opportunity. We also went to the airport to see Baba off. We made two lines and Baba passed between us and then sat and talked with us for some time in the waiting area. His wife was sitting on one side and Baba on the other.

About a month after the DMC, I finished the spiritual part of the training curriculum and sat for the exam, which was conducted by Dada Dasarath. He only asked me one question: explain the different parts of the mind. I explained about mahat, aham, and citta, and he was satisfied with my explanation. In the meantime my family had filed a kidnapping case against Ananda Marga, claiming that I was a minor and that I had been abducted by the organization against my will. I was already twenty-two by then and thus they had no legal grounds, but while the legal dispute was in process the training secretary thought it best to send me someplace where the authorities wouldn't think to look for me. Thus they sent me to the Prout office in South Extension, Part Two, C-15 to continue my training. While I was there I sent a letter to my parents. They knew I wasn't a minor, but I believe they filed the case so that they would feel that they had done all they could to get me back. Dada Shantoshananda drafted the letter for me in Hindi, and I signed it and sent it.

While I was in Delhi I had my Prout training, along with Dada Nigamananda, who was also there because his family had filed a similar case. When he finished his training he was posted as the Prout finance secretary. I was young and eager to see the society change for the better, so I found this part of the training particularly inspiring. In Baba we had not only a spiritual master but a social revolutionary who was leading the revolution from the front lines. I was thrilled to know that I was now one of his cadre.

In late July, Baba came to Delhi to give a DMC. He stayed in Mangal Bihari's house in South Extension Part Two. I was still a trainee but I got a chance to be in Baba's kitchen and cook for him. A group of ladies were taking care of the kitchen but as a trainee I had pretty much free access everywhere. Things were not so strict then. The attending secretary was Ram Tanook, and he gave me permission to enter Baba's room while Baba was eating his meal.

There were several other acaryas there as well. Baba was talking about different topics, language and so forth, and while he was eating I got the desire to cook something for him. Later I went into the kitchen and helped fry some puris. Baba ate them during his next meal, thus fulfilling my desire.

Altogether I was in Delhi for about three months. Dada Dasarath came to conduct the Prout exam, and then I was sent to Allahabad to finish my training. We didn't have a training center in Allahabad but they opened a temporary center for myself and one other trainee whose parents had also filed a legal case. He had been a medical student and his parents had sufficient resources to pursue the case. This training center was for so-called "risky" workers, those who were in some sort of legal predicament.

I did my SPT (sadhana piitha training) in Allahabad. It was a cleansing experience, a way to purify one's thought processes. We were given one lungota, one dhoti, and a clay pot that served as a begging bowl and a pot for drinking and cooking, and each day we would go out to beg barefoot for food in different locales—uncooked food, like rice or dal or flour or vegetables—each in different directions. The first day I went to a village outside of town. I stopped at some houses there but I didn't receive anything. What I did get were comments, such as "he is a young healthy boy who can very easily earn his keep; why is he begging?" I understood that this was also part of the training. I then went to a part of the town but again came up empty, so when I got back to the training center they gave me some flour and I was able to cook some chapatis. The second day I went to a different part of town and again came away empty handed. At one place they asked me why I was begging. The rule was that if you spoke then you couldn't take anything from that house. The only words we were allowed to speak while begging were hari om tat sat, "God is truth." So I explained why I was begging but I couldn't accept anything. On the third day I decided to cross the Ganges and visit the villages on the other side. It was a very long walk. I got a number of comments there. "Oh, he is very young. If he gets married he will very easily give his wife a child." That sort of thing. After that, however, I started getting some food. SPT lasted

seven days and I really enjoyed the experience. I had no adverse reaction at all. If someone made a comment I would take second lesson and see it all as God's play. I spent a good part of each day walking around, going to different places and remaining in silence. It was a fun way to pass the time. Then at the end of the day we would come back and cook our food. That gave me a special kind of satisfaction.

I finished my training in November and became an acarya. Dada Dasarath came to Allahabad to conduct the final exam, after which I copied out the acarya diary. Then I was sent back to Delhi where I remained in the office to await my posting order.

Just after I arrived in Delhi, Baba came there to hold a DMC. I had a chance to go to the airport to receive him and again to see him off. While he was leaving for the airport, the workers and margis lined up in front of his room in two lines and Baba passed through us on his way to the car. Since I did not have a posting yet, I had to keep my distance from Baba during the DMC, and the fact that I had not had a chance to meet him personally had made me very emotional. As Baba passed through the line, he walked right by me but he didn't even give me a glance. I was very pained by this. The thought came in my mind that I had dedicated my life to his mission for the sole reason that I wanted to be near him, and not only had I not been able to meet him, he had not even looked at me. All of a sudden Baba stopped and walked back to where I was standing. He took my hands, which were still folded at my chest, and asked me, "Are you fine?" Unable to contain myself, I broke down and started crying.

After the DMC I was posted to Simla, in the PU department. I was in Delhi for nearly two weeks after that without any further instructions, and then one day, all of a sudden, the new PU chief secretary, Dada Chandreshvarananda, showed up and told me, quite unceremoniously, that I had to leave for Simla immediately. Later I discovered Baba had roundly scolded him for not sending me to my posting, and so he had rushed to Delhi from Jamalpur to send me on my way. It didn't make much sense, since I would have to

come back in less than two weeks time for departmental training and the New Year's DMC, but I had no choice in the matter. It was something of a shock but it was part of the organizational discipline and he did pay the ticket.

Simla

I LEFT FOR SIMLA ON December 8. Having grown up on the plains, I was unprepared for the cold—this was my first time in the mountains—and it turned out to be quite a struggle at first. Nevertheless, it was a good experience.

From Delhi I took the Kalka Mail and arrived in Kalka in the morning. There I transferred to a narrow-gauge train for the ascent to Simla, not knowing at the time that it would have been faster by bus. It was a pleasant experience, gazing out the window at the mountain scenery as the train climbed at a leisurely pace. It was only when we arrived in the late afternoon that I started to give any serious thought to what I was to do next. I knew there was a dada in Simla, Dada Rudrananda, but no one in the Delhi office had his address. Nor did they have the address of any margi there. So I decided to go to a dharmasala, a traveler's lodge for pilgrims that only took a nominal fee. I hired a coolie to help me with my luggage, which included four or five blankets that I had brought for the cold, and was able to find quite a good dharmasala. I bought some food in the street, took a cold bath, did my sadhana, and the next day I started looking for Dada.

Simla was not a large city in those days, and after spending the morning wandering here and there, asking people if they had seen a sannyasi fitting Dada's description, I heard of a sannyasi who had taken a room in a local high school. Sure enough it was Dada Rudrananda. He was already an avadhuta by then while I was a new brahmacharyii. He invited me in and fed me and then we got

to talking. He explained that Simla was a difficult field to work in, and he suggested I make my headquarters in Solan, one town back on the same train line, where there was a margi with whom I could stay. Dada was the SDM circle organizer, while I had been posted as the Prout diocese comrade. In those days a state was called a province in PU, a circle in SDM, and a state in ERAWS, and the PU workers were called "comrades." I was the diocese comrade and my boss, Dada Devananda, was the provincial comrade. Nowadays they are called secretaries: diocese level secretary, provincial level secretary, area level secretary, and so on. At that time India was divided into nine regions for the purposes of ERAWS and four areas for the purposes of VSS, SDM, and Prout.

So I returned to Solan the next day and went to the house of this margi. He was in the public works department and had a two-bedroom cottage allotted to him by the government. He was married but due to some problem he and his wife were living separately, so I was able to stay in the spare bedroom. Later, my in-charge, Dada Devananda, also came and stayed there with me.

Over the next couple of weeks I got a chance to get settled and familiarize myself with the town. Then I left for the workers camp and departmental training in Ghazipur, followed by the DMC, and when I returned in January my work began in earnest.

Solan was an educational center and a good town for pracar due to its sizable student population. It had a liberal arts college, an agricultural college, and a teacher-training college. It was the second-largest town in the state of Himachal Pradesh but it was much smaller than Simla and I was able to go everywhere on foot. I had no prior experience doing pracar, but I started walking around the town and the surrounding villages and talking to people as best I could about Ananda Marga and yoga and meditation. Each district in Himachal had its local language and different dialects, but everyone spoke Hindi, so I had no language problem. I visited the different colleges and student hostels and was able to collect donations from the market, sometimes some vegetables or a little rice and dal, sometimes a little money. My first initiation was a half-Muslim, half-Hindu boy from Kashmir by the name of Kaku, who was a student in the

agricultural college. It was very unusual in those days to see mixed marriages. Gradually I started initiating more and more people, especially students. There was a women's hostel in Solan, and since there was no didi in the state I also initiated a lot of sisters. It was only in 1969 that Baba asked us to stop initiating sisters. Sometimes some of my contacts would take me to their villages for prakar. In one of those visits I initiated one brother's entire family and other relatives. That gave me great satisfaction. I felt that I was really doing something for Baba.

Not long ago, I met one of my first initiates in Solan, Puranchand, after a gap of more than thirty years. At the time of his initiation he had been working in the agricultural department in Solan. I had initiated his wife at the same time. While we were reminiscing he told me that during his personal contact with Baba, he requested Baba to please give him either mukti or moksha in this life. "Can you bear it?" Baba asked him. After that he had to undergo so many hardships, so many samskaras: physical difficulties, family problems. He passed away recently but by then his family was well established.

It was a nice life in Solan. In fact, I could say that my spiritual life really started there. There were many good places to meditate in the Himalayas. Sometimes during the day, when I had no pressing work, I would go to the forest to do my sadhana. I used to go into deep meditation almost immediately. It was such a peaceful and beautiful environment. That was probably the reason Baba posted me there. In the evening I would go to the college hostels to do prakar and give lectures. I used to meet the professors and give them Baba's books.

One of those professors was the principal of the teacher's college. He was a Kashmiri Brahmin and he had some margi relatives in Kashmir. I gave him *Human Society Part Two*. When I came back to see him a few days later, he commented that it was a very difficult book. He was a Ph.D. and he was complaining that a spiritual teacher had written such a difficult book that even he had trouble understanding it.

There was another professor, a Sanskrit professor, who was the cousin of Shyam Sundar Kaoshik, one of the Simla margis. Shyam Sundar is retired now and living in Long Island. This professor

didn't take initiation but we became friends and I gave him Ananda Sutram to read. He made the same comment, that it was very difficult to understand. We had a long discussion about the first sutra, *shivashaktatmakam brahma*. He insisted that brahma could not be defined and I tried to show that it could with the help of Baba's explanation. In the end he didn't take initiation but his father did.

From time to time I would go to Simla and Thanedar to visit the margis. In the beginning there were very few margis in Simla, just a few students, and we didn't have any place of our own, but there were many margis in Thanedar, and one rich margi family allowed us to use their house as the Ananda Marga center. Thanedar was famous for its apple orchards and they had an apple orchard and other concerns. There were three brothers in that family, all initiated by Dada Rudrananda and all active margis, and they lived together in a huge collective house with a big hall. Their kitchen always had plenty of food for guests. One of the brothers had been given Prout duty and he was very helpful to me.

The first time I went to Thanedar, Dada Rudrananda had organized a seminar for the margis in that house. This was early March and there were some thirty margis attending the seminar. As soon as I arrived, Dada asked me to give a class on Prout. There was no warning, none at all, but I couldn't say no in front of the margis. It was the first time I had ever spoken on Prout and I had a complex about it. I didn't know what to talk about. I had given lectures in Solan but they were all spiritual talks, *pracar*. Anyhow it went off okay. At least the margis seemed to like it. By then my boss, Dada Devananda, had been transferred to Kerala and I had been given his post of provincial comrade. That had been in late January or early February and it was most likely why Dada had asked me to give the class. I was still a brahmacharyii at that point and in those days the PU brahmacharyiis wore civil dress—white shirt and white pants, never a dhoti.

During the seminar we got the news that five acaryas had been killed in Anandanagar on the fifth of March. It was a big shock. Two margis from Thanedar decided to go to Ranchi to find out exactly what had happened. Dada also went with them. They were

rich margis and paid for him to accompany them by plane. Baba had been taken to Ranchi after the incident, and so they caught a flight to Ranchi to get the news firsthand. I remained there in that house until Dada returned a few days later. When he arrived back he made a comment: organization *to hil gaya hai*. "The organization has been shaken." I didn't like it. I felt that he was implying that the situation had gotten out of Baba's control. Perhaps it was true in the worldly sense, but spiritually I couldn't adjust with his comment. My whole reason for becoming a wholotimer was to be closer to Baba, and thus I couldn't stomach the insinuation. But I was a junior worker so I didn't say anything.

Not long after this Dada rented a house in Simla with the help of the Thanedar margis and that became our jagriti. He started holding DC there, and from time to time I would visit and then continue on to Thanedar. We both had initiates in Simla, mostly students. In those days we used to do dharmachakra in a circle. There was no fixed format at that time; people would do DC differently in different places, but most commonly people did it in a circle. We would sing some songs, if someone was willing to lead, and then we would meditate. There was one brother from Thanedar, Surendra, who was staying in Simla. He was a regular at DC, and he was also a regular in occult symptoms. He would sit in padmasana during meditation, and as soon as the DC began his occult symptoms would start. After a few seconds he would be in the middle of the circle, rolling in circles of his own, still in lotus posture with his eyes closed, his hands locked in his lap, and making loud "Baba, Baba, Baba" sounds. This happened almost every DC and he wasn't faking. It was genuine. Baba explains these occult symptoms in one of his books. On one occasion one of my initiates, a college student by the name of Prem Kumar, got so scared that he passed urine while doing sadhana in DC. On another occasion, an initiate of Rudrananda came up to me after DC and asked me what was going on. I could see the fright in his face and not surprisingly he never came back.

Avadhuta Initiation

THE 1967 ANANDA PURNIMA DMC was held at Allahabad on May 28. By then I had been in Himachal Pradesh for nearly six months. Before the DMC, we had the summer VSS camp and departmental classes. I still didn't know much about Ananda Marga philosophy, and thus the camp and the departmental classes were very important for me. I had Baba's books of course, but most of what I learned in subsequent years came through camps and departmental classes and seminars. I was very particular in taking notes, not only noting down the material but also carefully observing and noting down how the senior workers gave their lectures. It was in those classes that I learned what to speak and how to speak. I was young in those days and it was fun being there. It was like a mela, a fair, going here and there, so many interesting activities and wonderful satsang. In the field there were always difficulties, but then you came to the camp and the DMC to be with your brother monks and you really enjoyed.

Of course, even in those days there were politics. Dada Satyananda was the commander-in-chief in the VSS camp. He introduced a policy during the camp that each cadet would come in front of the group and confess their wrongdoings and promise that they would not do it again. It was a form of collective self-analysis for purification. A few dadas complained, but I found it to be very positive, and by and large I really enjoyed myself.

The DMC, as always, was very inspiring—Baba's talk was entitled "Mantra Caetanya"—and during the program, Dada Sarvatmananda,

who was the PU chief secretary at that time, approached me and asked me to give him my application to become an avadhuta. "Do I deserve it?" I asked. His reply was very laconic: "Just submit the application." So I went to Dada Madhavananda, who was the dharma pracar secretary. He asked some questions and helped me to complete the formalities, gathering the required signatures and so on. Baba approved eighteen candidates, myself among them. It was the biggest group of avadhutas to take initiation up until then. Baba called us into his room where we took the kapalik oath and touched his feet, one by one. Then he explained the process of kapalik meditation. Baba gave us permission to ask questions while he was explaining the process. One dada raised his hand but before he could speak Baba said, "Why are you asking such a foolish question?" Baba knew the question before he even opened his mouth. It wasn't a justifiable question so he put his hand back down. No one else asked anything, and everything Baba explained was very clear and precise. I still remember every detail of his explanation, nearly word for word. Afterward Baba told us that kapalik sadhana would help us to control the asthapasha, the eight fetters, and thus to attain realization. He especially mentioned three fetters—fear, hatred, and shyness—and said that this meditation would help us to control them very quickly. Then we did sastaung pranam and left the room. This was right before the DMC.

Later in one avadhuta meeting, Baba said that if you do kalpalik sadhana you will progress in your sadhana, and as you progress you will have a very sweet feeling and a tingling sensation in your heart; that feeling in the anahata chakra is a sign of your connection with the Supreme. This is true. I have felt it. He also added that you will hear a certain sound in the anahata chakra. Not an external sound, an internal sound. It is like the sound of a motorcycle humming inside your anahata. When you hear it you will enjoy the proximity of Parama Purusha.

I was very eager after that for the midnight hour to come, when we would do our first kapalik meditation. Just after midnight one senior dada led us to the banks of the Ganges in Allahabad, a deserted area with a huge sandy bank. It was summer, and so the rainy season had

not yet begun; thus everything was dry. It was cool also at that hour. We spread out and did our sadhana. I was still hesitant, wondering if I were really qualified to be an avadhuta, but I was very inspired by the sadhana. I felt that Baba was preparing us to work for humanity.

The next morning we took the avadhuta oath. Now that we had done our first kapalik sadhana, we were able to put on the full orange dress. Baba was very busy with the DMC, so we put on our dress and took the oath in front of Baba's picture. One senior dada was there to guide us. Afterward we went to Baba's room and got his blessing, and he spoke some inspiring words. One thing he said I remember to this day: he said that every time you go before the guru the first thing you should do is sastaung pranam. Every morning during the DMC program, I had the chance to go to Baba's room under the pretext that I was going there to do sastaung pranam. The other new avadhutas were also doing the same at different times. I also went in at other times to listen to Baba's talks. By this time my cousin, Vishokananda, had become Baba's PA, his personal assistant, but he wasn't showing me any special favor. Baba was free much of the time during that particular program and his door remained open. It was his special grace. Baba was very relaxed, and much of the time there was no one in his room, so I would go when there was no important organizational work and I knew he wouldn't be otherwise engaged.

The next two nights we again went to the Ganges for kapalik and in this way we completed the compulsory three nights.

After the DMC I went to the airport with everyone else to see Baba off. While Baba was sitting in the waiting area with the margis, someone offered him a glass of juice in a metal glass. Baba said that juice should not be served in a metal glass. It should be served either in a regular glass or a gold glass. That way no acidic reaction would take place. These were the little day-to-day teachings that Baba used to give us.

Baba's wife was also there but she was on one side of the group and Baba on the other. One margi asked Baba why they didn't sit together so the margis could look at them both. "God has given you two eyes," Baba told him. I think Baba didn't like the question.

Back in Himachal

WHEN I GOT BACK to Himachal Pradesh after the DMC, I really enjoyed doing my kapalik sadhana. I would do it at least two or three times a month, unless it was too cold. There were many beautiful places to do kapalik in the mountains, and I used to be very particular about finding a good spot. I remember that in January of 1968 I was in Bilaspur, and I and Dada Vandanananda went to Gobinda Sagar, the huge reservoir formed by the Bhakra Dam, to do our kapalik sadhana. It was a terrifying place at night in some people's eyes, lonely and foreboding, which made it perfect for doing kapalik. On top of that it was raining, which made it even more lonely and foreboding. We went to different parts of the lake to do our sadhana and then returned to the rented jagriti that we had in those days. The next day we had some visitors, a group of ten or so. One of the visitors commented, "Swamijii, why do I feel that light is streaming from your face? Why is your face shining so?"

I said, "It is not my light. It is the reflection of the guru that you are seeing." I was young and the sadhana was very inspiring, so I think he caught a glimpse of that inspiration in my face.

Nineteen-sixty-seven was an election year, so the PU department was especially active. Since I was the PU provincial level organizer for Himachal Pradesh, I was given the task of finding some margi candidates to contest the general election under the PBI platform, Proutist Bloc of India. I tried my level best but Ananda Marga was still very small in North India at the time and no margi candidate was willing to come forward. I wrote to headquarters to explain my

difficulties and they wrote back that I should keep trying, but in the end I was unable to find anyone. Some years later, when the Samaj movement began,* two of my initiates from those days contested the election on the Pahari Samaj platform.

Another of my duties during that time was to raise the consciousness of the Himachal people through the Kajahil movement. At that time there was one politician in Kashmir who made an alliance with a sheik who later became chief minister of Kashmir. They wanted more power for Kashmir but Baba didn't like that. To counter that regressive movement, Baba launched the Kajahil movement. The word was taken from the first letter of the four mountain states: Kashmir, Jammu, Himachal, and Ladakh. The goal of the movement was to merge those four mountain states into one. Acharya Sujit Kumar was leading the movement and you can find details of it in his memoirs. I was a new worker but I remember the movement and all the efforts we made to raise the social consciousness of the people from those mountain regions.

In one of Baba's books, Discourses on the Mahabharata, Baba mentioned that the guiding principle during Krishna's time was dharma. "The guiding factor behind the creation of the Mahabharata was dharma — the creation of a great human society in which there would be peace, happiness, fraternity and no poverty." He wanted to establish dharma in human life, and while people talk about Arjuna's bow, Gandhiva, being the greatest weapon of that age, the truth is that the greatest weapon during the mahabharata was dharma. Krishna was the manifestation of Taraka Brahma, as was Anandamurti. If dharma was the guiding principle of Krishna's mission then what was Baba's guiding principle? It was samgacchadvam, to create a society in which we are all moving together toward the Supreme. We are all the progeny of the Supreme Progenitor, and so we must create a social structure that allows us to move collectively toward that supreme goal. This is the guiding principle of Prout, and it is Prout that sets Ananda Marga apart from all other spiritual movements that have come before it. I felt that way even before I became a worker,

* The Samaj movement in Prout advocates the establishment of self-sufficient socio-economic units.

but once I was posted to Prout and working to materialize Baba's mission, I felt blessed to be in that position, fulfilling Baba's wish. In every General Darshan or workers meeting, Baba would add a few sentences to inspire us to work vigorously to change the society, and that was something I felt each and every day as I carried Baba's message to the people.

In late October Baba, came to Himachal Pradesh to conduct a DMC in the town of Nahan, about ninety kilometers from Chandigarh. Nahan had been the capital of the princely state of Sirmaur, and the program was held in the royal palace. The manager of the palace, which was unoccupied, was a strong margi. He secured the venue and organized Baba's stay. Mr. Panth was close to sixty then, and he went to great trouble to decorate the palace and have everything to Baba's liking.

Baba arrived from Meerut along with his wife and child, Uma Sarkar and Gautam, and we were there at the palace to receive him. One of the General Darshans was on the growth of different cells and the biology of the human structure, and how this knowledge can help in sadhana. It was a very important talk but the cassette was lost and I never saw it printed anywhere. Baba sat on the maharaj's throne for the DMC and gave a talk on the conversion of physical energy into psychic energy, and psychic energy into spiritual, but that talk was lost as well. About five hundred margis from the surrounding areas attended the program.

During the program I went to Baba's room regularly to do sastaung pranam. One morning Dada Mahadevananda, who was working in Jammu & Kashmir, was in the room. Baba asked him if he knew his past life. When he said he didn't, Baba started narrating incidents from that life. He had been a philanthropically minded pundit by the name of Ramchandra Shukla who had had a strong desire to do something for society. After his marriage that desire went unfulfilled, and due to that unfulfilled desire he had become a wholetimer in this life.

There was also a revolutionary marriage during the DMC, a Muslim girl and a Hindu boy, both from Jammu. Raghuvir Prasad

and other dignitaries came to witness the marriage, and Baba gave the couple his blessing.

Nahan is the district headquarters of Sirmaur District. This district has its own local language, Sirmauri, and that language had its own script but that script had been forgotten by the local inhabitants. Since I was a PU worker, Baba gave me the special duty to revive that language and track down its script. There was one margi politician in that area, Mr. Joshi, who had many connections. I enlisted his help, and he was able to find an old pundit who knew both the language and the script. I asked him to write down the alphabet in that script and I took it to Baba. He was very happy to see it. He asked me to make efforts to revive the Sirmauri language and to start a paper in that language. The language was spoken in the villages in that area but it had no literature and the script had gone completely out of use. It was, however, a difficult assignment. Needless to say, there was no type faces available in that script, and I was unable to get the paper started. This was Baba's second visit to Himachal Pradesh, the second of four visits, and the first and last time he visited Nahan. While he was there he conducted reporting for the whole state.

There is another district in Himachal called Kinnaur. Dada Asiimananda was born there, near Mount Kailash and the Tibetan border. Kinnaur also has its own language and script, and Baba also asked me to find examples of the script and do what I could to revive that language. I wasn't able to do much at this time, but later, in the spring of 1968, I went there with Dada Vandanananda for a special service project called Paincaseva. Paincaseva means "five types of service"—food and clothes distribution, and so on. We were given the task of covering all twelve districts in Himachal Pradesh. At that time Dada Vandanananda was working as circle organizer for SDM. Dada Rudrananda had been reposted to Jammu. We formed a team of three workers, the two of us and Dada Ramakrsnananda, who was the school principal in Thanedar, and three margis from that town. The team was led by P. C. Stoke and we traveled in his car. He was the son of an American missionary who had come to Himachal to propagate Christianity and had married a local girl. His father was very famous in that region. He had brought apple

saplings from Washington State and was the first person to plant apples in that region. The fruit became popular through his efforts and is now a major crop in Himachal Pradesh, supplying all of India with apples. Two of his sons were initiated, Pritam Chandra Stoke and Lal Chandra Stoke. After I was reposted and left Himachal, Baba stayed in the house of Lal Chandra Stoke and held a DMC in his apple orchard.

While we were on tour, P. C. Stoke took us to Rampur, near the Satlej River. That district borders Tibet, and you have to take a special pass in Rampur to be able to enter the district. The Stoke family is very influential in those parts, and P.C. Stoke met the magistrate and got passes for us. We spent the night in a guest house near the Nathpa Jhakri Dam, and the next day we traveled to the district headquarters, Kalpa, where we did service and pracar. While we were there we contacted a retired pandit who knew the script, and I was able to bring a sample of the Kinnaur script to Baba. Today it must be in the museum alongside the copy of the Sirmaur script.

During the following year, 1968, I made numerous visits to those apple-growing areas to do pracar. It was a very interesting part of the country and an enjoyable time for me. You were a lot closer to nature than down on the plains. From time to time you would even see wild animals that had disappeared from the rest of the country. Once a friend of mine, Rup Dayal, took me to his village in the interior where his father had bought a sizable land that he turned into an apple orchard. Rup Dayal was an old margi—he had been initiated by Amitananda—and we had become friends in Simla. These days he is in Chandigarh. While we were there, one of the caretakers of the orchard started telling stories. In those days they would light fires at night to protect themselves from bears, and one night while he was in the observation tower he saw a bear approach and start fighting with the fire. It was very amusing the way he told it. Another time he was in the forest and noticed a swarm of honey bees. When he saw the hive, it was obvious that it had been carried there and he knew that a bear must have done it. Bears love honey. So he stole the hive and then hid himself to watch. Sure enough the bear came back and was looking around in vain for his hive.

After a while another bear showed up with a hive. The first bear was incensed. He must have assumed that the second bear had stolen his hive. So he attacked him, and in the fight they both rolled down the hill. Thus the caretaker got a second hive and carried them both off.

In September of that year there was a DMC in Sitamarhi, in northern Bihar, about sixty kilometers from Muzaffarpur, and we were invited. Rup Dayal and I traveled together to Simla where we planned to take a bus to Kalka so we could catch the Kalka Mail, but when we arrived at the station we had missed the last bus and so we ended up hiring a taxi. After passing through my headquarters, Solan, we were on the main road about twenty kilometers from Kalka when we came upon a large leopard sitting in the middle of the road. The taxi driver slowed to a crawl and asked us to roll up the windows. He drove just by the side of the leopard; it was quite a sight. To our surprise, the leopard just sat there tranquilly and watched us pass. Then he got up and loped down the hill. The driver told us that he had probably eaten recently and that's why he was so relaxed. It was like that in those days in Himachal. It has changed a lot since then but they still have leopards. In 2012 I went to Sarkaghat in Himachal's Mandi district to visit Sohan Lal, whom I had initiated in 1967. While I was there, a child came running up to the house to report that Sohan's dog had been snatched by a leopard. The dog was in the patio and the leopard had jumped the fence, grabbed him, and run off. The leopard population has decreased a lot, but the forest department is protecting them to maintain the ecological balance. Normally they keep to the forest, but when their food supply grows scarce they sometimes approach populated areas looking for food.

The Sitamarhi DMC turned out to be quite eventful. We had a procession at the beginning of the program, and during the procession an orthodox Hindu group, the Arya Samaj, created a disturbance, distributing anti-Ananda Marga leaflets, and they ended up physically attacking us. Some of them went to the house where Baba was staying and launched an attack. I was in the front of the house with some other workers to protect Baba, among them Nigamananda, Rudrananda, and the future Mangalananda. Mangalananda was an LFT then and very strong. At one point I had to jump a big wall in

pursuit of an attacker. After that we held a meeting and decided to cancel the DMC. Baba had given a couple of darshans by then. Baba agreed, and early in the morning we took him to Muzaffarpur where he stayed in Dada Chandranath's house and we had his darshan there.

I Get Transferred

IN DECEMBER OF THAT year I returned to Bihar for the New Year's DMC in Patna. It was during that DMC that I was transferred for the first time. It was a new thing for me, but as the years passed I noticed that whenever I started growing uneasy with my posting I would get transferred. I had been in Himachal for three years by then. It was a small state and my work there was getting saturated. The same thing happens in the government. When an officer's creativity in one region starts to run out they transfer him, and the new surroundings and new challenges inspire fresh creativity. That same spirit was at work when Baba transferred his workers, and I was eager for a new challenge. After three years in Prout, Baba transferred me to VSS, which was a surprise since I am not VSS material. So I went back to Himachal to hand over charge and at the end of January I returned to Ranchi.

It was at that time that Baba introduced the concept of wing training. Whosoever worked in one of the trades or wings, whether VSS, Prout, or SDM, would have to get training in all three. Initially I was sent to Dhruva, a suburb of Ranchi, for VSS training. While I was there I held a DC and seminar with the margis and gave several public lectures, all in the space of one week, doing the same prakar I was used to doing. Then I was called back to Ranchi for ERAWS training. After seven days training, Baba called all the avadhutas to his room for a review of their conduct rules. It was like a mini-Dharma Samiiksa. All the workers who were in Ranchi at that time attended, and Baba asked each of us, one by one, if we

had committed any mistakes in our life. And whatever mistakes we didn't mention, he pointed them out in front of the group. When my turn came, I said that I had a lot of impure thoughts. Baba ignored that. He said, "No, you are lazy. You should remove your inferiority complex and activate your life." When I asked him how I could do that, he said that I should do more sadhana, especially sixth lesson. He punished several dadas during that session but he didn't punish me.

Later during the training, Baba once again called all the avadhutas to his room. It was a winter evening and all the doors and windows were shut. He asked us to sit in siddhasana and do sadhana, first bhuta shuddhi, then asana shuddhi, and finally citta shuddhi.* After completing citta shuddhi, he told us to remain at our ista chakra and continue doing sadhana. Then he said, "After some time those who are regularly doing sadhana four times a day will begin to hear the omkara."† After a few minutes silence, Baba asked those who were hearing the omkara to raise their hands. I was one of the ones who raised their hand. It is very difficult to put that experience into words. It was so sweet, so blissful, listening to that universal sound, the sound of om. Impossible to describe.

After the conduct-rules review, I was posted to Bombay Region as the circle organizer of SDM and given some SDM training. This was February 1969. A circle in SDM and VSS was equivalent to a region in ERAWS. It was a good posting, since SDM in those days was principally concerned with doing pracar. My headquarters was in Bombay but I traveled around the region during the month that I was there, visiting different units. In Nagpur I met the future Kalyaneshvarananda. He was an engineer in the engineering department. His brother Shyam Bang, who was a student at that time, was staying with him. Kalyaneshvarananda took me to different places for pracar, including his native place, Amravati, where he had donated land for a jagriti—there were some good margis there and I did several

* The three stages of the withdrawal process for the first lesson of Ananda Marga meditation.

† The omkara, or the sound of om, is the sonic expression of Supreme Consciousness, the primordial sound of the creation. It is heard by yogis in deep meditation as they approached Divine Consciousness.

initiations—and also to Akola, where I met Dr. Vidya Jain and her brother, whose wife was also a doctor. Kalyaneshvarananda took me to a friend's house near Akola where I gave a lecture. Afterward he commented that it was one of the best lectures he had ever heard. I had simply spoken whatever Baba put into my mind. I also initiated some students there. While one of them was doing sadhana after the initiation I asked him to stop. "I was just about to open my eyes when you told me to stop," he said, looking very impressed. "How did you know that?" Baba had just put it into my mind to tell him. Kalyaneshvarananda is still in touch with that brother.

All in all, I quite enjoyed working for SDM, but when I came back to Bombay in March there was a telegram waiting for me, calling me back to Ranchi. There I was given ten days ERAWS training and posted to Hyderabad as the school principal and diocese secretary. This was my first ERAWS posting, so the training was designed to teach me the basic skills I would need. I had to copy down the diocese secretary guidebook and the district secretary guidebook, which included a detailed job description and the various protocols I would need to follow. It was at that time that Baba introduced the system that whoever copied down the guidebooks would have to sit for an exam. On this occasion Baba himself was the examiner—for the first and last time. His questions were all practical—how to start a school, how to do paincaseva, what to do and what not to do in the field—and he was satisfied with my answers.

After the training I left for Hyderabad. It was a difficult field for me but I enjoyed the challenge. We had a school and a children's home in the same building, and sometimes I had to walk as much as ten kilometers at a time to raise funds to keep the project going, since the school fees were not sufficient. I had to pay the rent on the school building, pay the teachers, collect food for the children in the home. Fortunately there was one senior margi there who was a great help, Ram Chandra Reddy. He was retired, the former chief engineer of the state, and a very well known and highly respected individual. I had met him in Ranchi while I was doing my ERAWS training, after Baba did a demonstration on him. In the demonstration Baba asked one dada to sit in padmasana and meditate. While he was

concentrated in meditation, Baba asked him to go back 150 years and see Ram Chandra's previous life. He described a big paddy field and a well-dressed man who was standing there. "Yes," said Baba, "that was Ram Chandra Reddy in his previous life. He was a local king in Bali." Then Baba asked Ram Chandra to translate what he had said into Telegu, since Ram Chandra's wife did not speak any other language.

Ram Chandra was a great moralist and that was the secret of his enormous popularity in that area. He told me that as the president of the Ananda Marga school board he had inspected the finances of the school when it was under the supervision of a previous dada and found a discrepancy, and because he was the inspector he had felt responsible. For that reason he decided never to inspect the school again. Ram Chandra agreed to pay the rent of the school building and I was responsible for the rest. He would give me letters of introduction addressed to the different village heads, and with those letters I would go for collection, mostly rice. Sometimes I would go by foot, sometimes by bike, occasionally by bus. Often they would ask me to come back the next day or the next week, so there was quite a lot of running around. He also gave me letters for the owners of the various rice mills, and I would collect from them as well. I also made friends with an income tax officer and he also helped me to raise funds through his contacts. He was a non-margi but he was a saintly man.

Eventually Ram Chandra found some land for the school and decided that we should construct our own building. He asked me to raise some funds and he would see to the construction. I got the idea to organize a film matinee as a fundraiser. One relative of Dada Karunananda owned a film hall in Hyderabad. He wasn't a margi but he was sympathetic to our cause. He agreed to lend me the hall free of charge, outside of its regular business hours, and he helped to get the films and the projectionist. I sold the tickets. It was an odd hour, Sunday from 10 to 1, but it was the best available time slot. I wasn't sure who would come at that hour, but I did my level best to publicize the event, using my references to contact income tax officers, chartered accountants, lawyers, and other professionals,

requesting their support on behalf of the school. The program ended being an unmitigated success. I was able to raise five thousand rupees, which was a lot of money back then. I handed the money over to Ram Chandra, and with those funds he was able to complete the construction.

During that time the Telangana people were agitating for a separate state, and there were a lot of strikes and demonstrations. Once I went to Secunderabad for collection, about fifteen kilometers from Hyderabad, and a general strike went into effect while I was there. As a result there were no buses returning to Hyderabad and I had to walk back. That sort of thing happened to me a number of times. Sometimes, if I couldn't make it all the way back to the school, I would stay at Ram Chandra Reddy's house in town. He kept a room for me by the stairs in case I needed to spend the night. Those separatist efforts finally bore fruit in 2014—forty-five years later—and Hyderabad became the capital of the new state of Telangana.

As soon as the construction was complete, I moved the school and the home to the new land, which was in the suburbs, a little distance from the city. The school is still running but nowadays that area has become urbanized. There was a graveyard very close to the land, and for one month after I moved there I did kapalik sadhana in that graveyard every night. It was a wonderful environment, but I didn't get to enjoy my new surroundings for long. After one month in our new property I was again reposted.

Demonstration Year

NINETEEN SIXTY-NINE WAS SADHANA year. Sometimes we called it demonstration year, because that year Baba did demonstrations virtually every day. One day he called an old school buddy of mine, Vijay, to the front of the room. Vijay's father worked in the agricultural college near Bhagalpur, and we had studied together in the same school. Later he migrated to California. Baba asked him to sit and meditate. Then Baba started commanding the vayus to exit the body, one by one. "Prana vayu, leave the body, saman vayu, leave the body." When he came to dhainanjaya vayu, he said, "dhainanjaya vayu will remain. If I take out this vayu, then the body will disintegrate." After he removed the last vayu, Vijay fell over. There was a doctor in the room. Baba asked him to examine Vijay, and he pronounced him dead. Baba then explained the science of the vayus. Once he was done he returned the vayus to Vijay's body, one by one. Vijay was still prostrate on the ground. Baba asked someone to massage him. Then we saw him begin to breathe. He moved a little and finally he opened his eyes.

On another occasion, Baba sent the mind of Dada Turiiyananda to the Himalayas. He did many demonstrations on this dada. Baba asked him to sit in meditation and then directed his mind to the Himalayas. He guided him to one particular cave in the mountains and asked him to enter that cave and describe the person who was sitting inside. He described a yogi with a long beard and hair and simple clothes. "Do you recognize him?"

“Yes, Baba, he is Subhash Chandra Bose.” He is very old but I recognize him.”

“Yes, he is in deep meditation and very close to realization. Ask him if he wants to come back to the world.”

“He says no. He says his work is done and he is happy where he is.”

Then Baba brought Dada Turiiyananda back to his normal state of consciousness.

I saw similar demonstrations showing Subhash on two or three other occasions. Though he was Bengali, Subhash was a hero to the general public in Bihar and other parts of India. He was a big hero to me and my friends during my student days, though there was very little written about him in the history books. We would listen to stories about him from our relatives and friends. Of course he was also the subject of controversy in some circles, but not among the margis. Independence was still fresh in our minds, and the margis held him in great reverence.

Once a brother came to Ranchi from Uttar Pradesh. He was very sickly and Baba called him up to the front. Baba had one dada meditate and then look inside his body. He saw a black spot in his intestines and Baba explained that he had an ulcer. Baba then took his stick and reached out and touched this brother’s navel with the stick. “Now look again,” Baba said. The dada looked again and saw that most of the darkness had disappeared. “Two thirds of the disease is gone,” Baba said. “Do sadhana and asanas regularly, and by the grace of Parama Purusha you will be completely cured.”

Ananda Purnima DMC was held in Ranchi at the end of May. During one darshan Baba recited a shloka from the Gita: *daevii hyeśá guñamayii mama máyá duratyayá; mámeva ye prapadyante máyámetám taranti te*. Then he explained the meaning: “This is the maya of Parama Purusha. It is insurmountable, except through his grace.” Then Baba asked Dada Prankrishnananda to stand—the previous Prankrishnananda, not the American who came a little later. That dada was a good friend of mine. While he was standing, Baba asked him to close his eyes and do his dhyana lesson. Baba

* Subhash Chandra Bose was an important figure in the struggle for Indian independence and the founder of the Indian National Army, which fought against the British.

struck his two index fingers together, like he was lighting a fire, and Prankrishnananda fell down. It was as if Baba had cut a banana tree and it had fallen over. "Don't touch him," Baba said. "I have removed maya from his mind. Let him enjoy the bliss. After two or three hours he will open his eyes. When he does give him some hot milk and he will be all right."

Shortly after that DMC, Baba went to Netarhat for ten day's rest. Afterward he gave some senior acharya classes during which he told us that he had invented a new type of meditation in which one could take the mind out of the body, bring it to a spiritually charged place or a lonely place, and do meditation there whenever one wanted. While using that technique one had to make sure that their body was in a safe place where it wouldn't be disturbed, so that one could return to it without any difficulties. Then Baba called Dada Turiyananda to the front and asked him to meditate. He had him take his mind to the Himalayas and again he showed him Subhash. Then he asked him to go to a particular cave and meditate there. After five minutes Baba asked him to come back and tell him how his meditation had been. "You were enjoying, were you not?" Baba said.

"Yes, Baba, I didn't want to come back."

We asked Baba how to do this meditation, but he said that he would teach it later on, when he got time. He may have taught somebody. I have heard that Virendra Kumar Asthana, a senior disciple, learned the technique.

In one avadhuta meeting Baba asked that same dada to close his eyes and meditate. "What do you see?" Baba asked him. "Where are you sitting?"

"Baba, I see that I am sitting on your lap."

"Where are all the avadhutas sitting?"

"They are all sitting on your lap."

"Can you see the universe?"

"Yes, Baba, the whole universe is sitting on your lap."

In another demonstration, also in an avadhuta meeting, Baba called one dada and asked him to meditate in each chakra, one by one. "What are you seeing?" he asked.

"Baba, I am seeing you in varabhaya mudra in each chakra."

“Now go to each particle of your body and tell me what you are seeing.”

“Baba, I am seeing you in varabhaya mudra.”

“Now go to the universe and describe what you are seeing.”

“I am seeing Baba in varabhaya mudra, the same Supreme Consciousness in the form of varabhaya mudra.”

“Yes, only I exist, none else.”

And in yet another, almost identical, demonstration, one dada saw the entire universe resting in Baba's lap. Not in his whole lap but in a tiny part of his lap.

Vishesh Yoga

THE SCHOOL CONSTRUCTION FINISHED in April or May of 1970, and thereafter I moved everything into the new building. By then school had let out for the summer and it was time to prepare for the camps and the Ananda Purnima DMC. The ERAWS camp was held in Laheriasarai in early May. During the camp there was a bit of controversy. The ERAWS secretary at the time was Dada Siddhananda. He had mishandled one worker, and some senior dasas didn't like it, so they drew up a complaint against him and passed it around to different workers for their signatures with the intention of forwarding it to Baba. I was aware of his misbehavior and so I also signed the petition, not thinking much of it at the time. After the ERAWS camp I attended the VSS camp in Motihari, where most of the workers, including me, came down with stomach problems due to arsenic in the water. In the middle of the camp a message arrived ordering me to report to Ranchi. I was still feeling under the weather but I caught a bus for Ranchi and in the morning I reported to Baba in his room. The general secretary was there and several other central dasas, including Dada Pranavananda, the office secretary. Without any explanation, Baba started personally giving me punishment. I had no idea why but I didn't say anything, knowing that if he was giving me punishment there had to be a good reason. As soon as he finished punishing me, he announced that he had decided to give me a regional posting: REI, regional education in-charge, for Bombay and Jaipur regions. It was a mystery: first the punishment, then the promotion. Then

he added, "And I give you verbal permission to learn vishesh yoga. Go out now and write your application."

I hadn't requested vishesh yoga or even given it any serious thought. I had only been a worker for four years at that point. But that was Baba's grace. Dada Pranavananda went out of Baba's room with me and dictated the application. Then I went into the next room where Vishokananda taught me the first lesson of vishesh.

The DMC that May was in Muzaffarpur. Baba was due to leave for Muzaffarpur in a day or two. Before he left he called me and gave me a special duty. Some new workers would be traveling to the DMC in the publications jeep, along with some boxes of publications to be sold in the DMC, and he wanted me to look after those new workers. Then he wrote down for me on a piece of paper detailed directions how to get to Muzaffarpur from Ranchi by road. I was very moved by how lovingly he took care to see that I wouldn't have any difficulty with the task he had assigned me.

There were four or five of us in the publications jeep, including the assistant publications secretary and the new dadas, plus the boxes of books. Vikash was the driver. He was an Australian WT who had some knowledge of mechanics. We left before Baba, who was also traveling by car, so that we could be there when he arrived. Along the way we had some problems with the jeep and we were forced to stop at a petrol pump in Hazaribag. Vikash did his best to locate the problem, but all he knew for sure was that the gas was having trouble getting to the carburetor, perhaps due to some leak in the gas line. While he was looking at the engine, Baba's car pulled into the petrol station to fill up with gas. Baba called me to the window and asked me what the problem was. When I told him, he advised us to fill the tank and drive very slowly the rest of the way. Actually we had been driving rather fast to see if we could get there before Baba, who had an imported car that was much faster than our jeep. So we left Hazaribag behind Baba, whose car soon disappeared from sight. We drove slowly, as Baba had advised, stopping at towns along the way to monitor the situation and add petrol, and we managed to reach Muzaffarpur after several hours. As soon as we arrived, Baba called me to his room and asked me how the trip had

gone. I told him that by his grace and thanks to his advice we had reach Muzaffarpur without any further problems. Later I came to know that Baba had inquired at regular intervals whether or not we had arrived, asking for reports on us just like an anxious guardian waiting for the arrival of his children. That was typical of Baba. He was overseeing each and every aspect of his mission, right down to advising me on the best route for us to take.

The Muzaffarpur DMC was very blissful. Even though we arrived a little late, we didn't miss any darshans. As usual, on the day of the DMC, Baba presided over the biannual avadhuta meeting. During this particular meeting, he dealt with the protest letter that had been written against the central ERAWS secretary. "I don't recognize this protest letter," he said. "If it had been written and forwarded by an individual I could have accepted the complaint, but this is a collective letter signed by a number of workers, and in a missionary organization trade unions are not accepted. So I don't accept it. GS, who are the workers who are responsible for this letter? Call them to the front."

I had signed the letter and Siddhananda knew that, but I had signed it in such a way that it was difficult to make out the signature. At that time there was both a Nityashuddhananda and a Nityasundarananda and from the signature they couldn't decipher which one it was. Then Siddhananda told Baba that it was Nityashuddhananda. Baba immediately got angry with him. "He is a simple boy and I already punished him in Ranchi. Why are you bringing an unnecessary complaint against your own worker?" Then Baba punished Siddhananda for making an inappropriate accusation. It was only then that I discovered why Baba had punished me in Ranchi.

After that the avadhuta meeting began. Baba distributed sweets at the end, as he usually did, but before that he asked everyone to stand up and sing and dance however they wished. I had never seen that before. It was a wild dance, nothing systematic about it. The dasas were jumping around the hall, crying out "Baba, Baba, Baba, Baba," giving free reign to their emotions. I was astonished. How could we act this way in front of Baba? But since everybody was doing it, I also got caught up in the flow, jumping and dancing

and shouting Baba's name. A few months later, on 8 October, Baba would give Baba Nam Kevalam kiirtana. Looking back I think he was preparing our minds for that important event.

I should mention here that the different workers meetings were an important part of my organizational life. Twice a year the different boards would meet together during the time of DMC: the tattvika board, acharya board, avadhuta board, and purodha board. Baba was the purodha pramukha, and it was the duty of the purodha pramukha to chair those meetings, so most of all it was a time for the workers to be together with Baba. Many memorable events took place during those meetings. I remember that during one avadhuta meeting Baba asked a dada to explain the RU speech he had given the previous night. When this dada couldn't explain it, Baba asked Amitananda to do so. Amitananda, who was the rector master at Anandanagar, had a photographic memory. He gave a beautiful explanation of Baba's talk, right down to the smallest details. Baba was so happy he took a pen from his pocket, gave it to Amitananda, and said, "I now declare you tattvik of the year." Then Satyananda made some comment that I couldn't quite catch. "Listen," Baba told him, "I am not only purodha pramukha, I am also marga guru, and as marga guru I am supreme." I took it to mean that purodha pramukha is a post and thus under a certain bondage.

Anyhow, the board meetings all functioned in more or less the same way. Twice a year, during the New Year's and Ananda Purnima DMCs, the general body of the respective board would meet. Take the case of the avadhuta board. Twice a year all the avadhutas present at the DMC program would meet together as the general body of avadhutas. Baba was not an avadhuta, but since he was the purodha pramukha, he would preside over the meeting. First everyone would gather and then Baba would enter. Occasionally someone would sneak in late, and from time to time one or another avadhuta would purposely miss the meeting. Sometimes Baba would remark on their absence: "Where is so-and-so? Oh, he didn't come because he knows I will punish him." When Baba arrived, everyone would do sastaung pranam and the meeting would start. The first order of business was

the reading of the six-month report. This would include the names of the new avadhutas created in that period, the names of the members of the central avadhuta board, whatever work the avadhuta board had done during this time, any resolutions it had taken, what the board stood for, and what plans it had for the next six months. There would also be some mention of what the avadhuta represented, his mission in life. The reading of the report reinforced the spirit of the avadhuta commitment for everyone present and fostered a sense of resolve as to what they would do in the future. Generally Baba would listen to the report without comment, but if there was any mistake or anything missing then he would say something.

Once the report was read, Baba would ask a couple of dadas to speak about the concept of the avadhuta and their duties, usually one junior dada and one senior. Then he would ask us to do sadhana, and after sadhana he would give a talk and do some demonstrations. Then we would sing and dance—Kaosikii, Tandava, Madhura Sadhana—and after the singing and dancing he would again ask us to sit and do sadhana and then guru puja. After the guru puja he would leave. Later, when his health became poor, he would leave before sadhana, after his speech. Madhura Sadhana was only in the avadhuta meetings, not in the tattvik, acharya, or purodha meetings.

Seminar Year

AFTER THE MAY DMC, I went back to Hyderabad to hand over the charge and then proceeded to Kolapur in Bombay region to conduct the next scheduled seminar. Earlier Baba had declared 1970 to be seminar year, and as ERAWS in-charge one of my main duties was to conduct the regional level seminars in both regions.

The seminar system had actually started the previous September, when it was called the introductory seminar system. In August of 1969 Baba had gone to Cooch Bihar in North Bengal for a DMC, and during that DMC there was a confrontation with the CPM, Communist Party-Marxist. In that confrontation one margi, Ravi Sarkar, was killed, and afterward Baba was arrested. He was released after one or two days and was brought to Calcutta. Satyananda also went to Calcutta to meet Baba. He had been in Patna when he heard of the incident, and instead of leaving immediately for Cooch Bihar, which he wanted to do, he followed organizational protocol and tried to get permission from the general secretary, whom he couldn't find. When he told this to Baba, Baba said, "What! Your guru is in danger and you will wait for GS to sign your tour program!" It was a good lesson for us all. The guru comes first, before all things.

From Calcutta, Baba went to Patna and then returned to Ranchi. That's when he introduced the seminar system. He said, "Devotion with intellectual orientation is important. If there is only devotion it may lead to an intellectual crisis. If there is only intellectual development without devotion, then an intellectual crisis may also arise. Thus there should be a happy blending of intellect and devotion, and

for that I want to introduce the seminar system, so that my disciples will understand the philosophy and stand for the ideology. The guru was in danger and still they were thinking what to do. So the devotional concept that the guru is everything must be made clear.”

Baba decided with the introduction of the seminar system that every disciple would be an optee of one trade or another, or in the case of ERAWS one department or another. This idea had not existed before. And to realize this, seminars were conducted on all levels: sectorial, regional, diocese, district, block, panchayat, and village. Especially in Bihar and Bengal where there were a good number of margis. The system included six compulsory duties, and among them was that every optee would be required to be a trainer and an organizer at one or another seminar level. The trainer would be responsible for seeing that his trainees were giving proper training at the next level, and the organizer would have the supervisory duty at the next level, to see that each candidate was organizing properly. For example, if I gave state-level training to a certain number of trainees, then I would be responsible to see that they gave proper training in the different dioceses that made up that state. And the same would be true for the organizing duties at the diocese level. This began shortly after Baba came back from Cooch Bihar, from October to December 1969, as a kind of trial run.

Then in January 1970 the real seminar system began. I was still in Hyderabad at that time. The January DMC was in Patna that year, and all the workers had to take training so that they could then start doing seminars in their respective areas. Part of the training was learning the seminar reporting system. We had several proformas that each attending worker would have to fill out, including a review of the seminar and a utilization report for how the optees were being utilized. All those margis who were organizing subsequent seminars or acting as trainers also had to fill out those proformas. In that first training, we workers had to draw up the proformas for the various reports that would have to be submitted for the seminars, and every time we submitted the proformas to Baba for his approval he rejected them. For two days and two nights during that January training we worked on

the proformas until finally Baba was satisfied. Later, when the CBI raided our central office in Patna, they found all these proformas and reports and were impressed. They remarked that business-school graduates could not prepare such sophisticated reports.

The ISMUB secretary—ISMUB stands for “inspection, seminar, movement, utilization, board”—would select the topics for that round of seminars, which he would take directly from Baba’s DMC and RU speeches. The first seminar phase was from January to May, following the New Year’s DMC, and the second seminar phase was from June to December, following the Ananda Purnima DMC. The main text was the seminar notes, which would be published twice a year, including material from Baba’s DMC and RU speeches and any important or related general darshans. If the ISMUB secretary wanted to add any additional topics, then he would have to apply to Baba for permission. The entire system was detailed in the seminar guidebook, which was put together during that preliminary phase in late 1969.

After the May DMC, I went to my new posting and started conducting seminars in Bombay and Jaipur regions and supervising the lower-level seminars. Then in the October RDS in Ranchi I got reposted as the regional secretary for Bombay Region, another promotion. Dada Keshavananda, the previous RS, handed over the charge to me and left for his new posting as RS Bangalore, and I continued overseeing the seminars in Bombay region. It was shortly before that RDS that Baba gave kiirtana, on October 8 in Amjariah, not far from Ranchi. I saw kiirtana for the first time when I arrived in Ranchi for RDS. Baba would sit outside in the courtyard on a chair and we would form a circle around him and start the kiirtana. This became known as the Hari Pari Mandala Gosthi. I was a little hesitant at first in the company of the other workers, but after a day or two I lost all my inhibition. I felt as if the lord of the universe was sitting at the center of the circle, controlling us as we danced and sang around him. Some people needed some time to adjust to the practice, some people even had some reaction, but there was no better way to get into the spirit than having Baba present at the center of the hari pari mandala. This circle of workers dancing kiirtana

around Baba continued for the next several RDSs, so I think that was his way of getting us into the spirit of kiirtana.

Kiirtana didn't immediately become a part of regular dharmachakra, however. As far as I remember, it first became a popular part of dharmachakra outside India, and then in India it gradually became included in weekly DCs, especially after Baba came out of jail. I never noticed kiirtana in DC before the state of emergency in 1975, at least not where I was posted. A similar thing happened with the Supreme Command. Baba gave the Supreme Command in 1965, but it was not part of DC at first. I remember it was introduced on a large scale at the Ranchi DMC in 1969. In order for a margi to get a gate pass for that DMC he had to be able to recite the Supreme Command for the acharya who was issuing the gate pass. That way the margis were required to memorize it. I don't remember exactly when it started being included in the dharmachakras but it was certainly sometime after that. Eventually it became an unwritten tradition to recite it at the end of DC, and in the same way kiirtana became an unwritten tradition at the beginning of DC.

I remember that in one of those RDSs at this time, we workers staged a drama about the fight between Ananda Marga ideology and the Indian ritualistic dogmas. Baba was in the audience that night. He watched the entire performance and commented afterward that it was very well done. Baba always encouraged the arts.

Baba came to Hyderabad in late November for DMC and in the evening I went on field walk. I was walking behind Baba, with the security guards, and I was in a very devotional frame of mind. I was thinking: I have three flowers—body, mind, and soul; I will make a garland of them and lay it at Baba's feet. When I do so, will he then be able to walk? At that very moment Baba stopped, turned back to me, and asked, "May I have your permission to walk?" Baba smiled and again started walking. We were walking on the footpath by Hussain Sagar, a large lake in North Hyderabad.

The next morning, I also accompanied Baba on his walk. While we were in the car, about to leave, I asked him if he could visit the school and inaugurate it, since it was near the place that had been

chosen for his walk. Baba agreed. When we arrived, Baba took a short look around the grounds and then entered the main school building and wrote some inspirational words in the guest book that I had brought with me for that purpose: "May the light of education flourish all over the world." He wrote these words in Roman Sanskrit. He also signed his name, Anandamurti, in Roman script. Then he took his morning walk in the open field near the school, by the graveyard where I used to do my kapalik meditation.

I had done a lot of prakar in Hyderabad while I was DS and had initiated a lot of students, and since Hyderabad was part of Bombay Region I was still involved with the work there. One of my initiates in particular, a medical student who was an important student leader, had brought a lot of his fellow students to me for initiation. Almost all of them were eager to get Baba's personal contact but Baba had just made a new rule. Only those candidates who agreed to become a wholetimer would get PC. It was Baba's rule and there was nothing we could do to change it. He had only done this once or twice before, but for whatever reason he imposed this rule and he was very strict about it. Maybe he knew that they were very excited and perhaps not so serious. Thus very few people got PC. One boy pretended he was going to become a WT so that he could get PC but he never went to training. That was not so uncommon.

Normally Baba stayed in the house of Ramchandra Reddy, but this time he stayed in the house of Mukunda Giri, a rich man who was a good margi. The local workers wanted him to stay there because Mukunda was supporting them economically and they wanted to reward him, and I couldn't say no to them. His house was a little far from the DMC site, a twenty-minute drive, but it didn't prove too inconvenient.

After the DMC, one important margi's eldest daughter decided to go to WT training. She got inspired in the DMC. Her father was worried about what would happen to her, so he came to Ranchi to see Baba. Baba did a demonstration on him in General Darshan. Baba told him to close his eyes and asked him what he was seeing. "Baba, I see my daughter standing on a mountain peak. I am on another peak." In the vision he called to his daughter and she made

as if to jump. In that moment Baba appeared and caught her hand to protect her. After the demonstration he was no longer concerned about what would happen to his daughter, and afterward he continued to be a big help to us in Hyderabad, collecting a lot of funds for the organization and for me as well. His eldest son, however, was still angry, principally with me. When she left for training he came to me in a fighting mood and said, "Why did you send her to training? I want to become a WT. It is my life's goal and now I can't go since there is no one to take care of the family." It was a fact that the other children in the family were not so sane, and thus he was needed at home. But the youngest son eventually finished his education, and after that his older brother was able to go to training. He became Dada Brahmananda, who is in GT sector these days.

RS Bombay

As RS BOMBAY I had my headquarters in the city but I traveled throughout the region, attending to the seminars and supervising the various works of the region. Regional secretary was a very important posting, roughly equivalent to the sectorial secretary in the rest of the world, since the bulk of the margins and projects were in India. It was a very busy time for me, and I enjoyed the work, although as RS I was also responsible for the discipline of the local workers.

There were two very senior dasas working under me who had become dasas in 1962. They were senior to me, but I was their boss and they were indisciplined workers, traveling by train without ticket and not following their tour program, so I felt duty bound to bring it to Baba's attention. During one RDS in Ranchi I informed Baba that they were traveling without proper tour program. Baba took the matter quite seriously. He called them to Ranchi and punished them severely. Baba called them "unsupervised workers" and immediately afterward he issued a circular detailing what would qualify as an "unsupervised worker" and what would be their punishment. He also fixed punishments for other types of organizational indiscipline. That was how the term "unsupervised worker" came into existence. Baba never created arbitrary rules. All of the rules he gave had a purpose and a history behind them.

On another occasion, Baba expelled one of my diocese level workers, Acharya Manohar. He was a good friend of mine but a little indisciplined, and Baba announced that he was expelling him for

indiscipline. I felt pity for him and made the mistake of protesting his expulsion, asking Baba to give him a different duty instead of expelling him. As I should have expected, Baba got angry with me: "Okay, then you take him. I wanted to give him Prout duty after this, but now you take him." I apologized immediately and said that I had spoken out of innocence. In the end Baba didn't expel him. He transferred him to Prout, as he had intended all along, giving him a lower-level duty. Manohar eventually left his acharyaship—he never became an avadhuta—but he remained active in the organization. Later on, a kidnapping case was filed against Baba in Motihari—a minor had become a wholetimer and his father, a well-respected lawyer, filed a case, and that case continued even after Baba came out of jail in 1978. Manohar was helping with that case after he left his acaryaship, and he played an important role in securing bail on that outstanding case so that we could get Baba out of prison.

My disciplinary responsibilities also extended to the margis in my region. There was one important margi doctor in Bombay, Vidya Jain, who was creating problems for one of my workers. So I reported it to Baba during the DMC in Patna, and Baba took my report quite seriously. He told the GS to expel her. Dada Sarveshvarananda was the general secretary at the time, and it was also his duty to protect the margis. He requested Baba to let him deal with the matter, promising that he would put things right. Baba agreed, and he was able to get her to rectify her behavior. It was another example that when it came to organizational discipline and conduct, Baba was very strict, with margis as well as with workers.

In fact, Baba was becoming more and more strict, especially with the WTs. One afternoon in Ranchi, Baba called all the workers to his house. First his wife addressed the workers, before Baba entered the room. When he entered, he started talking about the importance of social service for the suffering humanity and how we had come to this earth for that very purpose. "Only you can save the suffering humanity," he said, "by the grace of Parama Purusha." Then he started talking about the coming global crisis and how it could be averted through our efforts. "Since the organizational speed is increasing, I want to give a global program to accomplish

this work; and in order to implement that program I will need to be very strict with you all. Do you give me permission?" Everyone starting crying yes in a loud voice, myself included. In my mind I said, Baba you are the potter and we are the unformed clay. Give us the shape you need of us according to your will. In my mind was the image of a potter hammering the clay on the outside with his wooden hammer while his other hand supported the clay from the inside. I felt Baba's eyes at that moment pierce into mine and a cool, peaceful feeling filled my entire being. And really, that is how he has supported me throughout my life, just like a potter with one hand supporting the clay from the inside and the other hammering it into a pleasing shape. Looking back at my career as a WT, I can truly say that I passed it all as God's play, knowing that at each moment he was taking complete care of me.

True to his word, Baba was very strict with us the following day in reporting. The punishment was extreme and the workers were suffering, but we knew the cause behind it and we did not lack for inspiration. When the stick hits the skin it hurts, but afterward everyone was enjoying Baba's drama. Of course one or two workers here and there started skipping RDS after that. These things happen. In my case the punishment was very light and I didn't have any mental reaction. The program was called the World Program.

Nineteen seventy-one was katha and kiirtana year, so named by Baba. There was an emphasis on philosophy and spiritual stories, both of which come under the rubric of katha, and of course on kiirtana, which he had given late the previous year. Baba categorized kiirtana into five types, including nagar kiirtana, pada kiirtana, pala kiirtana and the traditional nama kiirtana. Pada kiirtana is when you praise Parama Purusha in prose form and then sing his name. In pala kiirtana you praise him in poetic form.

The Ananda Purnima DMC that year was held in Ranchi. We were celebrating Baba's fiftieth birthday, so a special ceremony was organized and a huge pandal was erected. Unfortunately a big storm arose and all our preparations were ruined. Baba did not let that derail us, however. He had us get right back to work, and soon

we were able to erect a new tent a short distance from the one the storm had ruined. Baba gave General Darshan and DMC there and everything went smoothly. After the DMC was finished, however, trouble started brewing. One dada was attacked on Ratu Road by one of Ranchi's notorious goons who lived in that neighborhood. We thought initially that it was an isolated incident, but it was planned and organized and quickly developed into a mob attack. The atmosphere in Ranchi had become inimical to Ananda Marga, and as far as I understand, one political party had hired the bad elements of Ranchi to attack us. It ended up in a huge fight between us and those hired thugs. Pranavananda showed his leadership then. He called all the acharyas and avadhutas together, had us stand in a line, and gave a stirring talk. We all got inspired and followed him to face the goondas that were attacking us. They had some weapons but Dada Tadbhavananda found one person with a gun near a petrol station and was able to wrestle it away from him and throw it into a drain. The main goonda, the one who had organized the mob attack, also had a gun but one dada on a motorcycle hit him, put him out of action, and took the gun. Even I was fighting. Before we fought, Baba had been very stern. When the attack was first reported to him, he said that he didn't want to see the faces of his defeated sons. "Why are you coming to me like this? You come here when you have the proper result." But after we opposed them, Baba was very happy. He said very openly, "Even if you had killed somebody, nobody could have blamed you. It was a mob attack." One or two dadas were hospitalized, but other than that, no one was seriously hurt. However, once things settled down we decided as a precaution that it was time to remove Baba from Ranchi. The situation there had become too volatile, too inimical. It was an organizational decision and Baba agreed, so sometime in June we moved Baba to Patna.

Once Baba was settled in Patna he returned to his normal routine. We had three rented buildings, all within a short walk of each other, the jagriti building, the central office, and Baba's quarters. There was also another building for the didis. First he would go to the central office for reporting. There was one room in the central office reserved for Baba, with a chair and a desk. He would sit there and

take reports from whatever workers were present. We would enter the room and stand in front of the desk to give our reports. If there were no regional or sectorial workers present, then he would take report from the central workers. At that time the main work was in India. The organization hadn't developed yet outside of India. The most important RDS was with the regional and sectorial workers in India and that took place five times a year. After reporting, Baba would go to the jagriti for General Darshan, just as he had been doing in Ranchi. There were some Western margis staying there, mostly American. He was giving General Darshan twice a day in those days, morning and evening. Sometimes, if he had any problem with his health or if he was particularly busy in the office, he wouldn't come to the jagriti in the evening, but in the morning he was sure to come.

One morning in August during General Darshan he recited a famous shloka from the Upanishads—*asato ma sadgamaya, tamaso ma jyotirgamaya, mrtyor ma amrtam gamaya, om shantih shantih shantih*. Afterward he asked me to stand up and explain it. I knew the shloka and had even used it in some of my talks, but I was very nervous. The Patna margis were quite senior and I was worried that I might let Baba down in front of them. But as soon as I started speaking, Baba began prompting me and he continued doing that right until the end. He made it seem as if I was explaining the shloka, but actually he was explaining it, from beginning to end. The next day during reporting I was standing very close to Baba. He smiled at me with a mischievous look on his face and said very softly, "Baba saved you yesterday, didn't he?" I understood immediately and mentally did *sastaung pranam*. That was how he played with his devotees.

It was perhaps in this same RDS that I got an important lesson about *sadhana* from Baba. It was a thirty-six hour train journey from Bombay to Patna, and after arriving in the late afternoon, I took bath, went to the roof to do *sadhana*, then had something to eat and went to bed. The next morning, when I went to Baba's room, we had some conversation and then Baba stunned me by saying, "Last night you didn't do *sadhana*." I didn't know what to say. I had done *sadhana* but who can challenge the guru? I remained humble and kept quiet,

but internally I was wondering what I had done wrong for Baba to say that. What did I miss? For an entire day this question was on my mind. The next day during reporting Baba looked at me and said, "Where was Baba in your meditation?" That was enough for me to understand what he had meant. During meditation there should be intense longing for parama purusha, and for that the ideation of the guru is critical. Without that ideation love will not blossom during dhyana. Dhyana, or meditation, means chasing the guru with intense love. It requires devotion. I had done the process, but the process is not complete unless one races toward the Supreme with intense love, and that had been lacking. That is the spirit of dhyana, and such intense love is not possible with an impersonal entity. It requires a personal entity, and for us that personal entity is Baba.

Not long after this, I was traveling from Ahmedabad to Mumbai by train. At Surat Station (Surat is famous for the diamond business and was then part of Bombay Region, though that is no longer the case), one passenger boarded the train and sat next to me. I was reading Ananda Sutram at the time. After a few minutes we got to talking and had a nice conversation. Being a sannyasi dressed in my monk's robes, the conversation naturally turned to Ananda Marga, and he was interested in what I had to say. He had to get off at Valsad Station, and as the train was pulling into Valsad he asked if I had any book about Ananda Marga philosophy that I could give him. So I gave him my copy of Ananda Sutram. About one month later I came to Surat on tour and found a postcard addressed to me care of the Ananda Marga school in Surat. The postcard had been sent from Valsad. It read as follows:

"My name is professor Tripati. I am a retired principal of the Sanskrit college in Valsad and my age is now seventy-two. I received the book Ananda Sutram, written by Shrii Shrii Anandamurtijii, from a friend of mine who was traveling with you on the train from Surat to Valsad. After reading this book, I have come to the conclusion that Anandamurtijii's realization is much higher than all of the six acharyas of the six schools of Indian philosophy. The second chapter, especially, is very metaphysically advanced. I regard

him as a mahapurusha and would very much like to meet such a great personality. Please let me know when he is coming to Surat or Mumbai.”

In October, when I returned to Patna for RDS, I read out the postcard to Baba in his room. Baba commented that this professor had a samskara to know Anandamurti intellectually. Then Baba did pranam to him. Unfortunately Baba was arrested not long after that so I didn't communicate any further with that professor. After Baba came out of prison he didn't give a DMC in Surat. He did give a DMC in Bombay but the professor would have been too old by then, if he was even still alive.

The Tension Mounts

BABA WAS ARRESTED IN July in connection with the Ranchi bomb case. He had to go to Ranchi, where he was given provisional bail, and then returned to Patna. After that the tension between Ananda Marga and the government began to escalate. This became increasingly evident to me each time I came to Patna for RDS. In the meantime, Baba came to Bombay in October to conduct DMC, flying into Bombay from Delhi with a short stop in Jaipur, and as the regional secretary, I was in charge of all the arrangements.

We had a flat in Bombay that we used as the MG quarters. It was in Altamonte Road, a relatively posh area that has become even more posh nowadays, being home to the richest man in India, Mr. Mukesh Ambani, and also to the American consulate. The owner of the four-floor building, C.D. Munshi, had ceded a flat to Ananda Marga on the first floor and another to Prout on the ground floor. He was a good devotee who lived on the top floor with his wife. The apartment was a little dilapidated at the time but it was comfortable. Baba stayed there on several occasions and otherwise it remained vacant. Only RS had the key. After Baba's arrest we used it for DC sometimes. Later Munshi filed a case to get those properties back. He had some family problems and needed them back for economic reasons, and he had to go to court to do so—neither Ananda Marga nor Prout would have given them back otherwise—but he bought another flat for us in Andheri that we still have. He died right after that in a traffic accident. His son has since renovated the building and is making a lot of money from the rental income.

Most of the Bombay workers didn't want Laxmi Chand Anand to attend the DMC due to certain perceived misbehavior. He was the uncle of Dada Shambhushivananda and a great devotee in his own right, but he could be rough in his dealings with people, including the dadas, and to compound matters he was also the district secretary (this was before the bhukti pradhan system). It was mentioned to him that he shouldn't attend but he insisted not only on attending but also on driving Baba from the airport to MG quarters, which he traditionally did whenever Baba came to Bombay. Though it drew the ire of the local workers, I decided to support L.C. in this matter, and Dada Mangalananda, who was the local VSS in-charge, supported me. My reasoning was simple: since I was in charge of the DMC, my primary responsibility was to see to Baba's comfort, and L.C. was experienced in seeing to Baba's personal needs.

It was a tumultuous time for the organization. A few weeks earlier many workers had defected, leaving the organization along with Baba's wife, Uma Sarkar. Not only that, Uma Sarkar had left with Vishokananda. Many people were watching me to see how I would react, what I might do. I'm sure some wondered if I would also leave. But the truth was that I was not affected by what had happened. I was doing my sadhana, my work, attending to my duties, all in a normal state of mind. Some individuals questioned my integrity since I was Vishokananda's cousin, but I found out from Dada Shraddhananda that Baba never mentioned me in this connection. And none of the workers in the Bombay area defected.

Considering the circumstances, assigning that duty to somebody with less experience was an unnecessary risk, no matter what toes L.C. had stepped on. Some of the other dadas wanted Shyam Sundar Goenka to look after Baba's personal needs, but I knew him and I knew that L.C. Ananda would be much more responsible in these matters. Some other local dadas had asked Ravi Vashishta, the second son of Didi Ananda Bharati, to pick Baba up at the airport and drive him to Altamonte Road, but I personally requested Ravi not to agree and he was amenable to my request. "I will make some excuse," he said. "I will tell them I have back pain." And so I was able to make sure that L.C. remained as Baba's driver and looked

after Baba's personal needs, over the other dasas' objections. While we were at the airport, waiting for Baba's bags to come, I informed Dada Ramananda, Baba's personal assistant, about the other workers' reactions and what I had done, and asked him to please manage Baba in this regard. He may have communicated this to Baba, though not in my presence.

As RS, I was also in the car with Baba from the airport to Altamonte Road. While we were on the highway, we passed a large temple that was under construction. Baba asked what kind of temple it was, whether it was Buddhist or Hindu. I didn't know. Then Baba himself said that it was a Shiva temple. He was very meticulous about such things. "The people here adore Shiva," he said. "Out of sentiment for him they are building it, and rich people are behind it." That was his comment.

Baba's suitcase didn't show up at the airport baggage claim, and when we reached MG quarters he said that until he got his suitcase he would not change his clothes. We organized a meeting to deal with the situation, and afterward a group of workers organized a procession and went to the downtown Indian Airlines office to protest. Shankarananda was the leader of the agitation, along with one other VSS dada. They entered the office with a crowd of margis and workers shouting slogans, such as "Down with the CBI." The employees hid themselves under their desks or wherever they could. Ananda Marga was a big force in those days and many people were afraid of us. Most of the airline officials didn't have the courage to show their faces, but a couple of them got on the phone to their head office to try to resolve the situation. At the same time L.C. Ananda took some margis to the airport and they created a similar ruckus there with their slogans and protests.

In the meantime I was with Baba in his room. The entire drama lasted a couple of hours, and I spent that time conversing with Baba. It was a wonderful conversation and at some point we both started telling jokes. Despite the protests and all the drama, Baba was in a light mood. One of his jokes concerned the emperor Akbar and his minister Birbal. As Baba told it, one morning Akbar told his minister about a dream he had had that night. "I dreamed that we

were walking in a field and we came upon two ponds, one on the right and one on the left. I fell in one pond and you fell in the other. The pond I fell into was a pond of honey and yours was a pond of night soil." Birbal was quiet for a few moments and then he said, "Yes, Lord, I also had the same dream at the same time, that you fell into a pond of honey and I into a pond of night soil. But when we both came out we started licking each other." Baba laughed heartily at his joke and so did I.

Eventually the airline staff showed up at Altamonte Road with Baba's two suitcases. They didn't come inside, but before they left they wanted Baba to check the suitcases to make sure that everything was okay. I opened the suitcases for him in his room. As he was checking to see that everything was as he had packed it, he told me that there was a system to check to see if they had planted any kind of device in the suitcase. As he was checking them over, he was narrating how they plant bugs in suitcases. "If they are in a hurry," he said, "they generally plant them in the sides of the suitcase." The suitcases came up clean and only then did he change his clothes.

As the DMC got underway, the local workers staged a kind of protest against me for supporting L.C. Anand. They decided that they would not issue any gate passes to the margis unless I removed him from the DMC. I wasn't worried. I approached workers from other dioceses and got them to issue the gate passes to the margis. When the local workers saw this, they realized that they were in danger of losing the sympathy of the margis and they promptly changed their tune. Problem solved. I had a lot on my plate, having to see to Baba's comfort at the human level and to the overall organization of the program, but it all went off smoothly.

Among the other situations I had to deal with was Dada Japananda's insistence that I arrange a private meeting between him and Baba. He was a very senior dada who was posted as DS Akola. When I asked him why, all he would say was that he had an important question he needed to ask Baba. I could see that something was really bothering him, so I conveyed his request to Baba. Baba was a little annoyed with the request, but he told me that as the guru he had to satisfy his disciple. After some time Baba called Japananda

into his room, and when he came out I could see that he was satisfied. When I asked him what he had asked Baba, he told me that he had asked why Uma Sarkar had left. "Baba told me that it was his individual concern and had nothing to do with the organization, and I was satisfied."

Another problem I had to take care of concerned S.S. Goenka. His wife was taken ill. She was in the hospital and he was feeling very disturbed, but he didn't express openly his desire to meet Baba and ask him for a solution. He was an important senior margi of Bombay, so I waited for the right moment, when Baba was in a light mood, and reported the situation to him. Baba said, "Okay, call him to my room." I brought him into Baba's room and Baba asked him about his wife. After Goenkajii explained the situation, Baba said, "Sickness is a natural part of life." He quoted Lord Buddha and told the story of how Buddha died. He was begging for food and got some pork meat mixed with his food and that became the cause of stomach problems that eventually led to his demise. Then Baba suggested a remedy for her. He told him not to give her anything that could cause constipation, no beaten rice and such things, and that she should take full bath according to Caryacarya. He gave a few other suggestions and Goenkajii left the room happy. His wife made a full recovery, though not in time to attend the DMC.

I also had a certain level of concern that those dissenting workers might create problems. One time while I was in Baba's room with those workers, listening to him explain something, he looked at me and in the flow of the conversation he said, "Don't keep any worry in your mind. In my case, I scold people with one side of my face and with the other side I laugh and make fun with people. That should be your state of mind." I understood that Baba was telling me to maintain my mental balance.

Another incident I remember from that visit happened in the evening after General Darshan. I went to Baba's room to bring him a glass of water. Baba drank it and then asked me if I could find someone to give him a massage. "I need to relax," he said. I proposed the name of one margi brother who was very devoted and also very strong. Baba said, "I don't want to wrestle; I want to relax." I was

trying to think of someone else whom I could send when it occurred to me to volunteer myself. Baba readily accepted and I gave him a massage. The entire time I was thinking that it was purely his grace that he had given me that opportunity.

After the DMC we went to the airport to see Baba off. On the way back to Altamonte Road we passed a makeshift laborers settlement near our children's home and caught sight of some local boys chasing after our children's home boys. We stopped the taxi and got out to help our boys but as we did so, the shantytown residents started attacking us. Two strong, heavyset men grabbed me and a number of others attacked the other dada and the two margis who were with me. It was basically a mob scene, which is very dangerous in India. One man had his arm around my neck and I felt like I was suffocating. In desperation I thought of Baba and took my second lesson. At that moment my right hand came free and I hit the man who was strangling me. He gave a loud cry and fell to the ground. The other man also let go of me and then the rest of the mob got scared and started crying "run, run, run, the sadhu is doing something." And just like that they all ran away. We then gathered up the children and put them in our taxi to take them to the home, and we hailed another taxi for us. It was purely Baba's grace. Later some margis made some inquiries there and was told that our attackers had seen a frightening man running towards them and had gotten scared. I had thought of Baba and he protected us.

At the end of November, Baba again came to my region to conduct a DMC, this time at Nagpur. At the beginning of the month I had gone to Nagpur to take care of the arrangements. There was one margi couple from Amravati who were very helpful. The husband was an income tax officer who had many contacts and his wife was a very active margi. With their help, and that of other local margis and two or three local dadas, we were able to raise the necessary funds and secure the DMC site and a place for Baba to stay. Then I returned to Bombay to await Baba's arrival. He first came to Bombay for one night and then caught a late-morning flight to Nagpur. As the RS I had to be in both places. I needed to be in Bombay to receive him and then I had to be in Nagpur to oversee the program. There

was one big problem, however. I didn't have enough money for the ticket. When I accompanied Baba to the airport I started looking around frantically for donations. Fortunately one American margi understood my predicament. He gave me fifty rupees, and with that I was able to buy the ticket, which was very cheap in those days, less than one hundred rupees. It was Madhusudhan, the margi who bought the Los Altos jagriti. Later he became a doctor. That was the first and only time I was able to fly with Baba.

After I bought the ticket we were sitting in the lounge for some time with the margis, enjoying Baba's darshan. When the boarding announcement came, Baba and Ramananda passed through security and I was next in line. But when I tried to pass, the security-in-charge stopped me. A small dagger was part of the avadhuta uniform at that time, and I had my dagger tucked into my sash, where it was clearly visible. When Baba saw that they had stopped me, he came back, virtually at a run, and started scolding that officer. "Why did you stop him!" he said. "It is part of his uniform. He has a religious right to carry it. Sikhs are permitted to carry their sword with them."

The plane was about to leave and I didn't want Baba to be inconvenienced, so I folded my hands and said, "Baba, the plane is waiting for you. I will manage it. Please board and let me handle the situation." Like an obedient boy, Baba humbly obeyed and walked away. I gave the knife to one of the margis who had accompanied us to the airport, and then I boarded the plane and took a seat next to Baba. Once I was seated, Baba said, "The security officer was right to stop you, but I had to protect you. I have a duty to protect my son, even if it comes to a physical fight. That is my responsibility. That was why I came back."

Once we were airborne, we started discussing various matters. I was seated on one side of Baba and Dada Ramananda on the other. Madhusudhan was not on the plane with us, and in the course of the conversation I mentioned to Baba what Madhusudhan had told me during a discussion in MG quarters, that Baba's book *Problems of the Day* would not do well in America because it criticized capitalism. Baba said, "Tell him that it is written by a non-intellectual." Then I told Baba that the previous week I had met the editor of

Illustrated Weekly, Khushwant Singh, and he had mentioned that in one or two weeks they were going to publish an article on Ananda Marga. Baba asked me to convey to him that we would deal with the article according to its merits. After a few moments, he added, "The government of India has missed the bus. They cannot destroy Ananda Marga anymore because my literature has gone outside of India." I knew by this and by his comment about Madhusudhan that Baba was saying that his ideas could not be suppressed, neither in America nor in India.

The DMC went smoothly, apart from a minor glitch or two. When Baba was coming for General Darshan on the first morning, I noticed that the margis had forgotten to bring garlands. It was tradition that some important local margis would garland Baba at the opening of the program. I took Baba's driver aside and asked him to rush out and buy some garlands as quickly as possible. He was an engineer and an important margi of that area, Mr. Vishikar. He came back in a few minutes with some garlands, and as soon as Baba sat on the dais I had him go up and garland Baba. Thus the margis' oversight turned into his gain.

There was another interesting moment in Baba's room. I was there with Dada Devananda, the PBI area organizer (now his name is Parasatyananda) and one other dada who was working in the Ghana training center. I told Baba about an incident that had happened that morning. One margi couple had gotten their gate passes, and they asked for an additional gate pass for their fifteen-year-old son. The dada who was issuing the gate passes asked if their son was initiated. He wasn't and thus the dada refused to give him a gate pass, as per rule. This couple protested: "Why not? He is a born margi. He was born after we got initiated." I watched the scene with some amusement but I didn't interfere. Most likely the dada initiated the boy so that he could receive his gate pass. When I told the story to Baba, he had a big laugh. "Very good, very good, he is a born margi."

Another time I was in Baba's room with the three local dadas who had helped to organize the program. One was the DS and another was an area-level worker. The four of us had more or less free access to Baba's room. During the conversation, Baba started saying, "Just

see my situation. I am Mr. Sarkar and in Hindi the word for government is sarkar. So one sarkar is against another Sarkar. Not only that, my wife is against me and some of my disciples have turned against me. So many people are against me. Can you imagine my condition in such a situation?"

I said, "Yes, Baba, a normal person could not handle such a situation. They would go crazy or even commit suicide."

"My condition is just like a person hanging from the branch of a tree," Baba continued. "From above bees are attacking and below a tiger is pacing and a snake is crawling. But still I am able to run the organization."

"Only you can stand this, Baba," I said. "Only you can remain unaffected in such a situation." Internally I was thinking, because you are Parama Purusha.

Baba kept quiet. He had been in a light mood, but by the end of the conversation the mood in the room had turned grave. It had become a fighting mood. And really the situation had become very serious. The CBI was keeping a close watch on Baba and we all knew it. What we didn't know was that the CBI was getting ready to make their move.

Baba is Arrested

OUR REGULAR BI-MONTHLY RDS took place in Patna during the second week of December. I arrived one day late, and when I reached there I noticed that the atmosphere was very serious. Normally the mood when the acaryas met for RDS was very light. It was a chance to be together with our brothers and sisters, and to be with Baba. It was satsang of the highest order. Seeing the seriousness in everyone's demeanor, I asked one senior dada what the matter was. He laughed and said, "You will find out tomorrow."

The next morning I discovered that Baba had started reviewing the sixteen points of the workers. He was asking whoever came in front of him whether they were following this rule or that rule, and that was very embarrassing for the workers, especially since it didn't matter to Baba if margis were present or not in those meetings.

I should point out here that up until then the sixteen points as a system didn't exist. The rules existed—we knew that we should meditate four times a day, take half bath before sadhana, meals, and sleep, and fast on ekadashi—but it hadn't been systematized, nor had Baba placed so much emphasis on the rules as he was doing now in this RDS. We used to fast, for example, but we weren't so strict about it. Sometimes we would take a lassi on fasting days, or fruits, and sometimes we wouldn't bother to fast at all. And Baba never enforced it. But now everything had changed. He had decided to systematize all the rules and give them a fixed form. He still hadn't settled on the final format when I arrived, and he wouldn't for several days more. Sometimes it was fifteen points, sometimes seventeen.

Only after some deliberation did he settle on the final division into sixteen points. But in the meantime he was checking each of the workers, to see if they were following the various rules that he had given over the years.

The first meeting I attended that morning consisted only of workers. The first point he reviewed was the use of water after urination, which by then had already been designated as the first of what would officially become the sixteen points. He asked, "What is the first point?" and someone answered "use of water." Then Baba started asking the workers if they were using water after urination. Those who said yes he asked to stand in a line on the right, and those who said no were asked to stand in a line on the left. When my turn came, I said yes and went to the right. After a few minutes Baba again came to me and asked the same question. I again said yes and remained where I was. Then a little while later he came back to me and once again asked the same question. I thought, I must have done something; otherwise Baba wouldn't have asked me again. So this time I said, "Baba, I don't remember," and he sent me to stand on the left.

When I came out of the room I was still wondering what I had done. Then I remembered. The previous night after urination I had turned on the tap and found that there was no water. I opened the tank but it was empty and I had already urinated in the bowl, so I had no choice but to go without.

The next morning Baba was reviewing fasting, asking each person if they were performing regular fasting as per the prescribed system. When my turn came, a similar thing happened. I said yes but the next time around Baba asked me the same question and this time I wasn't sure. I went to the other line and then I remembered that recently I had been riding the train and at one station I got down to wash my mouth at one of the faucets on the platform and I inadvertently swallowed some water. I hadn't remembered the incident but Baba had.

Later I realized that Baba was preparing us for what was coming next, equipping us to face the crisis that was about to unfold.

After the RDS I stayed in Patna. I didn't go to the VSS camp that year, or perhaps there was no camp. The DMC was going to take place

in Benares, about four or five hours away by train. But that DMC never happened. Early in the morning of the twenty-ninth, while I and the other dadas were sleeping in the central office, just across the street from Baba's house, the CBI entered Baba's compound and arrested him. We heard the news when we woke up. It was a shock but we were more or less mentally prepared. Baba had warned us—we knew that something like this could happen at any moment. For the previous six months there had been an elevated level of tension in the office whenever I came for RDS. There were always some CBI or CID officers watching us from outside the compound, keeping a watch on Baba's house. One dada even got in a fight with a couple of them and gave them a good beating. Naturally they wanted to arrest him, but they ended up arresting the wrong dada by mistake. So there was a certain tension but at the same time we were enjoying it. It was a kind of entertainment for us. If we entered or left the compound and we didn't see them, we would wonder why they weren't there. It was a normal part of our routine, and the days leading up to Baba's arrest seemed even more relaxed than usual in that respect. But then suddenly we woke up one morning and Baba was gone. I was shocked; the other dadas were shocked. What were we going to do now? That was the thought that was uppermost on everyone's mind. But that same day we had a meeting and decided on a course of action. GS had been arrested along with Baba, Satyananda, and the others, so Keshavananda became the acting GS. He would also be arrested a couple of weeks later but it didn't matter. Baba had created a chain of command—Suvedananda was next in line after Keshavananda—and so there was no vacuum of leadership. The organization responded right away. We were prepared, the workers were in good spirits, and Baba was in our hearts, so we were ready to go on working and fighting.

The CBI brought Baba to Buxar jail, and after one or two days, I and three or four other dadas went to Buxar to see Baba. The jail authorities allowed him to go near a window and we saw him standing there, firm and tranquil, a picture of strength. I believe the room was some kind of office, and we were able to go right up to the window and talk with him. He had only one message for us:

Don't worry. Follow the sixteen points and keep fighting against the immoral forces. When you work for the cause of a great ideology such struggle is inevitable.

That meeting lasted only a couple of minutes but it filled us with determination. This was the battle of dharma, and as Baba had told us time and again, dharma always wins in the end, so we knew what the final outcome would be.

After our meetings, the workers returned to the field as usual. The RDS system went on as before, the field work was not disturbed, and the central office continued to function as it had when Baba was there. We began holding DMS twice a year with different workers standing in as Baba's representative. A few margis were able to see Baba in the jail at that time but we workers remained in the field working. We were determined to continue the mission with full spirit until Baba came out. And so I returned to Bombay Region and resumed my normal work as before, with one exception: we started organizing regular protests against Baba's incarceration, especially after Baba was poisoned and started his protest fast on April 1, 1973. Over the next few years I took part in a good number of protests and helped to organize them as well, especially in my region. For example, there was one protest for which we had to submit a memorandum to the governor. We marched in procession to his house, and when the security wouldn't let us in the compound we started shouting slogans at the top of our lungs. They made a lathi charge against us and Didi Giita got injured in the altercation.

On another occasion we decided to call for a general strike in the state of Bihar. The PU workers were given the main duty for organizing the strike, and I was put in charge of organizing the strike in the city of Saharsa. By then Baba had given the statement that he would only come out through legal means, and we thought that this was the means to force the authorities to eventually release him. I organized public meetings in Saharsa—the father of Papu Yadav, who is now an MP, was the main speaker—and we did a big rally and distributed leaflets, but at least in Saharsa the strike was mostly unsuccessful. The businessmen would close their shops when the

procession passed by, but after we passed they would open them again. Still we did the best we could. We weren't trained in this kind of work but we had the right spirit.

It was also at this time that some workers began self-immolating to bring attention to Baba's plight. When I arrived in Patna for one RDS I heard that Dada Divyananda was going to immolate himself the next day near the state assembly house. That was April 9, 1973. We knew what he was going to do, but we didn't know what time or where. I was sleeping in the office when I heard some noise and woke up. It was about three a.m. I got up and out of curiosity I went outside. Divyananda was sitting in the back seat of an old Tata Sumo, a kind of small SUV, driven by Dada Pranavananda. I imagine they had come from Baba's house, just across the street. I went up to him and found him to be in high spirits. In fact, he seemed happy and inspired. "Nityashuddhananda," he said loudly when he saw me approaching, "I cannot bear the torture given to my guru. Tomorrow I am going to immolate as a protest against this torture. Please let the world know what I have done and why." Dada Divyananda was a very popular and dynamic dada. Whenever he was present in an acharya meeting you would hear his voice, clear as a bell. Then he said—and these are the exact words: "I am going to sacrifice my life. It is not suicide. It is a protest against the torture of my guru. That should be highlighted." Afterward the margis were stunned when they heard the news. Since I was RS, I had to explain his reasons in light of Baba's philosophy and the plight of the organization. I made them understand that he had sacrificed his life for Baba and thus they were reconciled.

The second person to self-immolate, a few weeks later, was Dada Dineshvarananda. He was a great orator, not only in his mother tongue, Bhojpuri, but also in Hindi. He would stand up in front of a crowd without the slightest complex and invariably he had a powerful, inspiring effect on whoever was there. He was working for Prout in the Bombay area. I went with him to the city one day to conduct a street-corner meeting for the passers-by, and all of a sudden he told me that the next day he was going to Delhi to self-immolate. The margis and workers had organized a protest in

Delhi on that day to protest Baba's imprisonment, and he told me that he was going to immolate at this rally, even if no one agreed. "I am feeling so much pain about Baba's situation," he said, "I cannot tolerate it." He was a great devotee. Margis came from all over the country to hold the rally at the Purana Quila, the old fort, considered to be the site of the Pandava kingdom of Indraprastha, and at the end of the rally he self-immolated.

Dada Atulananda was next, in December 1975 in Bankipur Jail, and he was followed by five more non-Indians in different parts of the world.

In January 1974 I was reposted as DS Ludhiana, in the Punjab. I went to Bombay with Dada Vandanananda to hand over the charge to him and then we traveled together to Ludhiana where he handed over the charge to me—it was a straight exchange. We had a successful school in Ludhiana, and that immediately became my foremost responsibility. As I got settled in the school I became aware that the authorities were watching me and monitoring our activities. Their vigilance soon got to the point that they were monitoring each and every person who left or entered the school. They even got so bold that one intelligence officer, Raghunath something or other, even entered the school and tried to strike up a friendship with me. He pretended to be a normal civilian, but I knew right away that he was an intelligence officer. I told him in no uncertain terms not to disturb my school. "If you want to talk to me or ask me questions, then come before or after school hours," I told him. "I don't want you disturbing the children or interfering with the operation of the school."

Dada Mangalananda was wanted by the authorities at that time, and one day he came to the school to talk to me. He was in the upstairs office when that intelligence officer stopped by and asked me point blank if he was visiting the school. I denied it and spirited dada out at the first opportunity. This was probably April or May of 1975, a couple of months before Indira Gandhi declared a state of emergency and banned Ananda Marga. I remember a conversation with this officer in which he came right out and said that the

government was going to destroy Ananda Marga and that our guru would never come out of jail. "What will you do then?" he asked. "Will you go back home? Will you start another marga?"

I told him, "Listen, I took my oath touching my guru's feet. I didn't take that oath with a leather lip, so don't you dare talk like this. I represent my guru and his ideology. If anything happens to him, I will be there to propagate his ideology, and I will do it for the rest of my life."

After that he didn't bother me anymore.

The Emergency

INDIRA GANDHI'S GOVERNMENT DECLARED a state of emergency, with the immediate imposition of martial law, on June twenty-six and on the fourth of July Ananda Marga was banned. I was arrested the same day. I was teaching class at the time and hadn't heard the news. The police entered the classroom and took me to the office. Two other dadas who were visiting the school, Dada Prasanananda and Virendra Kumar, were also arrested, along with one teacher who would later be released through the efforts of his parents. They gave us time to pack our luggage and then brought us to the station where we spent the night in police custody. It was a very *tamasik* environment. The cell was extremely dirty, and we were together with a group of hardened criminals, but we put up with it as best we could and the next day we were brought to the court, where we were remanded for four days. After that they put us in a separate cell and provided us with vegetarian food.

One night during the remand period, the DSP (deputy superintendent of police) and several other police officers brought me into their office at midnight and told me that they were going to torture me. I remained calm and didn't reply. When the DSP saw that I wasn't affected by his threats, he said, "What is it you are teaching? What is your meditation?" So I started speaking about Tantra, some of the basic concepts. He spoke in Hindi but I answered him in English, though my English was not so fluent at that time. They were so impressed with my reply that a rumor started circulating through the local police ranks that I was highly educated, maybe even a Ph.D.

Both the DSP and the SHO, the local in-charge who had arrested me, were impressed. The DSP even asked me if I could teach him meditation. I could not refuse, especially with the threat of torture hanging over my head, but I didn't teach him the real meditation. I gave him a simple namo mantra, the rama mantra. That gave them the impression that there was nothing serious about our meditation.

In the school I had kept two skulls for use in kapalik meditation. They confiscated them and one day during the remand period they made us march through the streets of Ludhiana with the skulls. They filmed it and distributed the film in order to paint Ananda Marga in a bad light. They also published the news and pictures in the local papers. It was a heinous act on their part. But at the same time they were impressed with me. The other two dadas were sent to an interrogation center in Amritsar that was notorious as a torture center, but I was not. Later I heard from the DSP that my name was also on the list to be sent to the interrogation center, but he and the other officers who had interviewed me ignored it. Instead they sent me to Ludhiana Jail, a small facility where conditions were relatively decent. After one month I was transferred to Patiala Central Jail. There were three central jails in the state: Ferozpur, Amritsar, and Patiala. I spent nearly all of the following twenty-two months that the emergency lasted in Patiala, all but the last month or so when I was sent back to Ludhiana jail under MISA, the Maintenance of Internal Security Act. The original case against us, for which we were jailed, fell under the Defense of India act. That act was for a limited time period. When the time period expired we were given another case in order to keep us in jail. That case came under MISA. Since I had been originally arrested in Ludhiana, I was sent back to Ludhiana to begin my time as a MISA prisoner.

It was an interesting time, all things considered. There were three of us dadas incarcerated in Patiala, and we were able to stay together in the same cell. Since we were not convicts but had been imprisoned under acts instituted during the state of emergency that allowed the government to imprison people without trial and without bail, we did not have to wear the prison uniform. We wore our regular avadhuta dress the entire time we were imprisoned. According to

the strictures of the Defense of India act, we had to appear in court once every fourteen days. So every two weeks the police would escort us to Ludhiana, a journey of about two hours, to attend the court. Occasionally we traveled in a police van, but most often we traveled by public bus. It was fun and in fact an honor to go to court. We shouted slogans and protested the government crackdown on Ananda Marga as well as our unjust imprisonment. Our escort didn't mind. Though Indira Gandhi had imposed martial law, India was an open country and they more or less let us do as we pleased. Several times on the bus I met Dada Vandanananda, who had escaped arrest. Since he was underground, he was traveling in civil dress, and we would sit together and exchange information and he would give me news of the organization. Of course we were careful what we talked about, but the emergency wasn't really on people's minds and the policemen escorting us were simple officers. Dada wasn't afraid of getting arrested and they didn't care what we said.

In Indian prisons the prisoners were divided into two classes. I applied to the magistrate for high-class status on the grounds that I was the principal of an English-medium school and as per the police record I was a postgraduate and the holder of a Ph.D. The police didn't oppose my request and I was the first dada to get high-class status. High-class prisoners got better quality food and they were given facilities to cook their own food. Later one of the other two dasas also got high-class status, and together we had enough food for the three of us. We got vegetarian food and were able to cook our food as we pleased.

In Patiala we were put in a wing with the other political prisoners, including a good number of MPs. There were maybe fifteen or twenty cells in our barracks. At night we remained in our cell but during the day we were free to mix in the courtyard with the other prisoners. We could walk around, chat, play badminton. There were a good number of important politicians in that wing with us, and due to them we got whatever facilities were permitted by prison regulations, and some that weren't. We also used to have regular satsangs, religious meetings, with all the different groups joining together. We would do some kind of collective ritual, depending

on who was leading the satsang that day, and then somebody would give a spiritual talk. The other groups would often invite me to give talks for them, since they were not so skilled in religious discourse. Occasionally they would talk on political themes as well. We were able to do our sadhana without any difficulty, even kapalik sadhana. Shortly before Baba was arrested he had instructed us how to do kapalik if we were ever imprisoned, preparing us for the inevitable. We separated an area in our cell with curtains and we would take turns doing kapalik in that improvised room.

When my DIR case expired, they imposed MISA on us in order to keep us imprisoned and then sent me back to Ludhiana, where I stayed in a small barracks that housed the important prisoners. While I was there I became good friends with Prakash Singh Badal, an important Sikh leader who had been the Chief Minister of the Punjab during the early seventies and who again would become the Chief Minister immediately following the emergency, and again in 1997, and from 2007 to 2017. He was also under MISA. We used to play chess, cards, badminton, and volleyball together. We were both good at games, especially badminton. In fact, he used to defeat me more than I defeated him. I knew that he had taken initiation from Dada Shraddhananda, so I reviewed his lessons and we used to talk about spiritual matters. He didn't really practice, but he respected our dress and our spiritual commitment. His wife was also initiated. In those days politicians showed great respect for sannyasis, and he was a Sikh, so he had a certain affinity for Ananda Marga. The Sikhs had a concept that pure-minded, spiritually advanced people should rule the society, very similar to Baba's concept of sadvipra, which is why they looked favorably on us. The word khalsa, which is the community of Sikh warriors, means "pure."

I had my own private cell, but during the day we could go next door to the main campus where they had a badminton field and other facilities. I was cooking my food separately, as was he, and sometimes we would eat together. His people would invite me for a special meal. He was a rich man and very influential, and whatever facilities we needed he would arrange for them. I stayed in Ludhiana for the last month or two of my incarceration, and toward the end

we all knew that we would be getting out soon. Indira Gandhi was losing her grip, so it was just a matter of time.

We Are Released

THE EMERGENCY ENDED ON March 21, and the following day those dadas and didis and margis who had been imprisoned all over the country were freed. As a prisoner under MISA I was given one hundred rupees on my release, so I had some security. My first order of business was to find a place to stay. The police had handed back the school building to the owner and impounded our furniture and other property. Prakash Singh suggested I stay at the local Sikh gurudwara under his sponsorship, so I went there and began seeing what I could do to recover our property and reopen the school. The local margis were still scared, so they were not receiving dadas for the time being.

After getting settled in the Sikh temple, I went to the police station to try to convince them to hand over our property. It was my contention that they had illegally handed the school building back to the owner, since the building was on the seizure list. If it was seized, then how could they hand it over until the case had been settled? The superintendent of police was very accommodating. "Ananda Marga is so powerful," he said. "Why don't you simply go there and capture it. We will ignore it." They were well aware of my relationship with Prakash Singh and of the good relations between the various Sikh leaders and Ananda Marga, and it was clear that Prakash Singh and his party was about to come into power. Thus his reaction. I also got one politician friend to telephone the SP, which made him even more disposed to help me. "I will not do anything illegal," I told him. "You have seized our property and now that the emergency is

ended you will have to return it.” The SP then gathered together ten or twelve constables and forcefully took possession of the building from the owner, breaking the lock on the gate in my presence and allowing me to enter and take control. Then they brought our desks and chairs and other property by truck and deposited it all inside the gate. The school was now back in my possession, and within a short time I made arrangements to start admitting students.

It was during this period that I fell sick. First I had a recurrence of malaria, and that was followed by hepatitis and jaundice. School was not in session yet. It was supposed to start in June, after the summer recess concluded. One margi, Ramlal, whose uncle was a doctor in the Indian army, examined me and made the diagnosis. He said there was no effective medicine for jaundice, but it could be treated with diet and natural remedies. His prescription was to refrain from eating any kind of grain for one month and in the evening to eat a mixture of haritiki and myrobalan, bitter fruits renowned for their medicinal qualities. He said I could mix it with sugarcane juice to make it palatable, or else eat muraba, a type of sweetmeat whose main ingredient was myrobalam. It was very cleansing when taken with a cup of milk. My morning diet was three bananas, 250 grams of yoghurt, and a little sugar—sugar was good for jaundice. For lunch and dinner, only boiled vegetables. Between the diet and my illness I became very weak, but in one month I was cured.

In the meantime the owner, who lived across the street, got wind of my weakened condition and tried to recapture the building. While I was recuperating, he locked all the rooms except the room I was staying in. Despite my illness I jumped the wall to his compound and confronted him, brandishing the dagger that was part of my avadhuta uniform. He was a Sikh and a strong man, and I was in a weakened state, but something possessed me. We fought tooth and nail for some time. I even grabbed his long Sikh hair and pulled him to the ground, and finally he gave up. After that he didn't bother me any more. I paid the rent and he left us alone. Some of my old students returned to the school and I admitted a number of new students also. At first I was the only teacher, but soon I was able to hire several more.

As soon as I was well again, I went to Patna to meet Baba in Bankipur Jail, the first time I had seen him since Buxar. It had been six and a half years and I was very eager to see him. It was a very inspiring visit, made even more inspiring by the knowledge that it was only a matter of time now before he came out, fulfilling the triumph of dharma that he had prophesied more than six years earlier. At first I sat near his feet, but Baba asked me to move closer to his head. When we were face to face, he said in a soft and loving voice, "How are you?"

"Baba, I am very fine, by your grace."

Then he said, "I know that you and the margis in your area have suffered greatly due to the emergency and have even been tortured. Parama Purusha knows this, but to establish dharma such suffering is necessary. It is dharma that makes a man great." Then he gave the example of Lord Rama, who became victorious because he strictly adhered to the path of dharma.

When I was leaving Baba's cell, he gave me a bottle of candy as prasad. I had brought a different bottle of candy for Baba, and he explained that he would not give me the bottle I had brought but a different bottle, since in order to be prasad he had to prepare it through a certain process. When I returned to Ludhiana I gave the candies to different margis. One local margi, a high school teacher, had been sick, and when he took it he immediately recovered. This gave him so much faith in the curative powers of Baba's prasad that he gave it to different friends with physical ailments and it also helped them.

There was one Punjabi margi from Moga, Ramalal, who was also arrested during the emergency. His relatives tried everything in their power to get him released but they were unsuccessful. Finally one family member went to a famous astrologer and asked for his advice. The astrologer told him that he was destined to have been jailed on a murder charge—if he hadn't been jailed now, he would have been killed by someone for the same reason. "But I can see that in his case he has a special blessing," the astrologer concluded. "He is alive by the grace of a great guru, but he must remain in jail for a certain period."

After a few months, with the school running smoothly, I was reposted to Ajmer in Rajasthan as the DS. There also our school had been impounded and I had no place to stay. At first I stayed in a dharmasala, and then I was able to rent a small room. In the meantime I went to the authorities to try to get our property returned, this time without the help of my political connections in the Punjab. This was June or July, thereabouts. I wrote letters to different officials in English—the district collector, the chief minister, the governor, and so on—and sent copies to GS. For part of that time I was staying in Jaipur. We had a jagriti there where Dada Bhaveshananda was staying. It was actually a room in a Hindu temple, the Hawa Mahal, which is a tourist attraction in Jaipur. In the state of Rajasthan, the government controls the temples, and as a registered religious organization we were allotted one room, which we still have to this day. The local margis had exercised their influence to get us that allotment. Later Bhaveshananda built a jagriti building on land that we purchased.

When I finally came before the magistrate, he was impressed with my documentation and he released our impounded property, but we still didn't have a building. This was shortly after Baba's release on the second of August. I was in Jaipur the day Baba was released. We only had one margi in Ajmer and he was afraid to associate with us so soon after the emergency. There was also one tailor who was initiated and gave me some contacts, but he lived too far from the city so I could not stay with him. Anyhow, once I got our property released I brought it to the place I had rented and started giving some simple classes, free tutoring for high school students in English and math. In effect, it was a simple school, nothing much, but I wanted to have some output to show Baba before the next time I saw him, and the school quickly became popular among the local students.

Shortly after this, in late August or early September, I received a letter from the central office secretary informing me that I had been reposted to the US as the assistant global intellectual federation secretary, part of the Prout department, and that I should report to Calcutta after wrapping up any important work in Ajmer. I did as instructed, but since Baba was coming to Delhi in November for

DMC, I went there before going to Calcutta. I knew Baba would ask me why I had come, since I was posted in Ajmer, so I had my answer prepared. I told Baba that Dada Pranavananda, the office secretary, had called me to Calcutta for reasons of transfer and I was on my way there. "Oh, if he has called you then you have to go," was Baba's reply. A short while later Baba recited one Sanskrit shloka and explained its meaning. It was about the qualities and spirit of a good administrator. A good administrator, he said, should have one clear quality: he should be omniscient. He should know what his subordinates are thinking merely by looking at them; he should know what is in their mind. I told Baba that only he could do that and Baba smiled.

One morning during the DMC I got a chance to go on field walk along with Dada Brahmananda and the margi who would drive Baba's car whenever he came to Delhi. Brahmananda was not an avadhuta yet. By prior agreement, he rode in the back seat with Baba on the way out and I rode in the back with Baba on the way back. The walk was in Lodhi Gardens, a ninety-acre city park. At one point Baba stopped and pointed out a small herb, similar to a blade of grass. He asked us to taste it to see if it was bland, which it was. Then Baba told us that it was an excellent medicine for any wound inside the mouth. Baba told us name of the plant, which I don't remember, but I can still recognize it. We started walking again, and then Baba stopped by a city bench. It had rained earlier and the bench was wet, so I took off my orange sash, a Benares lungi, unfolded it, and spread it on the bench for Baba to sit. Baba asked us to sit beside him on the bench but we didn't agree. Instead we sat on the wet grass in front of Baba and talked about different subjects until it was time to go. Baba liked our gesture. "It is good to be humble before the guru," he said.

During the DMC Baba called a kapalik meeting. In that meeting Baba gave permission to ask questions regarding kapalik sadhana. Dada Nigamananda was the only one to ask a question. He asked about the other lessons of kapalik. "Tantra has four branches," Baba explained, touching his fingers as he counted them off. "The other three lessons are difficult to practice. These days it is very difficult to

arrange the materials you need for those lessons. For that reason I am not teaching them. But the lesson you have gotten is complete." He was using his hand and forearm to show that Tantra was a tree with four branches. "Each branch is complete in itself. You have learned one branch, but for the others the material is difficult to obtain in our modern-day society." The question came in my mind whether or not the other practices would get lost but I didn't dare ask it.

Getting ready to go to America

AFTER THE DMC, I continued on to Calcutta to begin my preparations to go to America. I had already gotten a passport in June while I was in Ludhiana. I had had a feeling that I might be posted outside India, as had been the case with a number of senior workers, so I had gone ahead and applied for the passport. My main work now was to obtain a US visa. Before that, however, I had to hand over charge. My successor was in Calcutta when I arrived, so we traveled together to Ajmer to complete the handover, and then I returned to Calcutta to start my visa application. Baba was still in Patna at the time but it had been decided to move him to Calcutta. They were looking for a house for Baba, and he had said that he would not shift to Calcutta until the purchase was finalized.

I was there when the house was bought and Baba saw it for the first time. As soon as he entered the gate, he started telling us what he planned to do with the place. He pointed off to the left and said, "Here I will put a statue of Rabindranath Tagore." Then he started walking through the grounds and around the perimeter of the house, pointing out which plants he would put where. "Now it looks barren," he said, "but you will see that in a few months this will all be green with plants." One margi sister from Calcutta, Rina-di, was standing at the entrance to the house with a fresh garland. She garlanded Baba and then he entered the house and went up to his room, pointing out once again what pictures and other items he would put where. Nowadays the house and the grounds are exactly as Baba explained it on that day—everything

green and full of plants, the same pictures and other items that Baba had said would be there.

In the meantime I was working on my visa. In those days, Indian workers had to make certain arrangements to get a US visa. Afterward the workers became eligible for missionary visas but not at that time. Dada Pranavananda, the office secretary, was familiar with all these machinations, having taken care of it for several other workers. He made the arrangements. The official ceremony was celebrated on my birthday, January 6. It was supposed to have been later, but when the lady in charge of the bureau saw that my birthday was coming up she fixed everything so that we could do the ceremony on that day, thinking it to be an auspicious sign. Baba was in Calcutta that week, staying in South End Park, so I reported the news to Dada Pranavananda and he reported it to Baba, who called me into his room.

It was around four in the afternoon and Baba was lying on his cot. I did sastaung pranam and sat in front of him, close to his head. Suddenly Baba sat up, grabbed me, and pulled me into a fatherly embrace. He was so strong, it was if I were a young boy. There was no effort on his part whatsoever. I was astonished by his gesture, and I am still astonished, even today. It was one of the great moments in my life and I remained in a state of bhava for several days. Then we started talking about my new post.

“Where will you make your headquarters?” Baba asked.

“Baba, it is proposed that I make my headquarters in Chicago.”

“Chicago is not a good city for this purpose,” Baba said in a serious tone of voice.

“Baba, then please tell me where I should make my headquarters.”

Baba was very clever. He told me that I should ask my in-charge. But after a few seconds he gave me a formula to go by. “First of all,” he said, “you should choose a place where there are a good number of margis. Second, it should be a small town, not a large city. And third, it should be in an area where there is a lot of open space. Those are the three points.”

After that, I was very relaxed and confident. I felt that Baba had taken the responsibility on himself. Dada Tadbhavananda was my

SG but I didn't ask him for his suggestion. I decided to go there first and look for a place that met Baba's criteria.

My visa didn't come through until the end of February. In the meantime I remained in Calcutta. Baba was there for a good part of that time, so I got to attend a number of General Darshans, mostly in our office at Jodhpur Park where I was staying. I remember two important General Darshans, on the ninth and tenth of January. The first was about the science of kiirtana and the changes that the human body would undergo in the future, the head gradually becoming bigger as the mental capacity and brain size increased and the arms and legs got thinner, becoming almost like sticks. On field walk afterward, Baba asked me how I had liked his General Darshan speech. He also asked me to summarize the theme of the talk and he was happy with my explanation.

The following day, Baba's General Darshan talk was about the importance of exceptions in human history. It was entitled "The Great Exceptions" and can be found in Ananda Vacanamrtam, Part 8, as can his talk on kiirtana. There were a good number of new dadas and didis present in the talk who were waiting to receive their first posting order, at least fifteen of them who had come from the Benares training center, and I believe Baba chose that topic in order to inspire them. The basic idea was that the exception helps society to advance. Many people misunderstood the meaning of Baba's speech. He was speaking directly to those new workers, telling them that they were the exception, that they were going to lead the society.

In mid-February Baba was scheduled to go to Patna. At that time Baba had imposed certain conditions for any place that wanted to host his visit. That place had to have a jagriti, a Baba's quarters, a printing press, and a paper. Patna met the first three conditions but they weren't publishing a paper. They had a printing press but they didn't have a worker to serve as editor. Since Baba was going there and I was a floating worker—a worker with no immediate duty, since I was waiting for my visa—I was sent to Patna as a stopgap, to serve as the acting editor of the daily Hindi Prout paper so that Baba would be satisfied that his four conditions were met.

I arrived in Patna two days before Baba was due to arrive. The press was located on the ground floor of the jagriti building, and I was able to print an abbreviated edition of the paper in time for Baba's arrival. It was an antiquated letterpress but at least we could get something in print to show Baba. There was just one problem: the paper had come out in the afternoon. When we showed it to Baba he wasn't happy. "Why have you brought out an afternoon paper? It should be supplied to the people in the morning." Baba looked at me and asked at what time I would bring out the paper the next day. I made a quick calculation in my head and said "four o'clock." I was thinking four p.m. but I didn't say that. Still, Baba knew what was in my mind and he became furious. "Why four o'clock! What did I just say! At that hour it is not a newspaper, it is wastepaper!"

Dada Sarvatmananda, who was the Prout organizing secretary, was also standing there. He was very clever. He said, "Baba, he didn't say morning or evening. He meant morning."

Baba became quiet. "Oh, morning." Then he called together certain important margis of Patna and gave them a pep talk. "You see, I have given so much importance to the Daily Prout that I have sent an important worker to Patna to be the editor of the paper, even though he is supposed to be on his way to America. Now you people should buy a proper press and make arrangements for the regular publication of the paper. Go out now and discuss this matter. See how you will buy the press and then report back to me."

They had a meeting and were able to get pledges for the funds they needed. It was not possible to purchase the press immediately, but the news of the collection was reported to Baba and he was placated. I remained there for the next couple of weeks. As the editor, I wrote the articles and reported the news. Gauri Shankar, an older margi brother who was very good in Hindi, helped me with the editing. We would work all day and the paper would come out at four p.m. It wasn't what Baba wanted but it was a start. Then information came from Dada Pranavananda that I needed to return to Calcutta to collect my visa. In the meantime they posted Dada Acintananda there as the editor and he arrived shortly after I left.

Once I was back in Calcutta, I completed the formalities and booked a ticket for Los Angeles via London on March 2. In the meantime Baba returned to Calcutta on his way to Siliguri. I went to the airport to see him off—this was March 1—and as we were getting settled in the waiting area with the margis and workers, I asked Baba's bodyguard to remind him that I was going to America the following day. I had three questions in my mind: how I would handle working in English, how I would handle the culture, and whether or not I would be able to properly represent the ideology. At the time we Indian workers had a certain conception that it was a sexually free country and I was nervous about what I was going to face. I was sitting on the floor near Baba's feet, and at a certain point Baba's bodyguard reminded him that I was leaving for America the next day. Baba turned to me and said, "Don't worry, everything will be okay. You won't have any problem with the culture." Then he added, "And you won't have any problem with the language either. It is a medium of communication, that's all. You have enough knowledge of English to communicate your ideas."

That was all the assurance I needed.

I Arrive in America

THE NEXT DAY I and one margi boarded a flight in Dum Dum airport for London, where our onward flight to Los Angeles was delayed by a few hours. It was my first time outside India. When we landed in LA and passed through immigration, the immigration officer asked me several questions. One of them was if I knew the zip code of where I was going. I didn't, but he had the immigration form open in front of him, so I had only to read it and then he let me pass.

Initially I was shocked by how new and how different everything was. Somebody offered me a glass of grape juice and at first I thought it was wine, which everyone found quite amusing. Dada Acyutananda was living in the Los Angeles jagriti at the time. He was still a brahmacaryii. This was before he was posted to Calcutta as translations secretary. There were also some LFTs living in the jagriti. The next day I flew to San Francisco, where Dhruva picked me up at the airport and brought me to the Los Altos jagriti. I didn't yet know how to start my work, so for the time being I followed the suggestions of the margis. Dada Shantabodhananda was staying in the cottage on the jagriti grounds, so I stayed with him, getting acclimated to my new surroundings, and after a few days some margis were driving up to Seattle in Jyotishvar's pickup and I went with them. We stopped for one night in Eugene and one night in Portland before going on to Seattle, which gave me a chance to meet the margis and see something of the West Coast. Then I returned to Los Altos with Jyotishvar. Dada Yatishvarananda, the SS, was passing through, so

I asked his advice as to where I should start my training center. He suggested Eugene, but having been there I knew I would have to rent a place, which would make it difficult to manage, so without consulting SS I asked Dada Shantabodhananda if I could use the two basement rooms of the Los Altos jagriti for my training center. He agreed and I started making plans to open the center.

There was already one training center in the US at the time. It was an AMUPRESSO center on a master unit in Virginia, run by Dada Subodhananda (now his name is Dada Abhivratana). Due to this I knew that I would have to be competitive in order to attract trainees. So I spent the next couple of months traveling to the different margi units, principally in the western states, attending retreats and dharmachakras, getting to know the margis and spreading the news of my new training center. I soon discovered that there was a lot of sentiment for Prout in the US, and this helped me with my recruiting efforts. I labored hard to present myself and to drum up support for Prout, and as a result I always had trainees in my center. My first batch of trainees arrived in Los Altos at the end of April and the flow of trainees continued as long as I was there.

Baba comes to Jamaica

AFTER I HAD GOTTEN the training center going, news came from center that Baba would be coming to America on his coming world tour. Los Altos was one of the stops on the program. We immediately got busy renovating the house, cleaning and decorating the property, and preparing Baba's room. It was a lot of work but it was very gratifying. I was supervising the work but the local margis had everything under control. The preparations took a couple of months and SS came from time to time to make sure that everything would be ready for Baba's arrival. But some fifteen to twenty days before Baba was due to arrive, we got the news that his visa had been refused by the US government. The margis were up in arms over the decision, so we went to San Francisco and demonstrated in front of the federal building. I heard that after receiving the news Baba issued a statement that he would not set foot in two countries: England and the US.

In September we got the news that Baba would be coming to Jamaica instead of the US, flying from Frankfurt to Kingston. I reached Kingston shortly after Baba did and went straight to the house where Baba and his entourage were staying. SS wanted me to stay with the other workers, who were staying elsewhere, but Dada Ramananda agreed to let me stay in Baba's house so that I could help him take care of Baba's needs. Since I was staying in Baba's house, I had more or less free access to his room. I used to accompany him while he was eating and at other times as well. Basically I was free, since I had no particular duty in the DMC. I also attended all the

General Darshans, massaged Baba everyday, mostly in the evening, and assisted Dada Ramananda with his duties. During the day I was mostly busy with the margis. I also went for field walk with Baba. Wherever we went, Baba would talk about the local flora and fauna, especially the flora, explaining the origin and history and evolution of the different plants, going back thousands and even millions of years. Shortly after this Baba started his plant collection phase, in which he began asking workers and margis to bring plants to India whenever they came. These plants were then cared for in the different Baba's quarters, turning them into miniature botanical gardens, especially the Lake Gardens house.

There was one night that Baba didn't go for General Darshan. That evening he slipped in the bathroom and pulled a muscle in his shoulder. I had a feeling at the time that it was due to him taking on people's samskaras during PC. That whole night Baba received treatment. There was one doctor traveling with Baba in his entourage, Dr. Pathak, the father of Dada Viirbhadrananda. He prescribed some homeopathic medicine but Baba's main treatment was one he prescribed himself, a common village cure for similar ailments that we were familiar with since our childhood. It consisted of heating a mound of salt in a pan, wrapping it in a rag, and using it as a heating pad, changing the pad at intervals. We collected three rags and enough salt to fill each one so we could rotate the heating pads. One sister heated the salt while I shuttled in and out of Baba's room, filling the bag and holding it on Baba's shoulder, then going back out to get a fresh pad when the heat had dissipated. I continued the applications after Baba fell asleep. Shortly after three a.m., I also fell asleep, quite unintentionally, in Baba's room. When I awoke around 4:30 I found myself covered with a sheet. Baba had gotten up and covered me. I felt a little ashamed that I had caused Baba that trouble but I was also thrilled by his fatherly gesture. I folded the sheet and carried it out of Baba's room so that I could wash it. Baba was still resting.

Once, while I was in Baba's room, he asked me about my training center. I had completed two sessions by then. After the second session, the news came that Didi Ananda Prajina had started a training

center in Italy—that was in August or September—so from that point forward I could no longer accept sisters for training. The rule was that if the didis had an LFT training center within reasonable traveling distance, then the sisters would have to go there. As a result I only had a few trainees signed up for my third session. Baba told me that since I didn't have so many trainees he was going to give me an additional duty: he wanted me to start a school. It was a surprise but what could I say. I told Baba I would get it done and I did. It took close to a year and a lot of struggle, but the following year I was able to fulfill my pledge. At first I tried to start it with the help of one sister who was a teacher but the didis objected and I had to desist. Then one brother, Satyam, agreed to help. He moved into the Los Altos jagriti and a few weeks later we were able to open the school in Los Altos. Later we shifted it to Mountain View. After our discussion in Jamaica, Baba made it a rule that every training center had to have an AMSAI school and a Master Unit. I even got a letter from GS that I would be reposted if I didn't open the school in a timely manner, but fortunately I was able to start it, and once it was open it was quite successful.

Baba's DMC talk was entitled "Paramapurusha the Great." Before Baba's talk tandava was performed with torches. It was very dramatic. There were two buckets of water by the side of the dancers for them to put out their torches when they finished so they wouldn't burn anything down. I was standing by the side of Baba with the security personnel. After the concluding guru puja, I could feel from Baba's facial expression and his walk as he was leaving the dais that he was very emotional. He didn't want to leave. As he was walking out, the margis stood up and gave him a standing ovation. I was surprised. I thought it very odd, never having witnessed such a thing before in Baba's presence, but someone explained to me that it was out of respect. It was part of the culture and Baba didn't seem to mind. He understood the margis' feeling.

After Baba left we did kiirtana and sadhana. When sadhana was finished, first Dada Jagadishvarananda and then SS Dada got up and spoke in front of the margis. It was not part of the program but they were inspired and wanted to express themselves. After they spoke,

the three of us walked back together to Baba's quarters. I went into Baba's room and began massaging him. Then they came in and did *sastaung pranam*. Baba asked them for good news and they told Baba how nice his speech was, how much the *margis* liked it, and how well the DMC in general had gone. Then Jagadishvarananda mentioned that he had also spoken in front of the *margis* after Baba had left, and SS could not stop himself from adding that he had also spoken. Baba became a little grave. "You should not have spoken," he said. I felt that Baba was saying that when the guru has created a spiritual environment with his words then no one else should disturb that environment. He didn't say this but I felt it was implied. So I said, "Baba, we first did *kiirtana* and *sadhana*," in the hopes of ameliorating a bit what they had done. Baba nodded but he had already expressed his concern.

Baba left the next day for Caracas, but I had to leave a little before he did, due to the flight arrangements that Kirit had made for us when he bought the tickets. I was in Baba's room, talking with Baba on different subjects, when Dada Ramananda entered to tell me that Kirit was insisting that we leave for the airport; otherwise we could miss our flight. Baba scolded him a bit. "You sent him in my room. That is your doing." Then Baba smiled and said, "Okay, go and catch your flight." I did *sastaung* and returned to Los Altos with Kirit after a wonderful DMC in Kingston.

Dharma Samiksha

IN 1981 I WAS called to India for Dharma Samiksha. This was after the May DMC and it was the first time I had seen Baba since Jamaica. Dharma Samiksha was a review of margis' and workers' conduct and practices conducted personally by Baba at Jodhpur Park.

It was late afternoon when I arrived in Calcutta, and Baba had finished that day's Dharma Samiksha session, so my turn came the next day. At that time workers were being given priority. When I went in front of Baba for my review, he commented, "Your conduct and character are good, but you are not fasting properly and you are not doing the proper asanas. Also you are not doing guru dhyana properly. You are not giving sufficient time to dhyana." It was very true. At the time I was enjoying first lesson very much and dedicating less time to dhyana, but after Dharma Samiksha I changed course. I was also drinking water sometimes on fasting days. Baba prescribed two asanas for me, bhastrikasanana and gomukhasana, and told me that Vijayananda would prescribe the rest. I don't remember the asanas Vijayananda gave me any longer, but I still practice the two that Baba mentioned. Baba then gave me some light physical punishment and called the next person while I moved to the back of the hall and watched with the rest of the spectators.

Whoever had already completed Dharma Samiksha was allowed to attend the sessions, so I got to witness a number of interesting incidents during those few days. I remember one Filipino dada who was working in Berlin Sector. His work-progress report was unsatisfactory and he had some character problem. Baba asked him,

“Why is there no progress in your work? What is the reason?” He kept quiet and Baba himself answered. “It is because you are not doing sadhana properly. If you do 95% sadhana and 5% work then the work you do will be as marvelous as any work that has ever been done on this planet. Why will you go to the people to do *pracar*? If you do sadhana properly then your sadhana will bring them to you.” Abhidevananda was also there. Afterward we had some friendly disagreement over the exact words that Baba had used.

During another session, Baba scolded one *margi* for having revealed organizational secrets. This brother had moved from Tripura to Calcutta after retiring from the army and he was a volunteer in Baba’s security detail. He was shocked by Baba’s words, certain he had done no such thing. He didn’t say anything to Baba, but he was so thoroughly clashed that after the session was over he started telling the *dadas* that Baba was mistaken—he had never revealed any organizational secrets. He was so upset, in fact, that he decided to leave Calcutta and return to his home in Tripura. When he was doing *guru puja* on the morning that he was to leave, an image suddenly flashed in his mind, the face of a friend from his army days with whom he had fought in the Bangladesh war. A scene unfolded in his memory and he realized that Baba was right.

In the meantime, Dada Vijayananda had gone to Baba and told him what this *margi* was telling the *dadas*, and Baba told him the following the story, the same story that this brother remembered when he did *guru puja* that morning:

During the fighting he and his friend had gotten lost in the jungle. After wandering aimlessly for some time they heard some sounds and headed that way. Unfortunately they happened on a group of eight to ten Pakistani soldiers who were also lost. The Pakistani soldiers attacked them and they fled and hid themselves in a ditch. They could hear the sounds of those Pakistanis tramping through the foliage, searching for them, and for a long time they didn’t dare move. In the meantime his friend started asking him about his practices and then he asked him to teach him. This brother resisted at first but eventually he broke down and taught him first lesson, including his own mantra, thereby revealing the secret that he had taken an oath never to divulge.

I was there for three or four days and by the time I left, Dharma Samiksha had become so crowded that if you got up for any reason you couldn't find a place to sit back down.

One morning while I was there, I got a chance to go on field walk with Baba to Ravindra Sarobar, the huge lake and park area near South End Park. Dada Krsnadevananda was also on that walk. He sat in the back with Baba on the way out and then we reversed roles on the way back. While he was in the back he asked Baba a question about Babaji, the guru of Lahiri Mahasaya. He framed the question in such a way as to imply that Babaji and our Baba were one and the same, but Baba made it clear that they were not. "Yes, he was a great yogi," Baba said, "but now he is no more."

After a few moments Baba started telling one story. "My maternal uncle was a practitioner of Tantra sadhana. One day he decided to travel in search of a guru. He went all over India, visiting many ashrams. He met many yogis and the heads of many spiritual institutions, but he noticed that these yogis and ashram heads always seemed to be running after rich people for money or blankets or food. They were always praising them and trying to get something out of them, and my uncle didn't like that. Eventually he reached the Haridwar-Rishikesh area. By then he was frustrated by his failure to find a true guru. One day he was sitting by the side of a path near one village, wondering if he was ever going to find a worthy guru. A villager happened by and asked him why he was sitting there looking so forlorn. My uncle explained to him his frustration and the villager told him that beyond the nearby mountain one yogi had an ashram. He was reputed to be a great yogi but he also had a reputation of being a bit of a madman. My uncle thought that there was no harm in going to see for himself, so the next morning he crossed the mountain, following the villager's directions, and came down to the plain where there was a hut. Outside the hut one yogi was sitting in the sun wearing only a loincloth. As he was approaching him, the yogi yelled out in a scathing voice, "Why are you coming here? Go away." The yogi picked up a stone and threw it at him, and then another, trying to chase him away, but my uncle noticed that the stones weren't actually coming that close. There is

some mystery here, he thought, so he continued approaching. Finally he did sastaung pranam in front of the yogi and asked him to teach him something. The yogi became mad. 'Why are you asking me this? You already know. Don't speak lies, don't do any bad actions. Why are you bothering me? Go away.' But my uncle persisted and finally the yogi initiated him into Tantra sadhana."

Baba paused for a moment, smiled, and said, "I also do the same."

After that field walk Krsnadevananda discovered that he had lost his passport, so he had to go to Delhi to get a new one. He took verbal permission from somebody, I don't remember whom, and then went to Delhi with Dada Nityasatyananda, who had also lost his passport and needed to go to Delhi for the same reason. The one difference is that Dada Nityasatyananda had made out a proper tour program and gotten GS's signature. That day Baba asked where those two dasas were. GS didn't know, so Baba told him to send some VSS to fetch them. GS discovered that they had gone to Delhi and ordered them to return immediately. Dada Nityasatyananda reached first. He had a properly signed tour program so Baba didn't punish him. Instead he punished GS for giving him permission to leave without asking him. Krsnadevananda arrived shortly afterward. He didn't have permission in writing and nobody dared admit to Baba that they had given him verbal permission so Baba expelled him. In those days expulsion was one of Baba's punishments. The system was that you would cry and plead and promise Baba that you would correct yourself, whatever your fault was. But instead of doing this, Krsnadevananda simply left. Afterward Baba made one comment in Bengali: *dharitri dhare parte rakhlo na*. "He was not able to hold on to the earth." Here the earth is symbolic for the guru's feet. Then I remembered the story Baba had told during field walk a couple of days earlier about his uncle. Baba had tested Krsnadevananda and he had failed the test.

Once Dharma Samiksha was finished, reporting began. Since Dada Tadbhavananda, the global Prout SG, was not there, I took his place for one day. Baba was very tired—he had expended a lot of energy in Dharma Samiksha—so he had GS, Dada Sarveshvarananda, conduct the reporting sessions. Even though Baba was not present

he still punished us. I was annoyed and afterward I questioned him about it. "Why are punishing us when Baba is not here?"

"Because if I don't punish you, Baba will punish me. He knows what I am doing."

Of course he was right, so I had to retract my objection. Later that day Dada Tadbhavananda returned to Calcutta, so that was my only day of reporting.

In the meantime things were going smoothly in Los Altos. I was running the training center, getting a good number of trainees on a regular basis, supervising the school, doing *pracar*, and taking care of the local *margis*. I also began a weekly mass-feeding program in San Jose Park. This was after Baba gave two new programs early in 1982: *sadavrata* and *paincajanya*, feeding the poor and doing collective meditation at five a.m.

Paincajanya was the name of Krsna's conch, which he would blow in order to awaken the people, to arouse the dormant spirit of their humanity. It was a spiritual call for people to move ahead in their lives. With this in mind, Baba added to our routine the collective performance of meditation in a particular style at five a.m. First, fifteen minutes of *kiirtana*, then ten minutes of meditation, then one begins one's daily routine and regular morning *sadhana*. After he gave *prabhat samgiita*, he added one *prabhat samgiita* for five minutes before *kiirtana*. If one begins the day in this way then one feels very vigorous and spirited throughout the day. The mind remains cool and calm and energetic. After I explained the spirit and purpose of *paincajanya* for the local *margis*, one lady who lived in Los Altos, Manjuri, started coming every morning to the *jagriti* to do *paincajanya* with us. She was over sixty at the time but she was very regular. And even if nobody else came, I would do it by myself and I could feel the benefits.

Sadavrata was the mass-feeding program. I called the *margis* together and after some discussion we decided to start free meal distribution twice a week in San Jose Park. The program soon became popular. The homeless of San Jose would congregate in the park on those particular days, waiting for us to arrive. Eventually our

efforts attracted the attention of the local press—with unexpected consequences. A reporter from the San Jose Mercury, Bernard Bauer, heard about the project and came to the park one Sunday afternoon to see it for himself. He was impressed by our efforts and afterward he asked me for an interview. I invited him to the jagriti and he left with a favorable impression of Ananda Marga. But one month later he again came to the jagriti to interview me, and this time he asked a number of hostile questions about Prout, armed revolution, and the role of terrorism in our organization. I understood right away that he had contacted the Indian Embassy and had been fed a lot of negative propaganda designed to defame us (there was no Internet in those days). I had dealt with this kind of slander before in India, so I was prepared to answer his accusations, which were entirely based on falsehoods propagated by the Indian government. Nevertheless, when his article was published it was almost entirely negative, although he did include some of my main statements. The title of the article, which appeared on the front page of the August 15, 1982 edition of the Mercury, was “Ananda Marga: a deadly mix of yoga, violence?” My picture also appeared on the front page with the article and again on an inside page, sandwiched between a picture of Ronald Reagan and a picture of Indira Gandhi, the incumbent US president and the ex-Prime Minister of India.

After that I started getting calls from newspapers and television stations all over the country, including the Boston Globe, the New York Times, and the Miami Times. They wanted to hear what I had to say about the accusations in Bauer’s article. I also released an official statement that Navin helped me with, which we used as a press release. The sectorial office got into the act, demanding a retraction from the newspaper, and the paper printed several more articles about Ananda Marga, all written by the same reporter, fueled by the ongoing controversy and the war of words between us and the San Jose Mercury. (I have included copies of those articles and our responses to the newspaper, as well as some State Department communications, in the appendix.) I also sent a copy of the original article and news of our responses to Dada Keshavananda in India, who was assisting Dada Ramananda. He told Baba about the article

and our efforts and Baba commented, "Oh, Nityashuddhananda is grown up now. He is bold enough to face the reporters."

After the article came out, less people came to the mass feeding but we continued just the same and eventually the number of homeless who came swelled once again.

Later that year Dada Vijayananda came to New York Sector for the global conference in Mexico, and afterward he visited Los Altos. Baba had just given his first talks on neohumanism, introducing the new philosophy that would become a cornerstone of his teaching. I hadn't heard of it, but Dada gave two excellent lectures while he was in Los Altos, one of which was on neohumanism, and that was enough for me to get the basics. I hadn't been particularly close to Dada Vijayananda before then, but he had been impressed by Baba's comments about me during Dharma Samiksha. He didn't talk much to general workers, especially those who were not so intellectual, but after this we became quite close.

Baba had also started composing songs by this time, what became called Prabhat Samgiita. The first song was given on September 14. Kirit, an Indian margi who lived in the Los Altos area, was a trained musician and a good singer. He started learning Prabhat Samgiita and soon started coming to the jagriti to teach the songs to the margis.

I Get Reposted

IN APRIL 1983 I was reposted and given the duty of sectorial RU secretary for New York Sector. Renaissance Universal was the wing for artists, writers, and intellectuals. This was about the same time that we finalized the purchase of Ananda Kanan, the new master unit in Missouri. In the month of June, just before the summer retreat, the SSs were called to India for a special reporting session. Since Dada Yatiishvarananda, our SS, had to leave, he was unable to attend the first summer retreat in Ananda Kanan. I was the only senior worker in the sector, so he left me in charge. The retreat went smoothly, as was to be expected. The margis in New York Sector were very mature and they took care of all the arrangements. When the retreat was over, I was one of the last workers to leave. There were two cars scheduled to leave with the last remaining workers and margis. I was supposed to go to the sectorial office in Denver in one of those cars, along with Dada Shamitananda, Dada Sadhanananda, and Ramesh. But I was adamant that if Sadhanananda was going to drive then I wouldn't go. He was a very poor driver but you couldn't tell him that. He had a stubborn, somewhat angry nature, and he couldn't tolerate anybody pointing out his flaws. How he ever got his driving license is a mystery. So I ended up going in the other car, which was heading to the GP office Kansas City with two or three margis.

I heard about the accident when we arrived. While Sadhanananda was driving he crashed into a truck and Dada Shamitananda was badly injured. His hip and the bones in one leg were shattered, and he had a number of broken ribs. As soon as I heard the news I took

the car and drove straight to the hospital where they had admitted Dada. It was a two-hour drive from Ananda Kanan. SS Dada was sent back from India as soon as the news reached Baba, and we met at the hospital. Dada gradually began to heal, though it wasn't sure at first if he would ever walk again, and I stayed there as his caretaker for the next month. We didn't have anywhere to stay in that city and the hospital didn't allow visitors to stay there overnight, but the nurses and doctors made certain allowances for us. There was a big armchair in Dada's room and most nights I slept in that chair. There was a visitor's waiting room where I could sometimes sleep lying down, and there was a place where I could take a shower. From time to time I went to Ananda Kanan and spent the night there.

I passed all of July in the hospital, and in early August both myself and Dada Yatiishvarananda were transferred. I was being sent to Nairobi Sector as the chief secretary of Seva Dal, which was the new name Baba had given to VSS. By this time Dada Shamitananda was on the mend. It was just a question of the healing taking its course before they would be able to release him. I had to make preparations to leave, so Dada Sadhananda was sent there to be Dada's caretaker in my stead, the same Sadhanananda who had been the cause of the accident (he had escaped entirely uninjured). He was the PU chief secretary at the time. So I went back to Los Altos, collected some money, and bought a ticket to Lagos. I had a stopover in Germany and traveled up to Oslo for a global VSS meeting. SG came from India to chair the meeting and a number of VSS workers attended, including Dada Dharmvedananda, who was working in Europe, and Dada Dharmadevananda. Then I returned to Germany and continued on to Lagos. This was the end of September or the beginning of October.

The environment in Nairobi Sector was very different from New York Sector and I had a difficult time adjusting. In fact, my difficulties began right at the airport. I was missing two required inoculations, and in order to pass through immigration I had to give a bribe and promise to get those shots in the city, which I did. But that was the least of it. I had difficulty adjusting with the culture and with the

climate. My health suffered and living conditions were precarious. I remembered somebody telling me once that if you don't have to go to Lagos then don't go, yet there I was. It was a cruel society. If they caught somebody stealing they would lynch him. They would put a tire around his neck and burn it until he died. You could feel the tension in the air. Some workers didn't mind but I found the atmosphere very heavy. I also had a malaria attack while I was there. On my next trip to India Baba would acknowledge my difficulties with very sweet words.

Nevertheless I got into a normal work flow, going here and there and doing *pracar* in the English-speaking sector, until it was time to go to Zambia for RDS. My flight went through Zimbabwe, where I stayed overnight in a hotel, arriving the following day in Zambia. During the RDS, Dada Sumitananda, who was the sectorial DPS, lodged a complaint to SS, Dada Shuddhasattvananda, that after *paincajanya* Dada Brahmananda and myself were going back to sleep. When SS questioned me, I said, "Yes, because when you sleep right after *paincajanya* you see Baba in your dream. What is the harm in that?" Everyone laughed, including SS, and that was the end of that. Afterward I told Sumitananda not to make such remarks in the future, since I knew how to reply and it would not go well for him. Nowadays we are both SS in Qahira sector and I sometimes remind him about that incident, but he is still adamant that he was correct in bringing it to SS's attention.

Anyhow, there was a good flow in RDS, although I again had a malaria attack and had to wait until I recovered before I could fly back to Lagos. My flight was once again via Zimbabwe, and while I was onboard there was a coup in Nigeria and my onward flight was canceled. I went to the *jagriti* and while I was waiting for the political situation to stabilize, my Nigerian visa expired. It took several weeks to get a new visa. The Nigerian embassy continued to refuse me—I still had an Indian passport at that time—but I remained persistent and eventually they gave me a visa on the strength of my American green card and my return ticket to Europe. In the meantime I was active while I was there. There was one popular Indian *dada* working in Zimbabwe and he took me on safari to see the lions and other

animals. We did a lot of pracaar together and collected funds and materials. A local margi took us to meet the police commissioner where we had an interesting discussion about our missionary work. At one point he remarked that this was the strategy of missionaries, doing social service so that they could eventually capture the country and exploit it. "You only think that way because the missionaries you have seen didn't have a proper ideology," I told him. "They didn't accept all of humanity as their own." I explained to him about neohumanism and the concept of samaj, how our mission made us merge our economic and social interests with that of the local society, making us defenders of society rather than exploiters, intent on guiding humanity to realize its full potential, physical, mental, and spiritual.

Finally I was able to return to Nigeria and resume my work there. Dada Brahmananda was also working in Nigeria—not in Lagos but in a different part of the country. I was at his place when I got a telegram that I had been transferred once again, this time to Cairo Sector as SES. I telephoned the sectorial office to confirm the news and SS told me that I had to leave immediately. I needed some time, however, to put my affairs in order and collect enough money for the ticket.

Cairo Sector

THE SECTORIAL OFFICE FOR Cairo Sector was in Athens. Since I already had a return ticket to Copenhagen, I spent a week in Denmark to get my visa and then bought an onward ticket to Athens. When I arrived in the airport I phoned the jagriti and Dada Abhidevananda, who was working in PU, told me to "hop in a taxi." Dada Yatiishvarananda was the SS.

I spent that first month in the sectorial office in Athens, getting acclimated to the sector. At the end of the month, SS sent me to India to represent the sector in junior RDS. The plant program was in full force, so every worker going to India had to bring plants with them. In my case I brought some seven hundred plants in two large suitcases, both small and large plants. Some of the plants were officially from the PU department and the rest from ERAWS. This was the end of February 1984, and as per his tour program Baba was scheduled to be in Delhi.

When I arrived in the airport I was stopped by a customs official. He called his boss, who asked one of his subordinates to handle it. This official was an elderly gentleman. When he questioned me about why I was bringing all these plants, I told him straight out that I was bringing them for my guru's botanical gardens. Then I talked to him about Raghuvir Prasad and Ananda Marga. He knew all about R. Prasad, who had been the head of customs in India for a number of years and was very respected by his colleagues. This made him sympathetic to my cause. Though it wasn't allowed, he told me to take my suitcases and exit as quickly as reasonably possible. He would

manage it with his boss. Thus I was able to get the plants through customs and proceed on to Baba's quarters, where I handed over the plants to Didi Ananda Karuna, who was in charge of receiving and cataloging them. Later Baba asked me about those plants and in particular about one date palm that I had brought.

We had just bought the new Baba's quarters in the Gadaipur area of Delhi. After I took a bath, I went straight to Baba's room. As soon as I got up from sastaung pranam, Baba called me closer and said softly, "I know it was difficult for you in Nairobi Sector." I kept quiet and then he added, "There was nothing to worry about. I was also there with you." As soon as he said this, my mind became very light and I had the distinct feeling that he was watching me in each and every moment of my life.

For those few days while Baba was in Delhi, he conducted RDS every morning and afternoon. During one session, Baba was particularly severe with Dada Ajharananda, who later died from cancer. Why have you done this? Why have you done that? While he was scolding and punishing him, the question arose in my mind: Baba, I know you are omniscient, I am seeing evidence of it also right now, but this is my intellectual understanding. How will I know that you are indeed that all-knowing entity? At the precise moment that this thought arose, Baba looked directly at me. His gaze was so penetrating that a thrill ran through my entire body. I realized immediately that I had gotten my answer, a reward for the sentient nature of my thought.

From Delhi, Baba traveled by car to Jammu for DMC and from there to Jaipur. After the judicial order to ban tandava in public gatherings, he had taken a resolve not to travel by plane (we had previously been doing tandava in the airports while Baba was waiting for his flight). I went by train to Jammu along with some of the other workers who had come for RDS. One afternoon while we were there, Baba called all the field workers and asked us to submit our reports. There were some fifteen or twenty of us. Not satisfied with our reports, Baba told us that we deserved "atonement," one of his favorite words for punishment. He told us to lie on the floor and commanded GS to start beating us. "Beat them hard," he said,

prompting him from behind as GS approached us with his stick. I was at the back and I thought, Why don't I go closer? That way I will be able to enjoy more of Baba's bliss. So I started sliding on the floor to get closer to Baba. GS noticed what I was doing and signaled to me to move away, but I didn't pay him any heed, though I knew he was just trying to protect me. Since Baba's cataract operation, his vision was very limited, so GS was only beating those workers who were within Baba's field of vision. Nevertheless, I kept moving closer, and when I got close to Baba's cot, Baba pointed to me and shouted, "Beat him also." I didn't mind—quite the opposite, in fact. I was happy for the attention.

This went on for ten or fifteen minutes. Then Baba had us sit up and he began to give a very inspiring talk. "Do you think I enjoy it when you are getting a beating? Do you think perhaps that I don't love you? I love you very much, and thus I also feel pain when you are beaten. But there is a reason behind it. You don't know the reason but I do. This beating is not a punishment. You have all been with me for a very long time. In the process of evolution you have accumulated lots of samskaras. You don't remember what you have done in your previous lifetimes, but a lot of your karma was not good. Those accumulated samskaras have to be exhausted, and it is for this reason that you have to go through this process. In this way Parama Purusha is exhausting your samskaras, so that you can come closer to him."

One month after I returned to the sector, I was reposted yet again, this time to Berlin Sector as the sectorial dharma pracar secretary. I had only been in Cairo Sector for some four to five months.

Berlin, New York, and Calcutta

I ENJOYED BERLIN SECTOR FOR the short time I was there. I traveled all over the sector, except for some of the communist countries in Eastern Europe for which I couldn't get a visa due to my Indian passport. I even went to the Canary Islands and traveled throughout Spain and Portugal. I also got arrested twice during those months, both times in Germany and both times I got fined \$200. The problem was that I had two legal IDs: my Indian passport and a reentry permit issued by the US government that they gave to green-card holders who needed to leave the country for more than two months. It looked just like a passport and functioned more or less the same. You could travel with it in lieu of a passport and they would stamp it upon entry in the same fashion. But once when I was returning to Germany by train from Copenhagen, the German police searched me and they found the two IDs as well as one thousand dollars in cash. They fined me \$200, which they took from my cash on hand. I protested, pointing out that both IDs were legal travel documents, which was perfectly true, but they took my money nonetheless and told me that I was free to go to the court and lodge an official complaint. I didn't bother. Then, some months later, the same thing happened again. It even showed up in their computer that I had been fined earlier for the same non-existent offense. Again I had to pay \$200. After that, I had to go to Yugoslavia and when I went to the embassy to request my Yugoslavian visa they suggested that I didn't travel with my reentry permit, since they didn't like America or Americans in Yugoslavia.

Dada Shambhushivananda was the SS at the time, and he ended up depending on me quite a bit while I was there. Whenever we had RDS, he would get tense and start dealing with the workers in a heavy-handed way. He had a difficult relationship with a number of workers, especially Didi Ananda Sharada, who was in charge of the didis. I remember one RDS when he blasted the workers in a loud voice and they asked me to step in. I was a senior worker and I had a good relationship with the other dasas and didis, as well as with the margis. "First let me enjoy the drama," I told them. "When he calms down a little, I will talk to him." Afterward we talked and I explained to him that if he let himself get tense in this way he would lose his grip on the situation and it would reflect poorly on him. After that, I became a source of solace for him and the RDSs went more smoothly.

My stay in Berlin Sector was short but I was glad that I was able to contribute to the peace of the sector. At that time there was some tension and conflict between the PU department and Ananda Marga. The global PU headquarters was in Copenhagen and Dada Tadbhavananda and Dada Krtashivananda had been posted there as global PU workers, and to some extent they were in competition with Ananda Marga. As a senior worker, I did my best to be a stabilizing factor, to smooth out the relations between the two organizations. I did as much *pracar* as I could, giving lectures in various countries, like Spain and Italy and Germany, but a lot of my time was spent in administrative work, trying to see to it that the organization ran smoothly and that there were good relations between the different departments.

In the meantime Dada Haratmananda was working behind the scenes with GS, trying to get me reposted back to New York Sector. His efforts eventually proved successful, and at the beginning of 1985, after five months or so in Berlin Sector, I was sent back to NY Sector as the sectorial RU secretary with an additional duty to oversee the work in Boston Region. This was my second stint as RU secretary in New York. Since I already knew the sector well and had developed many good contacts there, I hit the ground running. I made my base in the New Haven jagriti, which was my regional

office, and in a short time I was able to begin publishing the *New Renaissance Journal*, the magazine of the RU department. Danjoo Ghista helped me with the editing.

In April of that year Baba announced a world review of all workers and started calling workers to India posting-wise. RU was given priority, so I went to India later that month to take part in the review. Baba reviewed the work-done reports of each worker, and if the work was not satisfactory he gave punishment. At the beginning of the review of the RU workers, Baba asked the central RU secretary who his best RU worker was. He was a relatively new dada who is working in Bangladesh now. He named me as his best worker so I ended up not getting any punishment. I had brought some copies of *New Renaissance Journal* to give to Baba and he was very happy with the magazine. The printing was high quality and it had very good articles.

At the end of the world review, Baba got angry with the PU department and right then and there he disbanded it and formed a new organization called USP, Universal Service Prout, which was then downgraded to a department within VSS. To my surprise, he put me in charge of the new organization. Since it was a part of VSS, I was not an independent SG but was answerable to the VSS SG. Then Baba said that he would give priority to this department and that I could select workers from other departments. It was a fasting day and Baba was sitting in his room with the door closed. I was sitting outside Baba's door, charged with giving him a list of names from which to form my department. I had been outside India for some years by then and wasn't well acquainted with the Indian workers, so the central workers helped me to select the names. I asked them what they thought of the different workers and as a result I got to select some of the best workers in the organization. Sure enough, they were all forthwith transferred to my department and were then posted all over India at different levels. Most of them came from the ERAWS department. The next day Baba called the central ERAWS secretary and started scolding him. "Why did you let him take your best workers? Why didn't you protest?" That was the system at the time. If you put up a protest, Baba would listen to you and make a

decision. So Baba demoted him and had him reposted for allowing me to grab his best workers.

Thus for the next six months I was the USP global in-charge. Most of that time I remained in Calcutta but I was able to leave India and travel to other sectors on a few occasions under different pretexts, mostly on the grounds that I needed to collect funds for my department. On those occasions I would leave Dada Tabhavananda to represent me in reporting, or if he was unavailable then the Delhi Sector chief secretary. In that way I was able to manage my absences. Dada Tadbhavananda had been the PU SG before Baba abolished the department and renamed it, and now he was working under me as the USP global organizing secretary; so he was a big help to me, not only in reporting but in organizing the work so that we would have something to report.

During one reporting session Baba got angry and said that he would stop giving Varna Vijinana, his serialized discourses on the science of language, because Prout was not propagating it. This would have been a big loss to humanity, so I pleaded with Baba, asking him not to stop and telling him that I was planning to organize a big symposium to explain Varna Vijinana to the public. We rented a downtown hall on Shakespeare Sarani, in a building owned by a Marwari organization, and started doing publicity for the event, which came under the platform of IF, Intellectual Federation. One afternoon, as the date of the symposium was drawing near, I and Dada Vijayananda, who was one of the two featured speakers, went to Baba to get his advice for the program. Dada Vijayananda was going to give a talk on grammar and Baba gave him some tips for his lecture. Then, addressing us both, Baba said that the program should begin with Prabhat Samgiita and should include a maximum of three songs, either all three at the beginning or else two at the beginning and one in the middle of the program but not at the end. "The reason I am saying this," he said, "is because when Prabhat Samgiita is sung, the mind of the audience will become calm and thus they will be better able to understand whatever subjects you will be talking about. But I repeat, there should be no Prabhat Samgiita at the end."

The other main speaker was Riten Bose, a margi professor who used to take notes every Sunday when Baba would give his Varna Vijanana lectures. Not many people attended, perhaps twenty-five or so from the public, plus some margis, but Baba was satisfied with our efforts and he continued his Sunday talks that eventually were compiled and published under the name *Varna Vijinana*.

Another time, news came from the Chattisgarh Samaj that a protest movement was being carried out in Raipur with good success. This was reported to Baba and he called some Prout workers to his room along with Dada Vijayananda. He was lying on his cot, and since I was in charge of Prout he asked me, "How do you want to lead this movement and up to what level do you want to take it?" I wasn't up to date about Prout—it had been a long time since my days as a young PU worker in Himachal—so I naively said that I wanted to bring it up to the level of Amra Bengali. Baba immediately said, "No, not Amra Bengali. You can take it to the level of Angika Samaj." After I left Baba's room, I asked Tadbhavananda, who had also been present in Baba's room, if he knew why Baba had reacted in that way.

He said, "You don't know? Baba himself is supervising the work of Amra Bengali. If you say that you want to take it up to the level of Amra Bengali, he will feel that you are in competition with him and he won't like that. So he corrected you, and it was good that he did so." Actually I should have known. Some time earlier I had asked Tadbhavananda if we should establish some kind of cadre training center. He had replied that it was a good idea but we shouldn't do it in Calcutta because everything that happens in Amra Bengali is under his direction. And it was true that whenever some news was reported to Baba that Amra Bengali had done some kind of action or agitation, Baba's mood would completely change. He would be very pleased. That is why I like to say that he led the organization from the front. In the case of Amra Bengali he gave very specific instructions about what was to be done, the different types of actions he wanted carried out, such as the Kevalam movement.

Finally, after some five or six months, Baba was satisfied with the progress in our department and he changed the name back to PU and

gave the department back its independence as a separate wing. Dada Tadbhavananda was reinstated as PU SG and I was transferred to Cairo Sector as the PU chief secretary. This was October or November of 1985. It was not long before the annual New Year's DMC, so before leaving for my sector I asked GS, Dada Sarvatmananda, if I should come back to India for the DMC but he advised me against it. It was too soon. So I got my visa in Calcutta and returned to Athens for a second tour of duty in Cairo Sector.

US Citizenship

MY NOT HAVING TO return to India at the end of the year proved to be fortuitous, for I was thus able to travel to Los Altos to follow up on my citizenship application that I had submitted several years earlier. I ended up having to stay there for several months to complete the formalities, which I didn't mind since I liked Los Altos. I was still in the Los Altos jagriti working on my citizenship in late March when I got a phone call from Calcutta instructing me to reach there at once. I had a vague idea of what might transpire once I got there. There had been some conflict between the workers in Cairo sector and it seemed that a transfer was in the offing. Sure enough, when I arrived in Calcutta I was informed that I was being reposted as SS Cairo. Dada Keshavananda later told me that due to tension between the workers, GS had gotten a chance to remove the incumbent SS and during the transfer process my name was proposed as his replacement. Baba said, "Yes, he has his American papers now, so he can work there without any difficulty." Actually my papers, though imminent, were not yet finalized. I was still traveling with my Indian passport, along with my US reentry permit.

When I entered Baba's room after arriving in Calcutta, I did *sastaung pranam* and Baba started describing in great detail the history, geography, cultures, and strengths and weaknesses of my new sector, country by country. While talking about Greece he said that the people there are physically robust, intelligent, and have a philosophical base. The Turkish people are very strong physically and have adapted to the new culture, leaving very little of the old culture.

At one point Baba told me that the proper name of the sector is not Cairo, which is an anglicized word, but Qahira. He took out a piece of paper and noted down the proper spelling of the word qahira. Some people spelled it with a K but it should be spelled with a Q. The entire discussion lasted about forty-five minutes. Afterward I wrote down all the details of what Baba said but unfortunately I have since lost that notebook. Dharmamitránanda, the previous SS, was already in Calcutta, so he gave me the key to the cabinet in the SS room, but other than that there was no handover of the charge.

I got my visa in Calcutta and flew from Calcutta to London on my return ticket. Vishvarupananda was staying in London for some work, so I went to his place. The day after I arrived I got a phone call from Los Altos that the date for taking the oath ceremony for my US citizenship had been fixed for a few days hence. I called GS and told him that I had to go to America before going to my sector but he protested: "What! You just got posted to Qahira and now you want to go to America!" I hung up the phone and bought a ticket for New York. From there I took the People's Express for \$100 to San Francisco and made it in time for the ceremony. I had already taken the test in 1983, so this was the final culmination of a long process. After taking the test, the official had asked me if I wanted to take an American name. When I declined he got annoyed. He was a mainstream white male with a picture of his wife and children on his desk. He asked to see my Indian passport and started asking me a bunch of questions. Why was I traveling so much? Did I pay taxes? That sort of thing. I told him that I didn't earn enough income to pay taxes, so he asked me to bring a letter from the IRS to confirm this. Due to the problems he created, my application had gotten delayed. I had to hire a lawyer and appear at several interviews.

The last interview was with a lady judge who worked with the immigration department. She had gone over my case and she also asked me to explain why I traveled so much and what my source of income was that allowed me to do so. This was early in 1986, while I was in Los Altos before being reposted. I talked to her for fifteen minutes about neohumanism. It was a very good speech, one I probably couldn't give now. I explained that wherever I went I would

preach this philosophy, and people in different places would invite me to lecture there on the subject, paying my ticket and expenses. Naturally, I wasn't wearing my monk's dress for these interviews. She was impressed. She said "this is also my philosophy" and right away she signed and stamped my papers. Thus on April 17, 1986 I took the oath and received my naturalization papers. The next day I went to the passport office to request my passport, paying extra to get it expedited. With that passport I went to the Indian consulate to get my Indian visa. The whole process only took three or four days. Then I bought a ticket to Athens.

SS Qahira

AT THAT TIME MOST of the work being done in the sector was in Athens Region—Greece, Yugoslavia, and the Balkans. Up until then we had had a lot of difficulty getting a foothold in the Islamic countries, which made up the rest of the sector, excepting Israel. During my first RDS as SS Qahira, Baba got angry with me while I was giving my report. “You are only talking about Athens Region! What about the other regions? If you can’t work in the other regions then I will give Athens Region back to Berlin Sector.” Previously Athens Region had been part of Berlin Sector but Baba had given it to Qahira since it was so difficult to work in the Islamic nations of the Middle East. We did have a few margis in Israel and Dada Hiranmayananda was well established in Istanbul, where he had a jagriti, a school, a master unit, and a good number of margis, though most of those margis came from Jewish families—only a few from Muslim families. There was one very good margii, Jayanta, in Ankara who came to India three times. He married a blind margii sister from Ankara in Anandanagar and they got Baba’s blessing. Another brother, Mahesh from Izmir, was one of our LFTs and he had PC with Baba in India. During his PC, Baba recited a poem written by Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, who modernized the Turkish state. So after Baba’s scolding we started making a concerted effort to do pracar in the other regions of Qahira Sector.

The first place I started going to was Cairo. I stayed in a hotel and tried to do pracar there as best I could, but I didn’t have much success. Nor could I stay for long since I was SS and had to take care

of the entire sector. What I needed was a worker who was willing to take on that responsibility, and at the time we only had some fifteen workers in the sector, including didis. Fortunately a new worker was soon posted to the sector who agreed to take on the challenge of working in Egypt. Before long he was able to rent an apartment in Cairo and start giving classes and lectures. He initiated some people and we even held an RDS in Cairo, in a coptic seminary. That was 1987 I believe. He was an Australian worker and very dynamic. He made some contacts in the Coptic community and among the Christians and expatriates who were living in Egypt, and in this way he was able to bring people to the mission.

The main problem in the Islamic countries was that the people were by and large very closed. They were not open to any kind of philosophic discussion. The influence of religion was so heavy on their minds that they couldn't accept any kind of new thought, even yoga, though yoga was starting to become popular in different parts of the world as a universal science. But not in the Middle East. Thus we had no margi base in any of those countries and no place to stay.

Unfortunately, this dada eventually left the organization. The work in Egypt continued after he left, but eventually it petered out until Didi Ananda Rama was posted there and things started picking up again in a big way. But that was much later, leading up to the Arab Spring. Didi bought two properties, one for her office and jagriti, and one for her school, which is highly successful. Egypt is a different country now, much more open than it was at that time.

Baba had visited Israel in 1979 and some good margis were still active from those days, so I visited there and also started visiting Jordan. After some time, a didi was posted in Jordan and we began enjoying good success there. In this way we slowly made inroads into the different Islamic countries. It was slow going, but by and large Baba was satisfied with our efforts.

Over the next few years Baba would have a lot to say about Qahira Sector during reporting sessions, and Baba's comments helped me to gain a deeper appreciation and understanding for the part of the world where I was working. In one of those RDSs—this was probably

late 1987—the dadas were gathered in the main hall of Baba's house in Tiljala. As soon as Baba entered the hall and sat on his cot, he said, "Where is SS Suva and SS Qahira? Their work-done report is not satisfactory so I will punish them." Dada Rtabuddhananda and I came forward and did sastaung pranam—he was the sectorial representative for Suva sector since the SS couldn't come. Then we stood up and awaited our punishment. "In Suva there are a lot of kangaroos," Baba said, "and in Qahira there are a lot of camels, so I will change one into a kangaroo and one into a camel. First their backbones will start bending."

As soon as Baba said this, I felt a tension in my back, as if a hump were starting to emerge, pressing against the skin. "Then they will start losing their memory." The moment he spoke this second sentence I began feeling as if I were losing my existence, losing my awareness of "I exist." Where that "I" was going, I didn't know. I just knew that I was losing my sense of self. A few moments later, Baba said, "But why will I change anyone into an animal," and he followed this with an inspiring talk about the purpose and value of human life.

"Human life is attained only after great difficulty," he began, "and once attained it should be used to fulfill its true purpose. One begins life as a small amoeba-like creature in the water and then passes through a myriad different animal lives, only attaining human life after several million years. And even after attaining human life, there is still a long struggle and many lives before one reaches the stage of human evolution where one learns meditation. Human life is so very precious, it should be utilized for the noblest and highest of purposes. Why then should I change them into animals?"

It was a longer speech but this is as much as I remember. Baba then called us forward and had us sit on his lap, during which he touched each of us on the back, along the backbone. Then he had us lie down and do guru dhyana, probably because we were both still affected by the transformation and wouldn't have been able to sit. It was a wonderful sadhana. All these years later I am still trying to achieve the state that I experienced during that sadhana, lying on my back and meditating on Baba. How my I-feeling came back I don't know. The sensation of losing it stopped the moment Baba stopped the demonstration. It

came back during the meditation and then I felt my I-feeling merging into Baba. It was not a punishment but a blessing.

The next day, when Baba entered the hall for reporting, he sat on his cot in *vyasasana*, a posture associated with the great yogi and writer Veda Vyasa, the author of the *Mahabharata* and other great works of spiritual literature. "I have a question," Baba said. "What is the difference between *jada* and *cetana*?" (That is, between non-living and living or insentient and sentient.) "And don't give me any stupid answer."

We started thinking, and after a minute or so Dada Haratmananda had the courage to come forward and answer Baba's question.

"Baba, the difference between *jada* and *cetana* is that living beings are capable of movement and non-living beings are not."

Baba called him closer, stretched out his stick, and asked him to put his ear to the stick. "Tell me what you are hearing."

"Baba, each particle inside the stick is moving."

"Then your definition is wrong."

Baba then picked up a pillow from his cot and moved it from one side to the other. He called GS and told him to put his ear to the pillow and describe what he was hearing.

"Baba, I am hearing the sound *kabadi, kabadi*."

Kabadi is a game in India where two groups of players stand opposite each other on a playing field, one team on each side of the midline. One person charges from one side to the other side and tries to touch somebody from the other team and then return to his side of the field. As long as he has breath—that is, as long as no one on the other team touches him—he is "alive." But if someone from the opposing team touches him then he loses his breath and he is out. It is a very popular game.

"You see?" Baba said. "His definition is wrong." Then after a pause Baba added, "Whoever makes a definition, that definition is a function of his mental level. If his mind reaches *atimanas kosa* then his definition will change. At the level of *atimanas kosa* there is no difference between living and non-living. That difference only exists when the mind is below *atimanas kosa*. That is, the difference exists only in *bhu, bhuvan* and *swara lokas*. Above *svarloka* there is

no difference between matter and consciousness. When you sleep you have no idea of existence. When you dream you have a hazy idea of existence. When this haziness is gone one crosses the third layer of mind, svarloka.”

Then Baba called in the didis. When they were settled he asked one of them, “Explain the existence of ghosts according to Ananda Marga philosophy. Do we accept the existence of ghosts and if not then why.”

It was an easy question and the didi was able to answer it. After a bit more discussion on this topic and some joking with the didis, Baba asked me to explain the specialities of the Semitic religions—Islam, Christianity, and Judaism. I don’t remember what I said, but Baba complimented my explanation by adding some observations of his own. “They recognize a second God in the form of Satan and through this concept they inject fear complex in the human mind.” He went on to say that in the Semitic world the people frequent restaurants to a great extent while in the Eastern world this is not the case. “In India it is part of the tradition that when priests are invited to a function they are given uncooked food—rice, dal, vegetables, even firewood and a matchbox—and then they prepare their food at home, while in the Semitic world they frequently eat in public restaurants.” This was part of a larger discussion of human cultural history, which was a frequent topic with Baba. He used to say that human culture is like the branches of a big banyan tree. To discover the similarities among the dissimilarities is worth pursuing. At some point in the discussion he said that communism is the most ultramodern religion.

“One thing that is common to all religions,” he continued, “is the belief in evil spirits. They accept the existence of these evil spirits and spirits in general, and yet they cannot explain how ghosts can function without nerve cells and nerve fibers. They also claim that there is a sex difference in ghosts. These are all religious dogmas. Their paradise is a paradise of stupidity. But such ideas are fast waning in human society. Except for siddhas, no departed soul can exert any influence on human beings. In some cases a person with developed psychic power can temporarily give a psychic body to

those departed souls but that is a different matter. Buddhism is to some extent based on rationality but Buddhism also recognizes the existence of ghosts. The same is true for Jainism.”

Baba looked at me and said, “In your sector there is a strong influence of the Semitic religions and the belief in Satan, so when you go back to your sector you should bring Ganges water and cow dung to protect yourself.” (Baba was referring to a common Hindu dogma.) I laughed and said, “Baba I don’t need Ganges water or cow dung. I have you to protect me.”

Then Baba asked the didis to please wait outside, after which he performed another series of demonstrations that helped to illustrate some of his points. First he called Dada Haratmananda forward, SS NY, and asked him to look at his stick and describe what he saw. He saw three luminous bodies sitting on the stick—one black, one yellow, and one white. Then Baba called me forward but after a few seconds he said, “No, you go back. I did a demonstration on you yesterday.” I felt bad, not knowing what I might have done for Baba to have sent me back, but it wouldn’t be long before I found out.

Then he called Dada Shuddhasattvananda, SS Nairobi. He did sastaung and when he stood up Baba asked him to think about his sector. “Your headquarters is in Nairobi, so think about Nairobi and describe what you are seeing.”

He started describing his office, the condition of the house, the city, the geography, and then all of a sudden he said, “Baba, I feel that somebody is pulling my mind, drawing me back, across the Arabian Sea, across central India—”

“Okay, stop thinking now,” Baba said. “Open your eyes. Out of those three luminous bodies, one of them, the white one, was your father in a previous life. He is happy that you are on the right path and he wants to be close to you. He was a yogi but he couldn’t succeed in his sadhana due to some bad samskara and so he was reborn as luminous body, but he is satisfied with you and what you are doing. This luminous body is attracting you to the district of Bankura, to a particular village where you were born in that previous life. I will not tell you the name; otherwise you will develop attachment. As you can see, the departed souls of developed sadhakas who have

taken luminous form as siddhas can create vibrations that can have some influence over living human beings.”

Baba then explained that when he had called him forward he hadn't repeated his second lesson mantra and for that reason that luminous body was able to influence his mind and attract him toward Bankura. “It was because you didn't take your second lesson that I was able to do the demonstration on you.” Then I realized why Baba had sent me back. When I had done sastaung pranam my second lesson mantra had automatically come into my mind.

Baba got up to go but then he stopped, turned to us, and spoke a sentence that was so powerful I can still feel his words vibrating me, even today: “Whoever repeats their mantra is under my protection.” Baba didn't say the first lesson mantra or the second lesson mantra, just mantra. He smiled and started walking, but again he halted for a moment and said, “But they will have to go through samskaras.”

On a different day during that same RDS, Baba touched the navel portion of one dada with his stick and that dada's stomach filled with air. Again he tapped his stomach and the dada started getting the taste of a particular sweet called khaja in his mouth and again his stomach was full. Once again Baba tapped his stomach and this time he started tasting another sweet, gulab jamin, which is called langcha in Bengali. This sweet was originally invented in Shaktigarh, about one kilometer from Baba's ancestral home in the village of Bamunpara in Burdwan District. Baba said that this science is called vastu niyantran yoga, the yoga of controlling objects. It is a kind of occult power that is only possible when one has access to the higher layers of the mind.

On another occasion during that RDS, Baba called one SS to the front and touched his hand. Baba then told GS to put one hand on this dada's chest and to grab his wrist with the other hand and tell him what he was feeling. GS reported that he could feel his heart rate and pulse increasing and his body getting heated. Then Baba called another SS and told GS to feel his back. He reported that the tension in his back was increasing. Then some sound started coming from his back, like the sound of breaking wood. Baba said, “If I want, I can take his soul out of his body and put it on the chair.

When a human being dies his soul comes out and looks back at its body and feels 'this was my body,' and then it leaves according to its samskaras." Baba was speaking Bengali and he used the word *jiivatma*, which means "unit consciousness" but also includes the mind, since the mind is automatically and inextricably associated with the unit consciousness. Part of what Baba meant to show through this demonstration was that the guru can influence anyone or bestow his grace on them not only by looking at them or touching them but by mere thinking as well.

I will add something more here from a different RDS regarding Qahira Sector. Baba had given a program called All-Round Service. Each sector would select one or two countries or areas that were particularly poor and undeveloped and do concentrated social service in those areas. I selected Sudan and Egypt. Hong Kong Sector chose Siberia and one other country. SS Berlin selected Greenland and Portugal. I remember that Baba commented that since Berlin and New York sectors were more intellectual sectors, more intellectual service was needed. While talking about Qahira he said that it was an extremely diverse sector and thus a lot of service was needed. He didn't say less intellectual but rather diverse, the most diverse. He said that it was a mix of many different cultures: Indo-Aryan, Persian, Greek, Balkan, Ottoman, etc. Libya, Tunisia, Sudan, and Egypt are all mixed cultures, Arabic and Habshi. Habshi is a common word in India. It refers to a mix between Arabic and African.

Another time in reporting Baba asked me if Islam was a philosophy or not. I replied, "No, it is not a philosophy, Baba, it is a theology."

Baba was satisfied with my answer. "Yes," he said. "Just see the hypocrisy in the religious dogma of Islam. In their scripture it says that Muhammad flew to heaven on a horse. How is this possible? Hoofed animals cannot fly. They cannot have wings. It is biologically incorrect. How can this be included in scripture?"

Global Reporting

DURING THE NEXT FEW years, and up until Baba left his body, my main contact with Baba was during global reporting, which I had to attend five times a year, more or less every other month. Global reporting actually took place ten times a year on specific fixed dates each month—there was no global RDS during the New Year's and Ananda Purnima DMCs although Baba would take reports during that time—but the SSs only had to be present every other month. In the alternate months they would send a representative from their sector. Delhi sector reporting would take place from the twenty-first to the twenty-third. Occasionally it would run over an extra day or two. Then global reporting for overseas workers would start on the twenty-sixth and would usually run over into the beginning of the next month, though it could be even longer—Baba used to love spending time with the SSs. I remember it once lasting until the tenth of the following month. From time to time Baba wouldn't come for reporting on some pretext—for example, if our reports were not satisfactory—so there was the occasional free day. That was part of the ongoing drama. Then after global reporting concluded Baba would be free from RDS for a couple of weeks. He would still take reports from the central workers during those couple of weeks but not at any fixed time. The RDS schedule became fixed after Baba came out of jail. When he established the bhukti pradhan system in 1986 he added margi reporting to the schedule, just before the Delhi Sector RDS. He would begin with the paincayat pramukhs and go level by level up to the bhukti pradhans. The margis would

file into the hall—it would get very crowded, two hundred margis or more, all squeezed together—and Baba would take their reports. This would often take up a full day. Then the margis would file out and the Delhi Sector workers would enter and begin their RDS.

Up until 1987, RDS would usually take place in Lake Gardens. We were all staying in Tiljala, so in the morning we would do paincajanya, sadhana, take breakfast, and then rush to Lake Gardens in different vehicles, mostly by public transport. We didn't know when Baba would show up so we had to be there early and be ready. Normally when he returned from his morning field walk he would go straight into the hall where we would be waiting. And then we would be there most of the day before going back to Tiljala. In 1987 Baba started shifting to Tiljala for the reporting period. He would remain there for those couple of weeks and then return to Lake Gardens until the next round of reporting came around.

On a normal day the workers would be sitting in the hall waiting for Baba to arrive, didis and dadas both. Usually Baba would take the didis' reports first and talk to all of us collectively on different topics; then he would ask the didis to please wait outside while he sat with the dadas. In the dadas' global reporting it was the eight SSS and the different CSs of the other wings—VSS, SDM, and Prout. Sometimes Delhi Sector would be present but usually not, since they had their separate RDS. Baba had a particular order in which he would call us: first Hong Kong, then Manila, Suva, New York, Georgetown, Berlin, Qahira, and Nairobi. Usually by the time Baba got to me and Nairobi SS, the intensity would have dissipated somewhat, so if he was unhappy with us I often escaped the full brunt of his displeasure. Baba was well aware of this, of course, so sometimes he would reverse the order and then it could get uncomfortable for me. Baba had all kinds of different punishments. Most of them were both creative and entertaining, but occasionally he would give us physical punishment with his stick. In the early 80s he would do this himself, which was a great blessing, even the didis, whom he would hit on the leg. They were thrilled when Baba would give them direct punishment, although not always in the moment that he was doing it. Later Baba stopped meting out this kind of punishment directly

and GS would wield the stick at Baba's discretion, but never with the didis. That form of punishment ended for them when Baba stopped using his stick. I remember once a particular dada didn't come for reporting. It wasn't the first time he hadn't shown up and the reason was simple: he wanted to avoid punishment. Baba remarked, "Do you think I like giving punishment? Do you know why I am always pushing you to come for reporting? Reporting is not a profession. It is Parama Purusha's blessing to you all." And that was the spirit we had. It was purely Baba's blessing.

But in general, Baba's punishments were more creative and entertaining than anything else. Sometimes he would have us all do sarvangasana, the shoulderstand, as our punishment, or some other asana. He would go on talking and then slowly one by one we would come back down when we thought he wouldn't notice. Or he would have two people stand on either side of the person and rock him back and forth. Sometimes he would make us jump like a frog while making frog noises—"hoop, hoop, hoop." Another punishment he liked was having three or four dadas spread their legs to make a tunnel and then have the offending dada get down on all fours and pass through the tunnel like a train while Baba would make the sound of a train engine. Tic tics,* of course, were another punishment. One time he threatened us that he was going to remove all the SSs and post didis in our place. That was another common ploy to keep us on our toes.

Each day reporting would focus on a different topic. One day Baba would focus on initiations, one day a particular department, one day schools or master units or pracar, but these were all excuses. The real purpose of reporting was to give us something. Baba wanted to prepare our minds for the work ahead, both internal and external. Thus the formalities of reporting normally didn't take very long. Baba would take our reports, using them as a platform to pass along one teaching or another, give us our punishment, and then he would talk on different topics and do different demonstrations, educating us, inspiring us, training us to be his representatives in the world.

* Also known as superbrain yoga, tic tics have been shown in numerous studies to be very beneficial for the brain.

The spirit behind it was twofold: first he was training us morally, intellectually, and spiritually, and secondly, he was building up the organization at a global level. Nothing could escape him, and if any SS tried to cover something up he would catch him. He knew the entire geography of the world and everything that was happening in the organization, right down to the smallest detail, and thus he was training us how to think globally, how to build the organization on all levels, pointing out defects in our work and in our character as he went along and correcting those defects, and we accepted his correction as a blessing because we knew that he was the tantrik guru, that the spirit behind his correction was purely benevolent. He was building us into his ideal cadre.

I remember one reporting session during the May 1987 DMC in Anandanagar. Baba was dealing with one Filipino dada who was working in Africa. He was pointing out some failings in his personal discipline in front of all the dadas, deviations from the conduct rules, that sort of thing. Generally Baba would check the sixteen points of the workers during reporting, though he wouldn't say that. He would just point out deviations in a person's conduct and give them punishment as needed for their correction. On this particular occasion—it could not have been easy for that dada, having Baba point out his defects in front of his fellow workers—Baba stopped and said to us all, "There will come a time when nature will take a sledgehammer to those who do not follow a prescribed code of discipline. Today I am dealing with you, but in the future, when I am not here, nature will deal with you directly, and nature will be far more severe with you than I am. Remember that while I am here you cannot escape from me, no matter where you are. I go even where the sun's rays cannot penetrate."

Of course, Baba did not point out everyone's mistakes during these reporting sessions. One person might have committed a grave mistake and another person a minor error, but Baba would give heavy punishment to the person who had committed a minor mistake and not even mention the grave error of that other person. Nonetheless, they would get the message and learn their lesson. There were so many examples of this. In general Baba would only punish those

who could bear it, and only to the extent that they could bear it. But at the same time we were all watching and reflecting on our own conduct, and the message would get through. If that example was enough for us to rectify our conduct or our thinking, then Baba would leave it at that. Public humiliation in these reporting sessions was also a form of punishment, but Baba would use it judiciously. It was my understanding that Baba would point out those deviations in a person's conduct that were having a serious effect on their spiritual progress. If a person felt repentance and had a sincere desire to rectify themselves, then Baba would usually let their errors go by without mention. Once Baba asked GS to ask me for a certain report. He asked me in English if I had done that work and I answered no, also in English. When Baba heard my answer he said "Why not!" in a voice so strong I got scared. I immediately changed my attitude and also my language. I said humbly in Angika, my mother tongue, "Baba, I will do it." (In the later phase Baba mostly conducted RDS in Bengali so that we would learn the language, but I always answered him in Angika, which he used to like.) Baba then lowered his voice and said, "How can you do it unless you have the grace of Parama Purusha? As long as Parama Purusha's hand is on your head, then you will be able to do it."

In short, there was always a spiritual purpose behind everything Baba did during those reporting sessions, even if that purpose was often hidden from us. Once, when we were sharing reporting stories, Dada Sarvatmananda, the GS at that time, told me a story about Delhi sector reporting. One day Baba called an Indian dada to his room after reporting—GS was also present—and beat that dada so severely that he ran out of the room to escape. Baba followed after him, dressed in his casual clothes, a lungi and a T-shirt. This dada was running away and Baba was running after him with his stick. In fact, Baba had beaten him so hard that he had bled a little from his back. GS was also clashed. This dada hadn't done anything wrong that he knew of, nor had Baba pointed out any mistake. Thus he couldn't understand why Baba was beating him.

The next day Delhi Sector reporting ended and this dada went back to his field. A couple of weeks later a letter arrived for GS from

this dada informing him that he had been traveling for prakar in an autorickshaw when the vehicle had collided with a bus. Everyone in the rickshaw, including the driver, died in the accident, with the sole exception of this dada. He had escaped unscathed except for a little blood from the exact spot where Baba had beaten him. GS took the letter to Baba and read it out. When he finished reading it, Baba said, "Now do you understand why I was beating him? He was supposed to die on that day. That was the reason I punished him, and why I beat him at the same place he was injured in the accident. To satisfy that samskara."

Some Demonstrations and Other Incidents

DURING ONE GLOBAL REPORTING Baba called everyone present to the upstairs living room in Lake Gardens—this may have been 1987. When Baba came out of his room he selected two dadas, myself and Dada Parameshvarananda, and said that our work reports were not satisfactory and hence he was going to punish us. He told GS that he should beat me until he could smell the fragrance of sweet peas coming from my anahata chakra. In the case of Parameshvarananda he was told to beat him until he smelled the fragrance of jasmine flowers. He started beating me and it hurt. After a few minutes I told Baba that I could smell the scent of sweet peas coming from my heart chakra. Baba said, “Just see, he wants to escape the beating. Cetanananda, you check. Is the smell coming from his anahata or not?” Cetanananda was the central DPS at the time. He was sitting just beside me and so he leaned toward me to smell. I knew Baba was playing with us so I said softly in a jocular voice, “Tell him you can smell it or I won’t give you any more donations.” It was a game and so Cetanananda told Baba, “Yes, I can smell the scent of sweet peas.” The same happened with Parameshvarananda. The beating stopped and Baba had us do madhur sadhana. While I was doing sadhana I could clearly smell the scent of sweet peas coming from my anahata. It was a familiar smell. I had smelled it before from time to time while I was doing sadhana, but I had never recognized the smell or even paid any attention to it. But now I knew what it

was, and afterward the fragrance often returned while I was doing meditation. Certainly Baba had done this demonstration to make us more aware of what was going on in our sadhana.

That same year there was LFT reporting both before and after the New Year's DMC. That was the year Baba introduced the theory of microvita during his RU speech, "Microvita, the Mysterious Emanation of Cosmic Factor." During the first LFT reporting only one or two LFTs were present. Baba was displeased with the low turnout and asked someone to summon the Delhi SS. Baba also called the rest of the SSs since we were all in Calcutta. It was an education for us. When SS Delhi arrived, Baba said, "Why have no LFTs come? You are the SS. You are responsible to see that they come. Why are they not here?"

To escape Baba's scolding the SS said, "Baba, I have sent the LFTs to bring the margis to the DMC."

This made Baba even angrier. "To bring the margis to DMC! Margis have been coming to DMC since before your birth. They don't need anyone to tell them to come. It is purely your negligence that no LFTs have come for reporting." That dada then changed his tune and begged Baba's forgiveness. After some more scolding, Baba said, "I have come to build this organization. Why will I forgive your offense?" He didn't punish him, just scolded him. He was a young dada, but the organization would eventually prove too strict for him.

Also around this time Baba called two dadas forward during reporting, Dada Nirgunananda and Dada Divyacetanananda. Divyacetanananda was not SS at the time so it may have been during DMC reporting. Baba said that he would now switch their minds, taking each mind out of its respective body and putting it in the other. As soon as he did this, the two dadas immediately embraced each other very tightly. Baba explained that this was also part of the science of yoga. "No matter what the circumstances, when the soul leaves the body it looks back at its body and feels that this is the body that I was inhabiting. This belongs to the branch of knowledge known as parakaya pravesh, the knowledge concerning the transmigration of souls. Para means 'another,' kaya means 'body,' and pravesh means 'entry.'" Baba also used the phrase *atmakaya kalpa*.

Another demonstration I remember took place during the Anandanagar DMC on 25 May 1987. Actually it was two demonstrations. Baba first called one dada, I forget his name, and said that he was going to direct a flow of negative microvita toward him. That dada immediately started feeling a burning sensation in his shoulder. Baba said that the negative microvita he had channeled had originated in a different celestial body. "If this negative microvita continues," he said, "then after some time a black spot will appear on your shoulder. No doctor at this time will be able to find a cure for it. Only after five hundred years will medical science be able to find a cure." Baba then called him closer and touched him with his stick in several places, though not on the exact spot where he felt the pain, and the pain disappeared.

Then Baba called Dada Nikhilananda forward. Nikhilananda had been suffering a lot of pain, and most likely he had prayed in his mind for Baba's help. Baba asked what problem he was suffering from, and Nikhilananda told him that he was suffering from severe stomach pains. "This can be cured through microvita," Baba told him. Baba then released a flow of positive microvita and Nikhilananda started feeling a very pleasant, cooling sensation in his stomach. "The greater part of the disease has been cured through the use of positive microvita," Baba said. "Continue doing sadhana and asanas and the rest will soon be cured."

Once Baba was invited to China to address a futurist conference. Subodh was involved in the conference and it was through his influence that the letter of invitation was sent. This was August 1988, if I remember correctly. Baba didn't have a passport at that time so he sent Dada Raghunath as his representative, though it was highly unlikely that Baba would have gone even if he had had a passport. In the meantime RDS was going on in Lake Gardens. In one of the RDS sessions Baba asked SS Hong Kong to report on what was going on with the conference in his sector. GS had received a call and he had reported the news to Baba, but SS didn't know anything about it. When he said that he didn't know what was going on, Baba said, "Why don't you know? You are SS. You must know

everything that is happening in your sector. How is it that I know what is happening there and you do not?" Baba gave him some light punishment and then explained that some *pracar* was going on in the conference and that Dada Raghunath was about to give a lecture. A few days later, when Raghunath returned and Baba's comments were conveyed to him, we discovered that at the exact moment that Baba was making his comments Raghunath was very sick and was afraid that he wouldn't be able to give his talk. But just as Baba was speaking about him in Calcutta, his illness suddenly vanished and he was able to go on and give his lecture.

A few minutes after Baba made these remarks to SS Hong Kong, he called the *didis* into the hall and asked them a question: "If you do not have the grace of *Parama Purusha* can you do anything?" The *didis* remained silent. Then Baba asked Didi Ananda Sampurna, SWWS Suva, to stand. "I know that you are the leader of Suva Sector; so now try to walk to the other side of the hall." She started trying to walk but she was unable to move. She couldn't even lift her foot a single inch from the ground. "If you do not have the grace of *Parama Purusha*," Baba said, "you cannot even walk." Then Baba withdrew whatever power he had used and she was able to move again.

Then he called Didi Ananda Prajina. He gave GS his stick and told him to touch her back with it. Didi had been suffering from severe back pain, but the moment the stick touched her the back pain disappeared. Baba said, "This is all by the grace of *Parama Purusha*."

In one Sunday *darshan* in Tiljala Baba was talking about the sense of smell. "If *Parama Purusha* so desires he can change the smell of any object." Baba took out his handkerchief and said, "Can someone come forward, smell this handkerchief, and tell me what it smells like?" After a short pause during which no one moved he asked me to come forward and smell it. I sniffed the handkerchief and said, "Baba, it smells like sandalwood." Baba then waved the handkerchief and asked me to smell it again. This time it smelled like a rose. He moved it again, and again there was a different smell, this time the smell of a lotus flower. Baba then explained the theory behind the change of smells. I don't remember the theory exactly—I was paying

more attention to Baba himself, not to what he was saying—but I do remember one interesting tidbit. One of the times I leaned forward to smell the handkerchief, my nose accidentally touched the cloth. From his face it didn't appear as if Baba had noticed, but I saw him almost imperceptibly fold the handkerchief before putting it back in his pocket so that the part I had touched was now on the inside. Such a sense of hygiene he had! No doubt he had it washed when he got back to his room.

During one of those January DMCs in the late eighties Baba was walking in the driveway of MG quarters in Anandanagar when he stepped on a rock, stumbled, and lost his balance. Baba's health was not so good at that time, which was why he wasn't going outside for his walk. There was a good distance from the house to the gate so he could get a good walk in by walking up and down in the driveway. When Baba lost his balance, he reached out to grab the shoulder of Pratap his bodyguard and steady himself. With a smile, Baba said, "You know, I don't see very well at all. My eyesight is quite bad. But when I close my eyes I can see everything."

During one RDS in Tiljala, Baba was so displeased with our progress that he decided to transfer all the SSs en masse, all nine of us. He announced this in front of us and then told GS to find new SSs. GS was understandably disturbed. If all the SSs were transferred simultaneously then the work of the organization would be hampered all over the globe. After Baba went to his room he called the central workers together to discuss what they could do to placate Baba. After some discussion they came up with a strategy, which included telling Baba about some important good news that had just come from Newfoundland. They went to Baba's room and after listening to them he agreed to cancel the transfers. I think he wanted them to find some excuse. When he appeared before the SSs in the next session he said, "With the help of Newfoundland the postings of all the SSs are newly founded." Then Baba said that before doing any work one should take the name of Parama Purusha. If there is ego, then destruction lies ahead for that person.

On another occasion around this time Baba called all the SSs to his room in Tijala. One by one he asked for our reports, starting with SS Hong Kong and proceeding in the regular order. When it came my turn and Baba asked for my report, one central worker made a snide remark: "What work report can he give. There is no progress in his sector." But actually I was very satisfied with our progress in the sector. By his grace we had extended our activities to countries Ananda Marga had never entered before. I said as much, and again that central worker made a snide remark: "Nobody accepts that their yogurt is sour." It is a Hindi phrase. Baba asked GS to punish me, as he had done with all the previous SSs, but I could see that he was unmoved by that worker's remarks. Then I noticed that he was looking at me with such benevolence that my whole body was vibrated with sweet spiritual feeling.

One time during global reporting Baba said, "I know that some of you have a great desire to do sadhana. Some of you are thinking that you have to do more sadhana, that you will not be able to work effectively unless you are able to elevate your minds to a higher level. But I ask you, can you do sadhana without the grace of Parama Purusha?" Baba continued in this vein for several minutes. Then he told us all to sit for sadhana. We were sitting in siddhasana. After a few moments Baba said, "Keep your body straight." Generally my body is very straight and erect when I sit. But Baba kept insisting in a loud voice. "Keep your body straight!" He said it a second and then a third time. When he said it the third time, I felt a blissful feeling inundate my mind. For the next five or ten minutes I experienced a great wave of bliss in my sadhana. Then he said, "Without Parama Purusha's grace you cannot do sadhana. He wants you to do sadhana, but he also wants you to work."

Once in Lake Gardens I was in Baba's room together with Dada Satyabodhananda. Baba was in a very sweet mood and he started talking about how Parama Purusha attracts the devotee through the medium of different bhavas, the greatest of which is the feeling of madhura bhava. The thought came in my mind that since the

relationship with Parama Purusha was purely personal and since there was another dada in the room with us, then how would it be possible for me to enjoy that bhava. At that moment Baba said that we should not talk to each other. Immediately I forgot that there was another dada in the room. I felt that I was alone with Baba and thus entered into the state of bhava that Baba was describing, and as long as I remained in that state I had no awareness that there was anyone else in the room. There was only me and Baba, and I suppose that Satyabodhananda also felt the same.

Once Dada Sarvatmananda and I were walking in Tiljala, sharing experiences about those days. This was a few years ago. At one point he told me a story from the late eighties. This was after Baba had started moving to his house in Tiljala, Madhu Koraka, for the ten days or more that the reporting sessions would last. Baba had begun including BP reporting, and the main reason for the move was that the reporting sessions were getting too large to hold in Lake Gardens. When global reporting was over, Baba would move back to his house in Lake Gardens, which he preferred to the house in Tiljala.

While Baba was staying in Tiljala he would appoint one dada to take care of the Lake Gardens house. On this occasion he had appointed a young junior dada. Baba was supposed to return to Lake Gardens on a certain fixed day but that day came and went and Baba didn't show up. Dada was wondering why, but the next day he prepared himself for Baba's arrival and again Baba didn't arrive. On the third day the same thing happened. Then one or two days later when he awoke he felt sure that Baba would come on that day. He spent the morning decorating the house for Baba's arrival and sure enough Baba returned that day. When Baba saw the decorations and colorful lighting, he called that dada and said, "How did you know I was coming today?" The dada kept silent. "Did somebody tell you?" Again he didn't say anything.

Then Baba said, "Perhaps because I am in Calcutta you could feel that I was coming. But suppose I wasn't in Calcutta. How are you going to know when I am coming then?"

“Baba, I will call the office and ask where you are in India and when you are due to arrive.”

“But suppose I am not in India. What then?”

“I will call the office, find out in what part of the world you are, and when you are coming back to India.”

“But suppose I am not in the world.”

Now the dada got confused. He didn't know what to say. “In that case,” Baba said, tapping his anahata chakra three times, “you will have to look for Baba here.”

Dada Keshavananda told me the following story: In one General Darshan in Patna one of the margis asked Baba when Prout would be established. Even in those later days Baba was very free and informal with the senior margis. Baba paused for a few moments and then said, “Yes, I can tell you, but only if you answer one question: tell me how many Proutists there are in this city. Whoever is a true Proutist raise your hand and we will count.” Then Baba asked Keshavananda to count how many hands were raised. Not surprisingly, not a single hand was raised. Who would dare raise their hand after such a question and face Baba's interrogation? This was before Baba's arrest, when he was living in Patna.

I heard another interesting story from Pratap, Baba's bodyguard. When plans were underway to publish the nutshell series of Baba's writings, both social and spiritual philosophy, a proposal was placed before Baba to put his photo inside the books, one photo for the spiritual philosophy as Anandamurti, and one photo for the social philosophy as Prabhat Ranjan Sarkar. A selection of photos was then given to Baba for him to decide. He selected two different gentleman's photos, one for Anandamurti and one for P. R. Sarkar. He also signed his name in Roman script on each photo. Afterward he commented that it was good that these photos were to be included in the nutshell series, since these books would be going to the masses. “When they read the book they will first look at the photo, and by doing so the consciousness of the general mass will be raised.”

Garden Demonstration

DURING ONE RDS IN late 1986 or early 1987, I and Dada Devashraddhananda, who was representing SS New York in the RDS, got a chance to attend Baba's garden demonstration, which Baba would do from time to time for margis and workers and also for certain select non-margis. In the beginning many non-margis attended, especially students and teachers from the agricultural college. They were surprised at how much they learned from Baba, even the professors, including details that were not found in any of their books. It was not only a chance for Baba to show the people his garden and his museum; it was a way for him to give them his personal touch.

There was no fixed day or time for the garden demonstration. He would decide that on such and such a day he wanted to hold the demonstration, and then whatever worker was in charge would set it up and invite the people. They had to make sure they got sufficient people so that Baba would be happy with the turnout. Of course, for us it was a chance to spend some time with Baba in a unique atmosphere.

We all gathered upstairs in Baba's house that afternoon, in the hall in front of his room, where his museum was housed. There were three or four Indian margis and the two of us. PA informed Baba that the group was ready and when Baba came out we all did sastaung pranam. Then he started showing us his museum, narrating the history and importance of different artifacts and displays—volcanic lava from Iceland, an ancient coin that had been minted outside of India. All

those objects were gifts from different margis and workers, some that Baba had specifically requested, such as the Krishna Liila and Shiva Liila displays, for which he had commissioned a local artist. Each used beautifully crafted figurines housed in glass cases to depict different scenes from the lives of Shiva and Krishna.

There were even several objects in the museum that I had brought for Baba. One was a beautifully carved stone artifact from an American Indian tribe. While I was living in Los Altos, I had initiated one member of that tribe, and he wanted to send something from his people as an offering to Baba. I had given it to Baba and explained its origin and significance, and he had accepted it and done namaskar to that distant brother. Now it was on display in his museum. Another object on display in the museum was a prism that a non-margi in Israel by the name of Cohen had given to me as an offering to Baba. He had seen a photo of Baba and had been greatly moved. "I feel that he is a man of great depth," he told me. "Just by looking at the photo I feel a great admiration for him." One article that I had wanted to get for Baba but couldn't was a moon rock. I knew one elderly lady in Los Altos who worked at NASA. She was also the editor of a scientific journal and used to attend dharmachakra. I asked her if she could get a moon rock for Baba's museum but the security at NASA was very tight and unfortunately it wasn't possible. But that was the spirit many people had, both workers and margis. We were always on the lookout for artifacts that Baba might like to have in his museum.

After Baba finished showing us the museum, he led us downstairs to tour the garden. One of the reasons Baba had made his garden was to save endangered species and he had many such rare plants. Another reason was to give his physical touch to these particular plants and to the workers who had brought them. All those plants needed Baba's touch in some unique and mysterious way. There are many stories connected with that. Someone would try to pluck a leaf or a flower from one of the plants and wherever Baba was he would immediately react. He was connected to them in some invisible manner.

Baba started from the left side as you enter the house, beginning at the statue of Rabindranath Tagore. He was in a light, joking mood,

and as we walked he explained in detail about the plants we saw, a fascinating narration that would have been difficult for anyone to remember, much less myself. Among the things I do remember was a small lemon tree. Baba said that one lemon of that variety was enough to cleanse the stomach and two lemons were enough to cleanse the intestines. When we completed the circuit, we came to some big ferns that are to the right of the gate as you enter. Baba said that these ferns used to be huge trees before the ice age but since then they had undergone evolutionary changes and had thus become small plants in the modern age. "These ferns do not have any name in Sanskrit," he said, "so I have given them the Sanskrit name 'puranika.'" Purana means "old."

Before we got to the ferns we passed another small museum on the ground floor where Dada Asimananda was staying. Baba led us in there and narrated the history and significance of the various artifacts. I was distinctly aware of how fortunate I was. I am walking with Parama Purusha was the predominant thought in my mind, to the extent that I wasn't paying that much attention to what Baba was saying. I was paying more attention to that feeling of grace, the awareness that I was walking in the company of Parama Purusha. The next day I got a chance to go into Baba's room. When I entered he smiled and said, "Oh, why have you come? You were already there." Of course, Baba had called me to his room. In the Calcutta phase you could only go to Baba's room when he called you. When he said this, I felt immediately that he was drawing attention to my feeling from the previous day, as if to say that he had recognized what I had been thinking, my mood of immersion in the thought that I was together with Parama Purusha. I stayed there for some time, talking with Baba on different subjects, but that subtle recognition of my devotional mood from the previous day is what most impacted my mind.

First Purodha Board Meeting

ON JUNE 3, 1989 Baba gave his RU speech, entitled "Matter and Abstract." It was a further exploration of the new theory of microvita that he had first given in 1986. The next morning Baba called the first official meeting of the purodha board. Prior to that, Baba had conducted purodha board meetings, just as he had conducted tattvik, acarya, and avadhuta board meetings, but these had always been meetings of the general bodies of those respective boards, and since there were no officially declared purodhas, everyone was allowed to take part in the general purodha meeting, even margis, and as with the other general body meetings Baba would preside in his function as purodha pramukha. But this time was different. Before the meeting Baba declared that only those persons could attend who had completed all the lessons of vishesh yoga, and at that moment in time only eighteen persons had completed all their lessons: Acarya Shraddhananda Avadhuta, Acarya Pranavananda Avadhuta, Acarya Asiiimananda Avadhuta, Acarya Shuddhasattvananda Avadhuta, Acarya Nityashuddhananda Avadhuta, Acarya Santoshananda Avadhuta, Acarya Nigamananda Avadhuta, Acarya Savitananda Avadhuta, Acarya Dhruvananda Avadhuta, Acarya Cidananda Avadhuta, Acarya Satyananda Avadhuta, Acarya Chandranathji, Acarya Dasharathji, Acarya Raghunathji, Acarya Sujit Kumarji, Acarya Pashupatiji, Avadhutika Ananda Bharati Acarya, Avadhutika Ananda Sumita Acarya, Avadhutika Ananda Mitra Acarya, and Acarya Kinshuk Ranjan Sarkar.

After that meeting, the workers who had begun learning vishesh started hurrying to complete their lessons, but as of June 1989

there were only eighteen of us. Important workers such as Dada Shambhushivananda and Dada Haratmananda had some lessons but not all, so they could not attend. I knew the complete record because I was one of the members of the central purodha board, along with Dada Pranavananda, Dada Suddhasattvananda, Dada Shraddhananda, and Dada Asiimananda. Baba also allowed three other workers to attend the meeting in order to assist him, though they had not yet completed their lessons: Baba's PA, Dada Keshvananda; the GS, Dada Sarvatmananda; and Dada Vijayananda, our leading intellectual and Baba's scribe.

At that time Dada Asiimananda had lost his acaryaship as a punishment imposed by Baba. Dada Shraddhananda was the purodha board secretary and he wasn't sure what to do in this situation. After deliberating the matter, we decided that since Asiimanandajii had lost his acaryaship he could not be part of the central board or take part in the meeting. Kinshuk's name came up—he had just completed his lessons after some prodding by Baba—and we decided to propose his name to take Dada Asiimananda's place. We brought our suggestion to Baba before the meeting and he accepted it. He then asked us if any of the board members had been in the board for more than three years, in which case he should be replaced. In Caryacarya it was written that the term was five years but Baba had his reasons. However, none of the members had been in the board for more than two years, and when Dada Shraddhananda informed Baba of this, Baba kept quiet.

As with the avadhuta board meeting, it was part of the tradition that the purodha board secretary would begin the meeting by reading out the purodha board report. Then a different dada would talk about the purpose and duties of a purodha. But this time Baba didn't allow anyone to speak on that subject. "What is there to say?" he said. "Everything is contained in the practice of sadhana. Do sadhana and you will get it." Then Baba himself started talking about the meaning of purodha. "The word purodha means 'he who moves ahead and leads society from the front.' You people should remain on the front lines and lead society forward. That is why you have to be established in your sadhana. Astavakra pioneered the science of

vishesh yoga but he could not complete giving it. Now it is complete, and you should practice it and become established in it.”

Baba used the phrase “high grade of science.” Again he stressed the importance of this practice and said that there was no effect of negative microvita in vishesh yoga. It was the pure rajadhiraja yoga and was intimately related with the concepts that he had given in his “Matter and Abstract” speech. Baba also mentioned that his coming to this earth was premature. “The world is not utilizing me properly,” he said, and it felt painfully obvious to me that he was right.

He also talked about the difference between Ananda Marga vishesh yoga and other yogas. In other yogas, he said, you will find detailed explanations of the petals and chakras, each petal with its own seed mantra and particular god or goddess, a symbolic deity representing the forces inherent in those petals and chakras. But Baba simplified this practice and made it more powerful by removing all those minor gods and goddesses and putting Anandamurti as the Supreme Lord in the center. He said much about the practice but this is as much as I can share here.

After Baba returned to Calcutta following the DMC, he gave a series of seminar classes for the workers centering around the ideas he had discussed in “Matter and Abstract.” He asked Dada Shambushivananda to bring a blackboard and then Baba dictated to him a detailed chart of the evolution of the cosmos according to microvita theory and the concepts found in “Matter and Abstract.” At one point, one Dada asked how these new concepts, which were not at all easy to understand, related to mahat, aham, and citta. Baba said, “What I have given is not according to Kapil’s (Samkhya) philosophy. All other existing philosophies are based on Kapil’s description of the cosmos. This is an entirely new theory, containing new concepts that humanity will require another two hundred years to understand.” This was the second time that I had heard Baba say that humanity will require another two hundred years to understand what he had given. The first time was during the seminars he had given for the workers on biopsychology. But I will come to that in a moment.

During these seminars on "Matter and Abstract," Baba talked about the internal ecological balance of the body. "Generally the body is in a balanced state," he said. "But if something goes awry then that balance is lost and either the internal or external heat of the body increases out of proportion to the other. Baba explained that the tanmatras play a major role in maintaining the internal ecological balance. He gave a demonstration but I don't remember the details. A person's vrittis get stimulated by the perceptions of sight, touch, taste, smell, and sound, and great personalities convey their blessings through these media. That is why the common people approach these great personalities with folded hands. Great personalities can treat people by means of these inferences, through the application of positive microvita. This application of positive microvita is also known as the karma of Parama Purusha. Negative microvita can also be transmitted in the same way and we can call that a curse. This happens due to the imbalance of energy that is created in the body. Thus we have to be careful with what types of tanmatras or vibrations we come in contact with. Yama, niyama, asanas, and pranayama are taught in order for the aspirant to gain control over the mind and organs and thus over the reception or rejection of these tanmatric vibrations, since it is the organs that transmit or perceive the tanmatras. Prana helps the citta to retain the vibration, so prana helps in perception. It is said that the delight of tasting is a lot greater than the pleasure of eating, and this is due to prana. When I have a craving for rasagula the enjoyment I feel is greater than the pleasure I get when I start eating. The greater the control one has over the vital principle, prana, the stronger shall be one's power of acceptance or non-acceptance of the samskaras. Prana is not an organ, it is the cooperative creation of ten vital vibrations of the aerial factor. In its collective entirety it is tamaguni. The ear, skin, speech, and hand are the sattvaguni organs. The eye and the foot are rajaguni. The tongue, nose, anus, and genital organs are tamaguni."

These were some of the topics Baba discussed during that seminar.

The other time I heard Baba say that humanity would need two hundred years to understand what he was saying was when he

was giving a seminar on biopsychology. That was earlier, in Lake Gardens, after the biannual DMC in Anandanagar. It was part of the general routine after the New Year's and Ananda Purnima DMCs. After returning to Calcutta, Baba would give a series of seminars for the workers based on topics he had discussed in his DMC and RU speeches, along with any pertinent General Darshans from that period. These discussions would then go into the seminar notes that would serve as the text material for the next round of seminars that would be held at different levels—sectorial, regional, diocese, and so on. This time the topic was biopsychology, and that day Baba called the seminar attendees upstairs to the living room so that he could examine them. All the global RDS workers were present. He put some questions to each of us and in the end only six or seven people passed: Vijayananda, Jagadishvarananda, Shambhushivananda, Mantreshvarananda, Pranavatmakananda, Bhaskarananda, and maybe one more. I didn't pass. Baba asked me what was the effect of intoxication. I gave the correct answer but I didn't elaborate enough. I said, "Baba, the balance of mind is lost." Baba paused for a few seconds and then said, "No, not correct." He then signaled for me to move to the side for those who had failed to answer correctly. Then Baba began to elaborate. "The balance of mind is lost, and when one takes intoxicants into the body, it accelerates the conversion of lymph into semen, and this increases sexual desire, which affects the mental balance." That lack of elaboration was why I failed to pass, and I have not seen Baba's explanation in any of his books. Baba added that a similar thing happens with meat-eaters. He mentioned that that was why a certain meat-eating people produced a lot of children but he would not allow that to go into the printed notes. Vijayananda would read out to Baba the draft version of the notes before it was sent for printing and Baba would tell him what to edit out.

At one point during the biopsychology seminar Vijayananda asked a question and Baba got annoyed. "What is your intellectual standard? What is your spiritual depth? Even if I explain it to you, you still won't be able to understand it. Humanity will need two hundred years before they can understand this. What I have said

about biopsychology is only 4%. Much more needs to be explained but no one will understand. I came too early for that. Humanity still has to grow intellectually quite a bit before they will be able to understand what I am giving. And what I am giving, no guru before me has given." Then he said that our standard was so poor he had decided to cancel the whole thing, the entire seminar he had given on biopsychology. He forced us to submit whatever notes we had taken. PA confiscated those notes but they survived and later were printed in the book *Yoga Psychology*. Of course this was after Baba had left his body. It could not be printed during his time. And even then, a lot of things were left out of the book that were in the original notes. It was an edited version. Those notes with that additional material may still be around somewhere. At least I hope that is the case.

Croatia Master Unit

IN JANUARY 1989, BABA gave a new program to establish master units in every district in India and every region outside of India. I was there when he gave the directive. Establishing master units had been a part of our organizational work for a long time, all the way back to the 1960s, but now he was putting a renewed emphasis on them. After the January DMC, he called the SSs to his room, one by one, and talked to them about the new program. In my case he told me that master units would be centers from where Prout and spirituality would spread throughout the world. "For that reason," he said, "they are called cakranemii." Cakra means "circle" and *nemii* means "nucleus" or "center." That was the spirit behind the program.

At that time we not only did not have a master unit in every region in Qahira Sector, we had only one master unit in the entire sector. That was in Turkey. So I knew that by hook or by crook I had to get at least one new master unit in the sector to make Baba happy. Thus I undertook the search as soon as I got back. After talking with the margis in various places, one brother from Zagreb, Pranesh, agreed to give us some land for a master unit in Yugoslavia. He took me by car to see the land he had promised to donate. And so I reported the news to the central office that we now had a master unit in Yugoslavia, the first Ananda Marga master unit in a communist country. Baba was very pleased with the news. There was just one problem. This brother Pranesh was not entirely trustworthy, and in the back of my mind I had the uncomfortable feeling that he was capable of going back on his word at any time. Still, I was under a

lot of pressure to get a master unit—all the SSs were—and thus I had reported to center that it was a *fait accompli*. Unfortunately my uncomfortable feeling would prove to be prescient.

When I arrived in India for the next global RDS, Baba questioned me about the new land. He was inside his room doing asanas—Baba was very disciplined in all aspects of his daily practice—and I was sitting outside the closed door to his room, along with Dada Sarvatmananda and Dada Vijayananda. We could hear through the door that he was lying on the floor and changing position while he talked, thus we were sure that he was doing asanas.

Baba began by saying, “You know, Marshal Tito was my friend. He invited Ananda Marga to come work in Yugoslavia, but at the time Ananda Marga was in the development stage and I couldn’t send anybody. But now we have land there.” Then he started asking questions: How close was it to Zagreb? In which direction? (“North-east.”) What is the population of Yugoslavia? (“Twenty-five million.”) What is the population density in the area surrounding the master unit? Are there any nearby villages? (“Yes, Baba, a few.”) What is the local dress and food habits of the village women? Do they cook with stoves or in a traditional oven? What kind of bread do they eat; is it cooked by hand or baked in an oven? How do the children go to school, by foot or by bicycle? (“By foot, Baba.”) What religion is practiced in that area? (“Mostly Christian.”) What category of Christian—Orthodox, Catholic, Protestant? What percentage? What is the local Muslim population? What are their food habits? What are the local dialects? He also talked about the Muslim influence there.

Baba was very detailed with his questions, and of course his questions about the local Muslims were very pertinent. Some areas of Yugoslavia were predominantly Muslim at the time, especially the southern areas—Macedonia, southern Serbia, Kosovo. Neighboring Albania was 50% Muslim. When the war broke out, I remembered Baba’s questions and realized why he had asked them—because he knew that war was coming and why. It was good that Ananda Marga had become established there by then. Afterward I dictated Baba’s questions to one dada but he lost them. These were some of the questions I remember. There were many more.

When the conversation was over, Baba declared, "Today is the day of Nityashuddhananda, SS Qahira." He was so happy with the news that we had gotten land for a master unit in communist Yugoslavia that he didn't ask me any questions during the RDS that day or give me any punishment. That evening he gave a dictation to Dada Vijayananda, his official scribe, about Croatia that was to be published in Nutan Prithvi, a Bengali newspaper published by Ananda Marga in Calcutta. In those days Baba used to give dictations from time to time on different subjects and they would be published in Nutan Prithvi. Some of those dictations were about different countries, as on this occasion. He also repeated in the dictation that Marshal Tito was his friend. The next day, however, when Nutan Prithvi was published, Baba's article was not there, and Baba was not pleased about it. He called the central PRS, Dada Mantreshvarananda, and asked him why he had not published the article. "Baba, there is no land," he said. "So why will I publish it?" Earlier I had mentioned to Mantreshvarananda that we didn't actually have the deed to the land yet, only a promise from that brother, and sometimes he would get irritated in front of Baba. It was his habit and this was one of those times. Naturally, Baba got angry. "I said that we have a land in Croatia! Then why didn't you publish it!" Mantreshvarananda immediately backtracked. "Baba, it is being published tomorrow." Baba was very forceful in his comments. He also gave the master unit a Sanskrit name, Ananda Bandhu.

When I returned to the field, I was worried that Pranesh might renege on his promise, and sure enough, that is what happened. Or rather, he simply disappeared. He left the country without leaving any forwarding address, and since I knew his nature, I knew that we wouldn't be getting the land. Today he is pretending to be a guru somewhere. But I had already told Baba that we had the master unit so I redoubled my efforts, moving here and there with a sense of urgency, requesting the margis for their help. At the time there were two young margis, Prem Kumar and Anumaya, who had started a raffle in Belgrade and were doing quite well for themselves. Their dada was from Russia and he suggested I request their help. I went to see them and was able to convince them to help. They ended up

giving me eighty thousand marks and I was able to add ten thousand marks from the sectorial office coffers, and with those ninety thousand marks I was able to buy a suitable property about twenty minutes from Zagreb. That Russian dada also left the organization and set himself up as a guru, but I am still grateful to him for his help. Baba posted Dada Vishvodgatananda to the master unit as rector, and he is still there to this day, running a very successful project. Of course I didn't report the purchase of the new land, since I had already reported that we had the master unit. Only the location had changed, and even then it was roughly the same distance from Zagreb, even closer in fact.

Seminar Classes

STARTING IN THE LATE 80s, not long after I became SS Qahira, I began taking notes whenever I had a chance during global RDS and Baba's seminar classes. Here are some of my notes from Baba's seminar classes from January 1988:

“What does the archeological record say? Has there been any collective influence of positive or negative microvita on this earth or in the entire cosmos? What do you think? Express what you think with sufficient logic. What is your guess regarding Atlantis, Oceania, and Gondwanaland? Human beings came on this earth one million years ago but the history of civilization starts with the beginning of the Rigveda, fifteen thousand years ago. One million years ago to fifteen thousand years ago. For so many years, 985,000 years, human society was in darkness, but less than seven thousand years ago human beings developed pictorial letters. Full-fledged human civilization with the four symbols of advancement—agriculture, the wheel, dress, and script—started approximately seven thousand years ago. For 985,000 years there had been little progress in human society. Nearly all humanity's progress has taken place during the last fifteen thousand years, since the time of the Rgveda, the oldest unwritten book of the world. Did positive or negative microvita play a role in that advancement?

“Do microvita influence the mind first or matter first in any human or living structure? Negative microvita can function directly in the physico-psychic plexuses but they cannot reach the occult plexus directly (the occult plexus is guru chakra). Only positive

microvita can touch the lunar plexus but negative microvita may be elevated to the lunar plexus by another course. Negative microvita can affect the mind and cause it to undergo derangement, but they cannot affect it directly. Positive microvita can be used for intellectual development and for imparting certain occult powers but not for spiritual power or spiritual development. Suppose a man is deaf and dumb. These activities are controlled by nerve cells and nerve fibers. They are activated with the help of nerve cells or nerve fibers. Those nerves cells are controlled with the help of the lunar plexus. Positive microvita may function directly up to lunar plexus, but at the lunar plexus, if positive microvita are to influence nerve cells, they require some special power. Positive microvita cannot do something supernatural. They require some special power of some powerful person. Suppose the guru is saying something. If a deaf or dumb man wants to hear him he cannot hear, but I say in this room—it is not to be said outside—that if one concentrates on my varabhaya mudra there will be a direct effect of positive microvita on the auricular or other nerve cells and also on the controlling cells, and it may be that all of a sudden he may regain the power of hearing. One should look toward these two mudras, varabhaya and janusparsha mudras, and not at anything else. Microvita are radiated through these two mudras. This is the inner secret. This is supernatural but not illogical. It is supernatural because it does not come within the scope of natural phenomena. Here the inner secret does not lie with the microvita. It depends on something else. I think it is clear now, crystal clear.

“During the last vaishaki purnima at Anandanagar there were many spiritual aspirants who wanted our speed of progress to be accelerated so that Ananda Marga could be fully established on this planet. Did you mark it that after the DMC the speed became accelerated? It was the effect of positive microvita radiated through the two mudras. If a deaf man sincerely wants to hear what Baba says, then those positive microvita radiated through these two mudras are sure to help him. Is it clear? In this DMC some boys expressed mentally that we should go on fighting, and we are seeing that our boys and our girls are going on fighting. Fight in the realm of

spirituality means victory. Suppose this is the highest point up to which negative microvita can function (Baba was indicating the base of his palm but he meant vishuddha chakra). With some application of force it can be raised to the lunar plexus. This raising is called *risti* or *rusti*. The lunar plexus is the highest point that positive microvita can reach. If they are raised above that point it is called *kripa* (grace). Raising positive microvita from the lunar plexus to the occult plexus is called *kripa*, and raising it from the lunar plexus to the pinnacle point of human glory is called *karuna*. Without *kripa* there cannot be *karuna*, there cannot be any galloping jump. And raising negative microvita above the psycho-physical plexus is *rusti* or *risti*. You should always try to avoid *rusti* and you should always try to receive the glamor of *kripa* and *karuna*.”

After the DMC, Baba's class was available in an edited form only. I have written some details that were not in the printed version.

The next class was on January 9. Baba continued with the same topic.

“Even in the case of positive microvita, if it enters all of a sudden then death may take place, especially in the case of a body that is not properly developed, say a boy below the age of sixteen. That can also happen in the case of certain ladies whose mind is very sentimental. A good reaction takes place after positive microvita move above the lunar plexus. After crossing the lunar plexus the speed increases and spiritual advancement is accelerated, both in the case of male and female bodies. But the body should not be that of a carnivore. The person should be a vegetarian. Non-vegetarian diet is not good for the application of positive microvita. GS, when I am going to apply microvita to someone, I first ask you when did he last take fish and meat. What is the biological effect of microvita in the physical body? Microvita may affect the glands or subglands or the nuclei of nerve cells. Transformation of species may even occur. Also transformation of sex may take place. What may be the psychological effect of positive microvita? Microvita may directly affect the plexuses, and through the plexuses mental occupations or *vrittis*

* This answer from Baba has been published as question 17 in Baba's book *Microvitum in a Nutshell*.

are affected. Vrittis are of three types: proto-physical propensities, psychic propensities, and proto-spiritual propensities. All these three types of vrittis are affected. A person may become eccentric, they may exhibit schizophrenia, mania, melancholia, and other psychic diseases of both mind and body.”*

While leaving Baba said, “Do something for the human society, the entire human society.”

Later that same day Baba talked about neohumanism:

“Why do we call it neohumanism rather than merely humanism? What is the special requirement of neohumanism? Neohumanism is the gospel of humanity, the gospel of the human heart, when the dreams of the human heart are emanated throughout the universe. The idea of humanism is that the vibration of human thought touches all of humanity, throughout the cosmos. Humanism means the sweet touch of the human heart for all of humanity. Neohumanism is called as such not because humanity is newly explained or defined but because the soft touch of humanity encompasses the entire periphery of the living world. Neohumanism is a new kind of humanism where the sweet touch of humanism is extended to the entire cosmos without distinction of plant, animal, or bird, to the entire living world. Does neohumanism also extend to the inanimate world? Yes it does. Neohumanism extends to the inanimate world as well, in the sense of the sentiment of the living earth, not externally emanated or externally expressed but within the human heart. That is, we cannot express it externally but we can feel it internally even in the case of inanimate objects, which may be transmuted into animate objects through scientific research, something that I hope will be done in the near future in the laboratory. Why should we unnecessarily break a piece of stone? We should leave it as it is, as far as possible. We may break it if needed, but never unnecessarily; otherwise we wound the sentiment of the Macrocosm. The Macrocosm created that piece of stone. If we break it unnecessarily we are hurting the sentiment of the Macrocosm. This inanimate world is the internal creation of the Macrocosm. You may have marked that some people

* This answer has been published as question 18 in *Microvitum in a Nutshell*.

while walking kick a piece of stone with their foot or with their stick. Does it not wound the mindstuff or ectoplasm of Saguna Brahma? I have no hesitation to powder down stone for construction purposes or when there is dire necessity, but not otherwise.”

After this Baba went out for his field walk. When he returned from his walk he remained outside the entrance door to the hall talking. Then he said, “Today I extend the arena of neohumanism to inanimate objects. You may notice that I don’t hit any stone unnecessarily when I am walking.” Then he went up.

In the evening he again talked to us about neohumanism.

Notes From Global RDS

HERE ARE SOME MORE excerpts from the notebook that I used to carry with me once I started attending global RDS. They are in no particular order:

During one session in December 1986 Baba said that ours is the single biggest missionary organization. He also said that India has 323 languages and Sanskrit is the mother of more than two hundred of those languages. Today approximately twelve million people are capable of speaking Sanskrit.

Without grammar one cannot create new words. A language is significantly transformed after one thousand years, scripts after two thousand years.

During LFT reporting—most likely during the 1987 Ananda Purnima DMC in Anandanagar—Baba gave one speech:

“You are my hope and aspiration. I expect much from you. In this universe there is both a machine and a machine man. The machine is universalism and human aspiration, and you are the handles of the machine. Our workers represent the hopes and aspirations of universal humanhood. The machine man cannot operate the machine if there is no handle. Are you not indispensable for the proper operation of the machine? I want our handles to be very strong. I say again and again that your existence is indispensable for human progress, and in the future, generation after generation, many LFTs will come forward. You boys and girls are the vanguard and pioneers.

You are constructing the path for them. After constructing the path, the vanguard does not have the chance to enjoy it, but others will enjoy it after them. As the vanguard and pioneers, you have a special responsibility and you must not forget your responsibility. Strict adherence to responsibility will make the future human society more luminous and more glamorous. You are the children of Parama Purusha. You are the glorious sons and daughters of the glorious father. I say once again that the organization depends on you. You should fulfill humanity's hopes and aspirations and longings. Assure me that humanity may count on your service."

The LFTs all assured Baba that he could count on them. Then he said, "Your reassurance pleases me very much."

One time in RDS, Baba asked someone to bring a blackboard. He then instructed that person to draw a triangle.

"How many sides does a triangle have?" he asked.

"Three sides, Baba."

"Now draw a rectangle. How many sides does a rectangle have?"

"Four sides."

"Now draw a pitcher. How many sides does a pitcher have?"

This time the dada was stumped.

"Two sides," Baba answered. "Inside and outside."

Baba would often have these kinds of humorous asides.

During the bhukti pradhana RDS on 30 October 1987, Baba said:

"Now we are at the threshold of a new era, poised to wipe out the old era of dogma, superstition, exploitation, and inhuman crimes. The new era will be an era of light. We should be well equipped with all the necessary aspects of this era. We should be mentally strong, intellectually elevated, and be ready to root out all dogmas, superstitions, inertness, and longing for the past. Our future is bright, but in order to realize that future we must welcome in this new era with all our might and intellectual strength. We must remember again and again that this is our universal responsibility, our social responsibility, and our personal responsibility." After a short gap, Baba said, "Suppression, oppression, and repression are all equally bad and

detrimental to proper integrated human development. We must not tolerate any of these. That is why we must be intellectually strong. We must not tolerate dogma and thus you should attend classes on Prout, sociology, and our philosophy and ideology. Intellectually you should be well equipped. You are entering into a noble era; thus you should be ready for the newer days to come. Free men of this free world, you should move forward. Your time is very valuable. You must not waste even a single moment.”

The next day, 31 October, at 11:15 p.m., Baba said:

“Ours is the age of geo-sentiment, the age of cosmopolitanism. If we use the term ‘cosmopolitan,’ it means geo-sentiment. They want to maintain their separate entities, living side by side as separate entities in peaceful coexistence. Actually the idea of cosmopolitanism is connected with land sentiment, with geo-sentiment, but we are all universal beings and the entire universe is ours. How are we then to prepare plans and programs? Our plans and programs should be twofold. First, we should fulfill local requirements without being affected by geo-sentiment. Secondly, our plans and programs must not be allowed to go against or be ultravires to our universal life. None is big or small. All must maintain a loving relationship. Those who hate are the enemies of human progress. All must move together in one spirit. Localized planning, or geo-sentiment, must not be allowed to go against the collective sentiment or universal interest. Different blocks have different problems. In Baethun Block or Malda Block there are different needs, but the human race should not be adversely affected by the programs they undertake.”

This was still during the bhukti pradhan meeting, which had continued into the next day.

“It is good to read but you should give more importance to your own literature. This will give you the knowledge you need.”

“To know is not sufficient. You should also know how to impart knowledge. Only then is it worthy.”

“Allopathic medicine is a type of poison but it cannot kill negative microvita. It suppresses them, and after a decade or more, a new complicated disease erupts. By taking this medicine, the ecological balance of the body is disturbed. The internal cure is meditation. The external cure is alternative medicine.”

Baba was talking about systaltic movement:

“Everything moves in a pulsative manner, and this is for the welfare of the world. It is the providential arrangement of Parama Purusha. You can look at the sun’s rays because those rays are systaltic. Had they been straight or linear you would have become blind had you looked at them. If you want to attain samadhi, systaltic movement is also essential. That is why pranayama is very important for sadhana. Human beings progress with the help of the vital energy acquired through the five fundamental factors passing through different planes of inferences. In sadhana, as the mind moves from conscious to subconscious to unconscious, the nerve cells get concentrated. One loses control of the nerve fibers and the conscious mind becomes suspended. The pulse rate decreases and the breathing becomes rhythmic, which paves the way to samadhi. Japa and dhyana become easier. One can get good sleep; it is a remedy for insomnia. For samadhi, dhruvasmriti is essential, and for that pranayama is a must.”

During the March 1989 RDS, Baba said that biological changes are taking place in a short span of time. “Agricultural methods are also undergoing changes. In the future agriculture will be more in the factories than in the fields. Regarding the problems of the present and near future, a new system is to be started. The psychic function of each and every living being starts from certain physical ions. These types of physical ions will serve the purpose.”

“What is our psycho-philosophical position regarding the cult of Satan? Is its existence supported by logic or rationality? Answer: there can be only one supreme entity. There cannot be a second one. In Hinduism there are four supreme entities: Narayana, king, brahmin, and cow. In Christianity there are three gods: father, son, and the holy ghost.”

March 31 was LFT reporting and some Italian LFTs were present. Baba asked one of them, "How can we maintain adjustment between socio-economic life and psycho-spiritual life?" He tried to answer but he couldn't, so Baba answered at some length, all in regards to Italy. Then Baba said, "But I have no idea about Italy." Everyone laughed.

The same LFT said, "Baba, you know everything," and Baba also laughed.

Then Baba said, "A buffalo told me that you have not discussed this question among yourselves."

Another question was, "What adjustment should there be between socio-economic life and spiritual-psycho-physical environment in comparison with (not in contrast to) the adjustment between psychic and spiritual environment?" A third question was, "What is the socio-economic structure of Italy and how can it be developed?" They answered but Baba was not satisfied and he elaborated. Another question was, "What are the forest resources and subterranean wealth of Italy?" Again Baba answered. During his answer he said, "Italy is neither developed nor underdeveloped. It is at the threshold of becoming a developed country. Its level of development is comparable to that of Spain. Both are more developed than Portugal."

"Grammar should be a happy blending of science and aesthetics. For spreading language there should be a policy of persuasion, not imposition or suppression.

"Sam + kr + kta—that which is developed in a balanced way or reformed language is Sanskrit. When the old Vedic language is given proper grammatical structure it becomes Sanskrit."

When Baba gave the master unit program he said one important thing during bhukti pradhan RDS: "If anyone cries for lack of food I will not allow them to cry. If anyone cries for lack of education I will not allow them to cry. If anyone cries for Parama Purusha I will allow them to cry because this is for their welfare."

Baba made one comment about Harrapa. He said it was the place where Shiva was looked upon as father. "Mojendaro was part of the

same civilization. Why they die out? Most likely the people left that area due to a lack of water.”

“The day I thought to give Prout, on that same day the death bell of communism rang.”

“To support Gandhism means to support logic with superstition.”

“In any missionary organization it is the work that is to be respected. Where there is work it is respected.”

“Due to intellectual development there is a lack of physical adjustment. For example, the eyesight weakens and the teeth get spoiled.”

“If you are tired do more dhyana; you will get energy.” Baba also told me personally to do maximum dhyana. “You can see Baba in any form,” he said. “Lying, sitting, young, old, with or without the mudra.”

“Guru dhyana means the guru’s blessing. The guru sees that one is meditating on him, so he must give that person supreme realization.”

“Nothing can happen without his grace. Human beings cannot do anything by their own efforts. The duty of human beings is to crave his grace. Even in guru puja one should cry for his grace. But in guru puja one cannot cry without his grace.”

“Brahma kripa (grace) means, ‘O God, keep me on the right path.’”

“A time will come when human beings will be able to extract energy from thunder and lightning and store it in a capsule that people will be able to ingest to get the energy.”

In Bengali Baba said, *Jiivika nast kara chalbe na; dharma nast kara chalbe na; bhasa nast kara chalbe na.* “One should not allow anyone’s occupation to be destroyed; one should not allow dharma to be destroyed; one should not allow language to be destroyed.” He also

said that those who do injustice are committing sin and sin is a symptom of weakness. "Such people are fearful people. To tolerate injustice is also a sin. Language is something fundamental; it is an important part of our existence and thus should not be destroyed."

In January 1989, Baba said that our organizational speed is not sufficient. "It has to be increased. To save humanity it should move ahead with lightning speed. For this seva dal was created."

In the ACB meeting after that DMC, many ACB members were missing and Baba personally knew those members. They had left for home after the DMC. When Baba arrived for the meeting, he asked GS why so few people were present and when GS told him, he said, "Many left? They are ACB members and bhukti pradhans and they left? What is this? They didn't ask me. LFT, BP, UBP, PP, GMP, and ACB are all active posts. They exist in order to accelerate the speed of the organization. They should have asked me."

During one reporting Baba said, "I wanted the management of the educational system to be in the hands of those who follow the prescribed rules and system. If it had been that way today in society, I could have started special training centers for birds and animals, for example, dogs and monkeys."

This was in connection with a discourse Baba had given in which he mentioned these training centers.

While at Anandanagar Baba said: "A time will come when Anandanagar will supply all necessary goods, even food, and the world can be saved. Break the soil and stone in Anandanagar and plant trees and other plants wherever you can."

"Falsehood is the noumenal cause of crime, so all criminals are liars."

Baba's Departure

IN JUNE OF 1989, Baba started giving microvita sadhana. He called selected workers to Calcutta and after the DMC he gave microvita sadhana to all the SSs. All I can say about the sadhana is that it was his grace in the form of his special blessing. It is a state of bliss, nothing else. Later Baba selected certain margis to learn the sadhana, and he asked the SSs to propose the names of margis in our respective sectors that we wished to recommend. Baba accepted some names and not others. Baba gave the sadhana over a period of one to two months. When I came back in August for RDS I brought with me one margi, Jayanta, from Athens—Baba had stayed in his house—and I requested microvita sadhana for him, but Baba said that he had stopped giving it.

When Baba taught me the sadhana he asked me a question—this was at the end of the session. “What is the best devotion?” I was surprised to hear him ask me this. What could I possibly say? After a few moments silence, Baba himself answered: “To please the guru is the best devotion.” Then he asked me, “And how will you please the guru?” I kept silent. Then Baba said, “Do what he says.”

Those who learned the sadhana all had inspiring stories to tell. One of them was Jaganath from Ludhiana. We were good friends from the time when I was posted there. He was a poor man who had a small dairy business, collecting milk from different places and making butter and other milk products, but he was a great devotee and he always helped the acaryas as much as he possibly could. When Baba called him to learn microvita sadhana, he first had to

go to Dada Vijayananda to get his lessons reviewed. This was part of the process. It was Dada's duty to make sure that the candidates were doing sadhana properly before they went into Baba's room to learn the sadhana. When Dada reviewed his lessons he couldn't answer any of his questions. Whether it was how to do first lesson, second lesson, pranayama, his only answer was "Baba." "What is your mantra?" "Baba!" "Explain how you do dhyana." "Baba!" For several days Vijayananda tried to revise his lessons but finally he had to give up. When he reported this to Baba, Baba said, "Don't worry about it. It is because he loves me. Send him in." And Baba taught him the sadhana. There was another brother, Bhatti, who had a similar experience.

When I came back in August for RDS with Jayanta, it was during the time of shravani purnima, the day Lord Shiva initiated his first disciple and the day Baba also initiated his first disciple. When Baba came for General Darshan that day, I could see the emotion in his face and hear it in his voice. Sometimes on shravani purnima Baba would give varabhaya mudra, but not this time. He was speaking Bengali and he began by saying, *mone porche ajker din anek batsar age ...* (I remember that many, many years ago on this day ...), and then began narrating the story of that first initiation:

"One person approached by the riverbank in Kashimishra Ghat. We talked for some time and he agreed to take initiation. I told him to take bath in the river, and he came back after his bath and I initiated him. After initiation there is a tradition that the disciple will offer the guru some physical gift, like money, gold, or land. With this in mind, he said that he didn't have anything to offer. Then I put my right hand in my pocket and took out one chawani (a quarter), and gave it to him." Baba said "right hand" and he used the word chawani. "I said, 'Now this is yours.' He took it and gave it back to me as guru dakshina. He said, 'Baba this is yours. I am offering it back to you.' After that offering I gave him my word that from then onward I would not accept any physical offering in guru dakshina."

When I arrived back in India in December for the New Year's DMC and reporting, Baba was sick—he had been hospitalized on the twenty-fifth—and so he didn't give DMC. Instead he sent Dada

Vijayananda to give a DMS in his stead. Since Baba didn't go to Anandanagar I also didn't go. I stayed in Calcutta. After the RDS ended, I remained in Calcutta for some days more, until the thirteenth or fourteenth. During that time Baba called all the important workers and had them sit in three lines. There were some fifteen or twenty of us, principally central workers. Dada Shambhushivananda and I were the only SSs. Before he began talking to us, he asked GS to recite the names of those workers who were present. As per the reporting system, I was supposed to have left for my field immediately after the reporting ended so GS didn't mention my name. In fact, it had been reported to Baba several days earlier that I had left, but I was still there. Baba was still following his normal routine, going for field walk and so on, but he had lost most of his sight so he couldn't see me. I was sitting in the middle of the second row. I had some clash in my mind when my name was not mentioned—I wanted Baba to know that I was there—but I knew why GS couldn't acknowledge my presence. Then Baba started speaking. He started describing matter-centered, dogma-centered, self-centered, and God-centered philosophies. It was the first time he had spoken on this subject. After he described them, he said that the other three had no future. Only God-centered philosophy would remain and that was Prout.

My last visit to India before Baba's departure was for the August 1990 RDS. During that visit Baba's health was very poor; he had to go to the hospital for a short visit. On his return the doctor prescribed complete rest, but that Sunday Baba insisted on giving General Darshan. How could Bhagavan remain away from his devotees? But since Baba had been prescribed rest, it was decided that rather than walking up the stairs to the darshan hall, Baba would sit on a chair and four people would be chosen to carry the chair to the hall. I was one of the four people chosen, along with Dada Nigamananda, Dada Krsnabuddhyananda, and one other dada whom I don't remember. Baba's bodyguard, Pratap, was also helping.

While we were going up the stairs I was to Baba's right, holding the front of the chair. I noticed that Baba's legs were hanging freely and swinging, so with my free hand, my right hand, I cupped the sole of Baba's foot so that it was resting on my palm. That was a

moment of immense bliss. On the way back down after the darshan, I again cupped the sole of Baba's foot and supported it all the way to the bottom of the stairs, until it was time to set his chair down and Baba's feet touched the ground. At one point on the way down Baba looked at me and our eyes met. Though his eyesight was very poor, his spiritual vision took in everything, and I felt a tremendous thrill from Baba's look.

Later that evening, Baba asked his PA, Dada Keshavananda, to tell him the names of the people who had carried him to the darshan hall because he didn't want to be in debt to anyone and thus wanted to pay us back in his own way. That evening when I sat for sadhana, I was inundated by a wave of bliss, and that blissful state continued for several days. That was Baba's recompense to me for that little service.

Global reporting finished on the ninth of September and on the tenth, before leaving for the field, all the SSs came to the living room of Baba's Tiljala house to do sastaung pranam. It was tradition that we would report to Baba before leaving. Sometimes we had the opportunity to do sastaung and sometimes not. Sometimes GS would go into his room and tell him we were leaving and we wouldn't see him. But on this occasion Baba came out to the living room and told us to do sastaung one by one in the same order as reporting—Hong Kong, Manila, Suva, New York, Georgetown, Berlin, Cairo, and Nairobi. That was the last time I saw Baba alive. Since then, whenever I do sastaung that picture comes in my mind.

When I arrived back in the sector I met Dada Mahavirananda in Athens. He had had a dream in which Baba had left his body and he was telling us that he thought Baba was getting ready to leave. I didn't trust his premonition. How can Baba leave his body before the fifty years are up, I thought, thinking about Nagina's story of asking Baba to stay for fifty years back in 1955. Then one sister in Athens, Manju, also had a premonition that Baba would leave his body. But again I didn't think it was possible.

In the evening of 20 October I caught an Egypt Air flight from Cairo to Bombay for the regular global RDS. I arrived on the night of October 21 and went to the jagriti in Andheri. I was planning on

buying my onward flight to Calcutta the next day. When I reached the jagriti it was after midnight and everyone was sleeping, so I found a free corner and went to sleep. Dada Suddhasattvananda arrived early in the morning and he had bought a newspaper on the way in. I was coming out of the bathroom when he showed me the news that Baba had left his body the previous afternoon. It was a tremendous shock. My Baba was gone! My next thought was for the mission. He was our guardian and our guide. What would happen to us now? Still in shock, I left immediately for the airport to buy a ticket on the first flight to Calcutta. I arrived in Tiljala in the early afternoon and the scene I found there was an echo of my own sentiments. Everyone was in shock and disbelief. Baba's body had been kept in a refrigerated glass box in the living room of his house, the same hall where Baba would sit for Sunday darshan and conduct RDS. Margis and workers were coming and going—doing sastaung pranam, meditating, standing and looking forlornly at Baba's body. Most everyone was silent, absorbed in their thoughts. I also did sastaung and sadhana in front of Baba's body. Then I left the room and tried to understand what had happened.

It was then that I learned about some of the hints Baba had given during his final days. Perhaps the strongest was his last message to the LFTs during LFT reporting the night before his departure. The message was as follows:

“Serpents are exhaling venom everywhere. The sweet gospels of peace sound like empty mockery. That is why on the eve of my departure from this world I send out a clarion call to all those in every house who are preparing to fight against the demons in human form.”

He was paraphrasing the words of Rabindranath Tagore but his meaning couldn't have been clearer. Earlier he had made the LFTs and workers take the following oath: “All my energy, all my mind, all my thoughts, all my deeds are to be goaded unto the path of collective elevation of human society without neglecting other animate and inanimate objects right from this moment until the last point of my living on this earth.” These words were deep in my thoughts as I contemplated the mystery of his departure.

Over the next few days, people arrived from all corners of the globe to pay their last respects to Baba's physical form. In the meantime

a wooden cremation pyre was erected on the grounds in the form of a pratik, on the site of the present-day memorial. I was one of the four people GS selected to carry Baba's body to the cremation pyre, at 2:30 Sunday afternoon, October twenty-six. The shraddha ceremony was performed according to Caryacarya, and at 3:30, the hour of Baba's death, Kinshuk, Baba's adopted son, put fire into Baba's mouth as per *Ananda Marga Caryacarya* (Baba's natural son, Gautam, arrived shortly after the cremation had begun; Uma Sarkar, Baba's wife, was also there). Dada Nigamananda and I, along with two other dasas, were selected to oversee the cremation, so we remained there throughout while thousands of grief-stricken devotees and workers looked on. The area around the body had been cordoned off and only we four workers were allowed inside, although a little later Dada Satyananda got permission to enter that central area. Part of our duty was to ensure that no dasas or didis made an attempt to enter the pyre and immolate themselves due to their grief. For precautionary reasons, all the rooms in the various buildings were vacated and locked and VSS guards were posted in the corridors to prevent any possible suicides. The atmosphere was full of such sadness and shock that anything was possible. On the other hand, many margis were convinced that Baba would revive himself, and they only abandoned that belief when his body started burning.

I remember that there was one cremation expert from a local cremation ground whom we had brought to make sure Baba's body was properly burned. Rati had invited him. At one point he was allowed inside the cordoned-off area. He sat next to me and said in Hindi, "Swamijii, why are you so sad? Hamsa is gone. There is nothing you or anyone can do." (Hamsa means "soul.")

The Aftermath

EVEN BEFORE BABA'S BODY was fully cremated, discussions had begun over who would head the organization and how it would be run in Baba's absence. The senior acaryas met in the Sunday darshan hall in Baba's house, including the family acaryas. Eventually it was agreed that we should follow the guidelines given in Caryacarya and that someone should be purodha pramukha. Some of the senior dasas began to have aspirations to become purodha pramukha. In fact, One senior dada started openly campaigning to be chosen. This scared some of the other senior dasas. He was a strong personality and if he became purodha pramukha he could make life difficult for many people. There were also some allegations of misbehavior. So after much discussion it was decided that since the central purodha board had been functioning while Baba was alive, then the five members of the purodha board should select or elect the purodha pramukha (we were still the same five members since the 1988 meeting). One of the criteria for becoming purodha pramukha was that the candidate had to have completed all the lessons of vishesh yoga. Several names came up, including Dada Chandranath and Dada Dasarath, since they along with Dada Shraddhananda were the teachers of vishesh yoga and it was thought that it should be one of them, but Dasarath was too old by then and Dada Chandranath thought that a wholotimer should be selected. He suggested Dada Shraddhananda. This was all discussed in the general body. Then we five sat separately and took a resolution that Dada Shraddhananda should become purodha pramukha (later I discovered that

the register in which that resolution was written had been lost). A general acarya meeting was held and Dada Pranavananda addressed that body with some inspiring words and announced that Dada Shradhdhananda had been selected as purodha pramukha. It was the twenty-eighth I believe and Dada Shradhdhananda immediately assumed the leadership of the organization.

After that we discussed who should take over as purodha board secretary. Dada Sarveshvarananda was selected as the fifth member and he became the board secretary. The other four members remained the same. Then we five members sat and selected the members of the central committee for a two-year term in accordance with Caryacarya. There was no election as of yet. Two years later the same purodha board again selected the central committee for another two-year term, adding some new members to the committee and omitting some others. At the same time we five members opted out of the central committee so that five new members could join. The spirit behind our decisions at that time was to have as little change as possible for as long as possible. Before Baba had left his body, he had told his brother Himanshu that when a great personality leaves their body, there should be no change for a certain period of time. How long a period of time depended on the personality. In some cases it could be one month, in others one year, and in some certain cases up to ten years. Baba said that when a very high-grade personality dies then it should be up to ten years. Baba used the word mahagurunipat. Nipat means "gone." So that was the spirit. We wanted to maintain the status quo as long as possible so that the organization could remain stable and continue Baba's work unimpeded. But that is not what happened. For that first year there was no significant change but after that changes started creeping in. If we could have waited ten years then the workers would have attained a certain maturity and many of the subsequent problems that we have been facing since then might have been avoided.

Unfortunately it was not destined to be—there was too great a clash of personalities. Two different groups of workers started meeting separately, and each group began crafting a strategy through which they could gain control of the organization. This really came

to the fore when the second central committee, at the end of its term, decided in October 1994 that the members of the central committee would thenceforth be determined through an electoral process drawn from among the general body of purodhas. During the previous four years we had created some thirty-three or thirty four purodhas and the central committee consisted of twenty-nine members. In that first election, Dada Sarvatmananda, Dada Keshavananda, and Dada Bhaveshananda lost their seats, primarily because many manipulations had been going on behind the scenes. Dada Sarvatmananda was a very strong personality—he had been GS during the last eight years of Baba's life. Gradually the other group had developed the feeling that the Bengalis had ruled for many years and now it was their turn. Thus the two sides faced off in a tug of war for power, and as a result the organization became destabilized. Part of the problem was that the new purodha pramukha did not prove to be a strong leader, and thus the crisis in our organization was born and it continued worsening as the years passed. There had also been intra-organizational clash and factionalism during Baba's time, but since Baba was such a strong leader it could never gain a foothold.

During those first few years after Baba's departure I remained SS Qahira, but in November 1994 I was transferred to the center as the general finance secretary, and I remained in that post until 23 August 1999, when I was again reposted. In the meantime the organizational drama continued. When the new central committee was elected in October 1994, they made one glaring mistake. They did not fix the tenure of the central committee. By then no one could ignore the growing fractures in the organization, so when the central committee met in 1997, the question of promoting the unity of the organization was added to the agenda. By this time Dada Chandranath had stopped attending the central committee meetings, though he continued to be a member. Up until the election he had presided over the CC meetings. I felt that he had some differences with how the purodha pramukha was running the organization, though that is my supposition. Dada Dasarath also stopped attending

at this time. The question of unity was discussed but no resolution was taken until the May 1997 DMS. During those meetings there was a very animated discussion. I was one of the ones who argued very strongly for unity. It was also proposed that previous central committee members who had lost their seats should be reinstated—Keshavananda, Sarvatmananda, and Bhaveshananda. In such cases, when there is a heated discussion, there is supposed to be a vote, and it was agreed that voting would be anonymous. But Dada Raghunath, who was presiding over the meeting, turned to Dada Cidananda and asked him to vote first. Dada Cidananda said that he stood for unity, and since the vote was no longer anonymous, everyone followed suit and voted yes. If anyone had voted no they would have lost face.

After the meeting the resolution was presented to the purodha pramukha. Now the purodha pramukha never attended the CC meetings. That was a crucial omission on his part. He was also president of the organization but because he didn't attend the meetings he wasn't aware of what its members were thinking. At the same time different lobbies tried to persuade him to their side and as a result he vetoed the resolution on some pretext. The next time we sat, I argued that the purodha pramukha was only one member of the CC. Nowhere was it written that he had the authority to reject the resolution. He could send it back for re-discussion but he could not reject it. This was both unconstitutional and unjust. I took a strong stand but in the end no one listened. The resolution was rejected and there it died.

In the next meeting, it was brought to light that the CC did not have a fixed tenure. As it stood it would go on indefinitely. We also discovered that only the general body of purodhas could fix its tenure. Not the CC but the entire body of purodhas, including those who had been left out of the CC. The general body of purodhas had four duties: the election of the purodha pramukha, the election of the purodha board, the election of the CC, and fixing the tenure of the CC. So in the October meetings the issue was raised and the general body of purodhas was convened to fix the tenure. Some members argued for a five-year term, some for a four-year term,

and some for a three-year term. A vote was taken and there was a tie. The matter went to the purodha pramukha and he sent it back to the CC for them to decide, though he suggested a compromise at four years. After further discussion the leader of the group that had been arguing for three years ceded his position and agreed to a five-year term. It was also agreed that all purodhas would be members of the CC with the exception of Dada Dhyaneshananda, who was in Africa and had not been able to attend. Dada Pranavananda, who was the GTS, said that on Dhyaneshananda's behalf he would take responsibility for leaving him out of the CC. It was not correct on his part, and when Dhyaneshananda was finally able to come to India he protested his exclusion. So the CC at that time, in late 1997, had thirty-seven members.

After this CC meeting, the forces that would eventually lead to the division of the organization gradually came to the fore. There were various efforts for conciliation—in 2002 three margis from America, Acarya Cirsmitta, Acarya Vishvamitra, and Vishvadeva, came to India in a last attempt to preserve unity—but those efforts came to nought and in 2003 the organization became divided.

The Years that Followed

ON 23 AUGUST 1999 I was transferred to Davao in the Philippines as CTS, central training secretary. I was there for one and one half years before I was again reposted on some pretext, this time as SS New York. In June 2001, I attended the DMS and the CC meetings but the politics were intense and I got the feeling that the Hindi workers didn't like me because, though Hindi speaking and from Bihar, I was fighting against the Hindi group. But I was SS, so no one could openly oppose me. Dhruvananda was the GS, and it was clear to me that he was a weak GS. He was being manipulated by certain elements and on various occasions he gave me very poor instructions. One time he asked me to apply for a green card for Dada Hitendrananda so that he could join Dada Citkrishananda's business. I wrote back that SS doesn't give green cards, Ananda Marga doesn't give green cards; the US government gives green cards. You can apply for the visa if you want, but why should I apply? He is not a worker of my sector. He is coming for business, not to help the sector. My responsibility is for my sector. Why should I do it? He couldn't convince me, nor could anyone else, and that didn't endear me to him.

As usual I went to India periodically for reporting and the CC meetings. In March 2002 an issue came up during the CC meeting regarding the AMURT mass-feeding center at Pundag. The CC wanted to give that building to the medical department so they could begin teaching medical classes there. Jitendra Singh was lobbying for the change and some people in the CC wanted

to please him, thus the proposal. I opposed it. Baba had given the mass-feeding program and he had designated the site. I argued that if they wanted, they could give the mass-feeding project to a different department, but since the project had been given by Baba it should not be changed. If AMURT couldn't do it, then give it to ERAWS or another department. Since the building had been constructed as the AMURT mass-feeding center, then the name of the building and the nature of the project should not be changed. In the end, I said, "I know that I am the only one fighting for this and that I will be voted down, but I will say one thing: if you do this then history will blame you." Raghunath had recently become president and he took it personally. Right after the meeting he went to the purodha pramukha and told him to transfer me. The next day I was charge-sheeted for my remarks, transferred, and suspended from the CC for one session. In my support, some of the other members of the CC protested the decision and they also didn't attend the next meeting. This caused a rift in the organization, and as a result the next meeting of the CC never took place because they didn't have a quorum.

Afterward I wrote separate letters to Raghunath and to GS in which I raised several points. The first point was that the CC was a legislative body and during the meeting the GS was serving as a member of the committee. He was not the GS while he was taking part in the meeting and thus had no authority to charge-sheet any of the CC members for what happened during the meeting. And yet he had written in the charge-sheet that he was charge-sheeting me and transferring me because I had misbehaved during the meeting. Secondly, how could they claim that I had misbehaved in the meeting? I had used polite language while saying what I had said. Thus I did not accept this charge-sheet. I would accept the transfer because it was part of our conduct rules that one should have dignity of labor and not of post. Wherever I was posted I would work. But the charge-sheet and transfer was a misuse of power by both the president and the GS.

I was transferred to Madurai in South India as district secretary. It was a punishment posting, but I accepted it as a kind of sport and went there determined to work to the best of my abilities. At

any rate, the atmosphere in the organization, especially in the center, had become so vicious that it was nigh on impossible to work independently and enjoy your work. So I went there with a peaceful mind, knowing that I would be far from the politics and the intrigue. First I went to Salem where I stayed with Dada Vireshvarananda. We had a piece of land in Madhurai with a ruined house that was unfit for habitation and there were no margis to speak of. The closest margi lived in another district. He was taking care of the property as best he could, visiting on occasion to make sure that no one usurped the land on the grounds that it was abandoned. I got the key from him and went to see the place. It was disheartening. The structure was in terrible condition, and it was hard to imagine how I could do any work there, so I went back to Salem. But Vireshvarananda made some unpleasant comments, so I decided to return to Madhurai and do whatever I could. I had to sleep outside on the veranda without a roof, accompanied by snakes and other vermin, but the very next day I started construction with what little money I had brought with me. One local Christian from Singapore who was running a children's home got inspired by my efforts and he donated one thousand Singapore dollars, and when the construction was sufficiently advanced I bought some furniture and started the school. Eventually I even got a computer and had Internet installed. I was there from March 2002 until the beginning of 2004. Every two or three months I would go to Calcutta for the CC meeting, but other than that I led a peaceful, simple life, running the school and communicating by Internet.

In the meantime, the Hindi group moved the purodha pramukha from Calcutta to Anandanagar after a short stay in Ranchi. This was a mistake, since from Anandanagar communication with the rest of the world was very difficult. Less than a year later they moved him to Ranchi for good. Both moves were done by stealth under the cover of darkness and presented as a *fait accompli*. As a direct consequence, the fighting increased and the CC meetings were moved to Ranchi.

Years earlier, Baba had given a program that each diocese, region, and sector should have both a headquarters and a center. He made a clear distinction between the two. By "center" he meant a rural center,

specifically a master unit. When I was RS Bombay, Baba said that he wanted to find an island that could become the Ananda Marga center. So I started looking for an island we could buy. That was before Baba's arrest. Baba said that if we could find him an island he would show the world what progress meant. But then Baba was arrested and those plans got derailed. For the headquarters, Baba gave three conditions: it had to have a railway terminus, an airport, and a seaport. Previously Baba had created Anandanagar as the organization's center and made Calcutta its headquarters. Thus to move the headquarters to either Anandanagar or Ranchi was against Baba's instructions. Ranchi had no seaport and Anandanagar had neither an airport nor a seaport, though it was perfect for the organization's center.

It was at this time that Dada Vijayananda became a target. Certain workers would go to his room and verbally abuse him, part of a series of calculated moves against those workers they saw as a danger to their hegemony. They suspended his purodhaship and sent him to Raiganj as the school principle, despite the fact that his health was precarious at that time. The move proved difficult for him and ultimately his heart failed and he passed away. I was very sad to see this. We had become very good friends while I had been working in Calcutta as the general finance secretary. It was a great loss to the mission.

In the beginning of 2004, during the New Years DMC, I asked Dada Nigamananda, the central ERAWS secretary, for a new posting. My school was running smoothly in Madhurai, but it was a waste of my abilities and experience. The area was sparsely populated, so there wasn't much scope for prakar, and I didn't speak the local language. He agreed and reposted me to Rajasthan as DS Udaipur, an area famous for its marble mines. We had a healthy school in Rajsambandh with over two hundred children, which I took over, and between the school and local prakar I was very busy. I increased the enrollment and bought a school bus to transport the children, and I was satisfied with my output. I still go there from time to time to meet friends and collect money, especially one of my teachers from those days who is now a retired headmaster. I got him to start

fasting and do his practices regularly. Now he is approaching ninety and is still healthy and active.

In October of 2005, GS called me to Delhi. Dada Nigamananda and Dada Rudrananda were also there, and the three of them tried to convince me to accept my old posting as SS Qahira. They told me that the workers there had been requesting my return, and that in these past years no one had been able to take proper care of the sector. "I already had that post," I said. "Why should I go back there?" But they insisted that I was the only person for the job since I had experience in the sector. Finally, after much discussion, I told them that I would accept the post—but only under one condition: I would not work for Ranchi or for Calcutta; I would only work for Ananda Marga, not for any group. The Calcutta group had already posted their own SS there, so officially I went as the Ranchi SS, but I remained true to my word. I worked for Ananda Marga, for the good of the sector, and not as a representative of the Hindi group, and I continue in that post until the present day. I am no longer the Ranchi SS—in January 2013 they posted Sumitananda there as the Ranchi SS while I remained as the Calcutta SS, and recently the third group has posted Dada Vishvodgatananda as their SS. But all three of us sit together to run the sector. I preside over our meetings and programs, but we have taken a resolution that we will work unitedly for Ananda Marga. I had to get Sumitananda to take an oath to uphold our pledge and he did so, and up until now things have been running smoothly without any unnecessary politics.

Epilogue

LOOKING BACK ON MY life, I do not think I would even be alive today if I had not met Ananda Marga. Knowing my nature, I do not think I could have adjusted in society. Ananda Marga gave me my mission and purpose in life. Today, after serving as a wholetimer for the past fifty-two years, I can say without any equivocation that wherever I went and whatever I did during these last fifty-two years I was guided and directed by Baba. I didn't do anything. That is my conviction and my experience. The time has passed and I cannot say that I have suffered during all this time, despite the many challenges. It was all his grace. Everywhere I went I felt his blessing. He was with me the entire time, watching over me and guiding me. And he is still with me today as I pen these words. Watching over me and guiding me according to his sweet will.

Baba Kripahi Kevalam. Baba's grace is everything.

Glossary

Acarya: Spiritual teacher. Literally, “one who teaches by example.”

ACB: An advisory board of Ananda Marga.

Ananda: Bliss.

Ananda Marga: The path of bliss. A spiritual organization founded in 1955 by Shrii Shrii Anandamurti for the propagation of his spiritual teachings and for establishing social service projects.

Anandamurti: The guru of Ananda Marga; b. 1921, d. 1990.

Asana: Literally, “seat”; yoga posture.

Avadhuta or **Avadhutika** (f): Literally, “one who is thoroughly cleansed mentally and spiritually”; a monk or a nun of an order close to the tradition of Shaeva Tantra.

Baba: Etymologically, “beloved”; colloquially, “father”. It is a common form of address for one’s guru in India if one’s guru is male.

CBI: Central Bureau of Investigation.

CC: Central committee.

Dada: Elder brother. A common form of address in north India. It denotes respect.

Darshan: Literally, sight; normally used to denote being in the presence of the guru.

DC: Dharmacakra; collective meditation. Literally, the circle of dharma.

Dharma: Spirituality; the essential nature of any entity; the path

of righteousness in social affairs.

Dhyana: Literally, “meditation”. The sixth lesson of Ananda Marga sadhana is called Dhyana.

Didi: Elder sister. A common form of address in north India. It denotes respect.

DMC: Dharmamahachakra. Literally, the great circle of dharma. In Ananda Marga it refers to collective functions where Baba was present and a series of discourses, one of which, the DMC discourse, was followed by his varabhaya mundra.

DPS: Dharma pracar secretary; in-charge of the propagation of dharma.

DS: District secretary.

ERAWS: Education, Relief and Welfare Section of Ananda Marga.

General Darshan: A function in Ananda Marga where Baba would sit with the devotees and give a talk.

GS: General secretary.

Guru puja: Literally, adoration of the guru; in Ananda Marga it refers to a chant performed after meditation during which the devotee **makes a mental offering to the guru.**

Guru Shakash: A meditation technique practiced in Ananda Marga before immediately upon waking.

Jagriti: Ananda Marga center.

Kapalik: In Ananda Marga it refers to any practitioner who has received kapalik sadhana, a special form of meditation that is said to overcome the fear complex.

Kirtan: The chanting of mantra, usually accompanied by the Lalita Marmika dance.

LFT: Local Full Timer; a full-time volunteer of Ananda Marga who is not a renunciate monk or nun.

Luminous body: A body consisting of the luminous, aerial, and ethereal factors, devoid of the solid and liquid factors.

Master unit: A rural Ananda Marga community

Microvita: Entities which come within the realms both of physicality and of psychic expression. They are smaller and

subtler than physical atoms and subatomic particles, and in the psychic realm they may be subtler than mind-stuff, and contribute to "pure consciousness".

Neohumanism: A new philosophy propagated by Shrii Shrii Anandamurti

Padmasana: Louts posture.

Parama purusha: Supreme Consciousness.

PC: Personal contact.

Prout: Progressive Utilization Theory; the social philosophy of Ananda Marga.

PU: Proutist Universal.

Purodha: The highest designation for an Ananda Marga monk or nun.

Purodha pramukha: Head of the Purodhas.

PBI: Proutist Bloc of India.

RDS: Review, defect, solution.

RS: Regional secretary.

RU: Renaissance Universal, the intellectual

Sadhaka: Spiritual aspirant or practitioner.

Sadhana: Literally, "effort to complete". In common parlance it means "spiritual practice", or more simply, "meditation".

Samaj: Literally, society; in Prout it refers to self-sufficient economic units

Sastaunga pranam: Full prostration.

Samadhi: Yogic trance; the state of union with God; the eighth limb of Astaunga yoga.

SDM: Seva Dharma Mission; a wing of Ananda Marga in charge of the training centers, kirtan and spiritual music.

SES: Sectorial ERAWS secretary.

SG: Secretary general.

Shloka: Sanskrit couplet.

Shuddhi: A process of visualization used in meditation.

Siddha: A type of luminous body; a highly developed soul.

Siddhasana: Perfect posture, one of the main postures for meditation.

SS: Sectorial secretary.

Tandava: A dance invented by Lord Shiva that promotes vigor and courage in men.

Tantra: A spiritual tradition which originated in India in prehistoric times and was first systematized by Shiva. It emphasizes the development of human vigor, both through meditation and through the confrontation of difficult external situations, to overcome all fears and weaknesses. Also, a scripture expounding that tradition.

Vayu: Vital air; synonymous with prana, or vital energy.

Varabhaya mudra: A special mudra given by Shrii Shrii Anandamurti as a blessing for his disciples. Vara means “blessing” and abhaya means “fearlessness.”

Vishesh yoga: A higher process of meditation taught by Shrii Shrii Anandamurti.

VSS: Vishva Seva Shanti. The wing of Ananda Marga responsible for protection and service during organization functions; VSS volunteers also served as Baba’s bodyguards.

Wholetimer: An Ananda Marga monk or nun who has dedicated their life to the work of the mission.

WT: Wholetimer.

Appendix

San Jose, California, Sunday morning, August 15, 1982

Peninsula
Edition**The Mercury News**

Serving Northern California Since 1851

**Ananda Marga: a deadly mix
of yoga, violence?**

A cult active on the Peninsula says its goals are humanitarian. But others link it to killings around the world.

By Bernard Bauer
Staff Writer

A worldwide sect that runs yoga and meditation classes at a secluded Los Altos Hills house is under investigation by the FBI because it is suspected of engaging in terrorist activities.

Publicly, the sect, the Ananda Marga Yoga Society, blends Eastern spiritualism with a wide array of social programs. It operates medical clinics, nursery schools and food programs for the poor in more than 120 countries.

including two locations in Santa Clara County.

But there is a darker side to Ananda Marga. Throughout the world, the cult has been connected to violence and bloodshed.

The sect's guru, Prabhakar Ranjan Sarkar, spent seven years in an Indian jail on charges of murdering six defectors. The conviction was reversed on appeal in 1978.

In the interim, seven followers burned themselves to death to protest the guru's prison sentence. Other cult-

ists went on a spree of terrorism aimed at freeing their leader, according to CIA and FBI documents.

Among the attacks:

- 1) An Indian embassy attache was stabbed in Washington, D.C.
- ✓ An Air India employee was assaulted with a knife in Los Angeles.
- ✓ A brick and a fire bomb were thrown through the window of the Air India office in New York City.
- 2) A police officer and two garbage collectors were killed when the Hilton Hotel in Sidney, Australia, was bombed

during a meeting of 12 Commonwealth ministers.

✓ Two cultists each were sentenced to 16 years in prison for conspiring to murder Australian right-wing extremist Robert Cameron.

✓ Two American cultists were convicted of the attempted murder of an Indian diplomat in the Philippines. One, who co-founded the Los Altos Hills center, recently won an acquittal on appeal.

Continued on Page 12A

Ananda Marga cultists:

Continued from Page 1A

3) A policeman was seriously injured when a bomb exploded in the Air India office in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia.

The Indian High Commission office in Canberra, Australia, suffered more than \$250,000 in damage from an arson fire.

4) Diplomats and Air India employees in Australia and England were stabbed.

Suspect in slaying

In an unrelated 1981 incident, police in Europe are seeking a veteran cult member who allegedly lured a former Ananda Marga monk to Sweden and killed him.

Dadaji Daneshananda, a spokesman for the group's national headquarters in Den-

to have a high potential for violence.

Like other sects, it is based on a strict dogma. Its particular dogma advocates a "one-world government" headed by the cult's leaders. The guru, known to his followers as "Baba" or "Father," predicts this plan will succeed and that the cult will rule the world by the year 2095.

"They foresee the bringing in of (that) age . . . through violence," said David Feteche, an ex-cultist. "It's kind of taken for granted that that will happen."

As a preventive measure, the State Department has banned Sarkar, the guru, from entering this country.

Fear of violence

"Our concern is that his presence here might lead to acts of violence," said an Indian-affairs analyst in the department who requested anonymity.

No acts of terrorism have been linked to the tax-exempt Los Altos Hills center,

caused by rumors that Ananda Marga was stealing children. The sect claims that it was an organized attack by the Communist Party.

Whether to protect itself or — as it critics claim — to foster its own violence, the cult maintains a security branch, known as VSS.

The VSS is the main "violence-prone wing of Ananda Marga" and is responsible for a series of terrorist acts around the world in 1977 and 1978, according to declassified CIA documents.

At VSS camps in India, cultists are trained in the use of martial weapons, including knives and nunchukas (martial-

They are fanatics.
... They will kill,
and they will die.

— Former cultist

ver, acknowledged that some terrorist acts attributed to the cult "may have been committed by misguided youth who have no faith in Ananda Marga ideology. But Ananda Marga is an organization directed to service to humanity and raising the spiritual consciousness of everyone."

The current FBI investigation is based in part on reports that Ananda Marga is planning more terrorist activities, according to an agency source who requested anonymity.

"We have investigated them in the past for isolated incidents," the FBI source said. "We did not investigate them as an organization until recently."

4) Last October, Indian intelligence agencies notified the FBI that Ananda Marga members were planning to cross the California-Mexico border and assassinate Prime Minister Indira Gandhi during the Cancun Summit.

Tightened security

5) And during Pope John Paul II's visit to the Philippines last year, police instituted extreme security measures after Ananda Marga reportedly threatened the Pope's life.

6) The U.S. government also has received unconfirmed reports that Ananda Marga, whose membership here has been estimated at 5,000 to 20,000, runs terrorist training camps in California and New York. The State Department has identified similar operations in India.

A sect spokesman said the reports are "totally bogus."

Yet the F.B.I. considers Ananda Marga

My view of
Ananda Marga is
that it teaches
yoga, it teaches
spiritual practices,
and that's the core
of it.

— Bob, a former devotee

where about 900 disciples have been trained in the group's political and religious beliefs.

In fact, Ananda Marga denies any role in the violence attributed to the organization. Rather, spokesmen stress its social-welfare programs and the letters of commendation the organization has earned around the world.

"I know several Marga and they are fine, committed people," the State Department official said.

Sect spokesmen blame Communists for spreading "inaccurate and purposefully misleading statements" about the organization. The two groups have a history of antagonism in India.

Ananda Marga also blames Communists for the April 30 daylight massacre of 17 of its nuns and monks in downtown Calcutta. The victims were stoned and stabbed to death and then piled in a heap and burned.

Disagreement with Communists

Indian police say the massacre was

We don't carry
arms. . . . But we
encourage that
people should be
prepared to defend
themselves.

— Jim Venezia, official
in Ananda Marga

arts weapons), the U.S. State Department said.

There are unconfirmed reports of VSS camps in California and New York, a department official said, "but I haven't seen any hard evidence of that."

Jim Venezia, treasurer-secretary of the VSS national office in Los Angeles, said all charges of terrorism are "totally bogus."

Venezia said the 70 VSS members in the United States act as "a security force . . . to keep order" during political demonstrations by Ananda Marga members.

Self-defense encouraged

"We don't carry arms," he said. "We don't train people in any organized way. But we encourage that people should be prepared to defend themselves."

Like their counterparts overseas, VSS members here wear uniforms of gray shirts with epaulettes, khaki pants and Australian bush hats, Venezia said.

Many U.S. followers seem to be unaware of the charges of evil that critics say permeates the inner sanctum of the cult.

"It's kind of a schizophrenic group," said Josh Baran, who runs "Sorting It Out," a counseling service in Berkeley for drop-

Continued on Page 13A

Some practice yoga — — others preach violence

Continued from Page 12A

outs from cults. "There are people that have been involved for years who don't know about that side of things at all."

A former U.S. government official, whose son belongs to the sect, said that its good deeds are merely a cover for less noble purposes.

"Despite its idealistic face in the United States," he said, "it's basically an organization dedicated to the overthrow of the basic institutions of the United States and the free world."

Like other sources, the former official, who has studied Ananda Marga for years, declined to be identified because he feared retaliation.

Seeking global changes

"They want to bring about . . . a worldwide transformation of society headed under Ananda Marga principles," said Rabbi Yehudah Fine of New York City, an ex-member. "They have the answer."

"They are fanatics," another former cultist said. "They will do anything — totally unpredictable. They will kill, and they will die."

At the center of the maelstrom of controversy that swirls around Ananda Marga is the cult's 61-year-old guru, a former railway clerk whose Sanskrit name, Anandamurti, means "embodiment of bliss."

Sarkar spent part of his early manhood living with Subhas Chandra Bose, a radical Indian nationalist who recruited 90,000 soldiers to fight with Hitler and the Japanese against the Allies.

"I was in an altered, hypnotized state."

— Rabbi Yehudah Fine

In 1966, Sarkar founded his sect, blending yoga, meditation and political dogma.

The cult was exported to the United States in 1969, in an era when Indian gurus and religions were finding fertile ground among young people in search of alternative lifestyles. Today, there are branches in 35 cities.

Precise membership figures are difficult to obtain. Ananda Marga claims 3 million members worldwide, with 26,000 in the United States. The State Department estimates there are only 494,000 members worldwide, with 5,000 in the United States.

Early recruit

"We tended to be hippies who were leaving drugs and going into meditation," said former member Caren Weaglas, a computer programmer at the University of California at Berkeley who was among the first devotees in this country. "We had a mantra we were supposed to say every morning to the light bulb in the bathroom."

During the early 1970s, Ananda Marga signed up thousands of members here. In India, however, crisis struck the organization.

Rumors were circulating that Sarkar was ordering the executions of disloyal priests. Sarkar's wife, Uma, left her husband in October 1971, saying it was "impossible for me to be a silent spectator of inhuman, brutal and senseless happenings."

Two months later, Sarkar was arrested and charged with murder.

"I landed in India the day he was arrested," recalled a former member who was sent to the subcontinent to study with Sarkar. "A friend of mine met me at the airport and took me to Delhi, where a group of ex-teachers had gathered."

"One guy said that he personally trained people to kill," the ex-member said. "He said there was a murder committee. I left the cult and never looked back."

Protests of jailing

Sarkar's followers said that the murder charges were trumped up and that the guru was a victim of political persecution. They staged rallies in the United States and overseas and bought newspaper advertisements protesting Sarkar's innocence.

After his acquittal on appeal in 1974, Sarkar embarked on a world tour of Ananda Marga centers. In 1979, defying the State Department ban, he tried to visit the Los Altos Hills center. He was detained at San Francisco International Airport and sent away, leaving behind hundreds of angry disciples who charged that their freedom of religion had been violated.

Sarkar teaches his followers that the world is in a state of moral and political decay. Both capitalism and communism have failed miserably to meet the material and spiritual needs of mankind, he says.

Hope lies only in a massive "intellectual revolution," led by Ananda Marga. If that fails, however, a "physical revolution" is inevitable.

"No problem of this world can be solved by means of (the) principle of non-violence," Sarkar has written.

One of the texts sold at the Los Altos Hills center stresses that point.

"Any act of violent retaliation against tyranny and oppression is justified," one book says.

Emphasis on charity

Nityashuddhanand Avadhuta, the self-proclaimed Indian monk who runs the Los Altos Hills center, says that violence is not advocated at the six-week sessions he runs. He stresses the humanitarian side of the organization, which runs a food program for indigents in San Jose and the Ananda Marga School for preschoolers, located near the center.

The monk says that the guru's teachings have been misinterpreted.

"We don't support violence," he said. "But when the capitalists exploit, . . . naturally the patience of the people is gone. . . . When the resentment becomes more and more, a chaotic situation comes, and that brings violence."

As in other cults, life in Ananda Marga is highly regimented. Hours are spent each day in intense meditation. Followers consider the life unifying. Critics call it brainwashing.

"At its most intense levels, you become basically lost, washed over with a very psychically pleasurable feeling," ex-disciple Fetcho said.

Mind-control charged

Rabbi Fine agrees. "There is no doubt that I was in an altered, hypnotized state."



Ananda Marga's Los Altos Hills training center has not been linked to any of the terrorism suspected elsewhere. Leader of the center is Nityashuddhanand Avadhuta.

he said. "The techniques they teach are powerful mind-altering techniques."

Fine says he is now sure he was brainwashed. Otherwise, he said, he could not have belonged to a cult whose symbol includes a swastika, which spokesmen say stands for victory.

"Even though that has nothing to do with Hitler, the fact that I could sit down, put my hands on that (swastika), and swear to an oath...," Fine said. He called Ananda Marga "a mass movement that included one extra item: a hypnotic, spiritual philosophy on top of it all. It scared me, as a Jew, when I thought of Nazi Germany."

Some ex-members are perplexed at the hostility of former disciples.

"My view of Ananda Marga is that it teaches yoga, it teaches spiritual practices, and that's the core of it," said a former devotee who identified himself only as Bob. "There are no brainwashing techniques. They don't pack people off to a farm. I was never out of communication with my parents."

"It's not a rip-off. I never felt I was ripped off or used."

Tough on parents

The incessant contradictions are agonizing to many parents of cult members.

"The parents are very, very afraid," said Betty McConahy of the Citizens Freedom Foundation, a national anti-cult organization based in Springfield, Va. "They're afraid harm will come to their children. They're afraid of physical retribution."

Some parents try to keep in touch with their children, but the conversations can be troubling.

"I told my son that he was being deceived, that the sect had a golden shell around a dark core," one father said. "He laughed and said he was planning to go to India to be with Baba."

That decision horrified the father, but he struggled to remain calm. "I told him I loved him," the man said. "I told him we would always be here for him."

"And I told him I hoped he wasn't heading for the core."

Sect leader's murder conviction was overturned, but his conduct has drawn scrutiny, accusations

Cult's guru inspires devotion and 7 supreme sacrifices

By Bernard Bauer
Staff Writer

To his devout followers, Prabhakar Ranjan Sarkar is a god.

"I was searching for my guru for years. In Ananda Marga, I do not have to search anymore," said a 28-year-old Trinidad man who trained recently at the Los Altos Hills center. "It is a miracle."

To others, the guru of Ananda Marga is Setan.

Nawal Kishore, a former high-ranking bank, wrote in 1975 that Sarkar is "a perverted megalomaniac" whose "murder squads" tied disloyal members to trees and stabbed them to death.

"It is a fact that, under the guise of spiritual practices, Sarkar and his associates have been indulging in quite heinous crimes," says a declassified but heavily censored 1980 CIA document.

Cult critics say that Sarkar runs his organization as a merciless autocracy and inspires unthinking loyalty in his followers. He was arrested in 1971 after Indian law-enforcement agencies uncovered an alleged plot to murder 18 defectors.

Sarkar and several followers were charged with six murders, as well as kidnapping and weapons possession.

From the outset, his followers mounted a long campaign aimed at winning the guru's release.

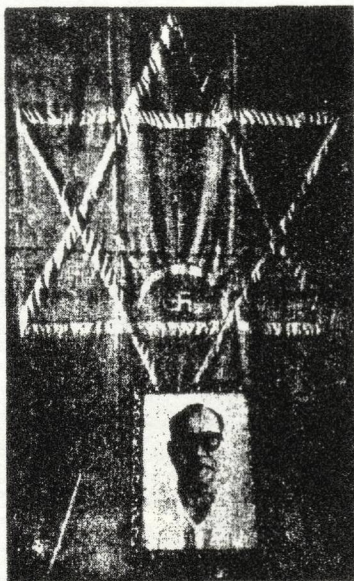
Seven disciples eventually burned themselves to death in protest.

One self-immolation occurred in the United States, with others in Europe, India and the Philippines, according to a sect manifesto.

"It was seen as a great sacrifice," said ex-member Rabbi Yehudah Fine of New York City. "These people were doing the ultimate sacrifice. That's what you were told."

Bizarre claims about the sect persisted through the 1970s. "It became a frequent practice for the Anandamurti (Sarkar), sitting on a chair with a rod in his hand, to chastise errant (monks), all of them stripped, naked," ex-member Kishore wrote. "He used to cane them one by one mercilessly. . . ."

"The Monks were allowed to find that



Enshrined at Ananda Marga's center in Los Altos Hills are a photo of the guru, Prabhakar Ranjan Sarkar, and the cult's symbol, which includes a swastika and a six-pointed star.

ers continued to enjoy his confidence, particularly those who brought young boys for the perverted satisfaction of Anandamurti."

A spokesman for Ananda Marga's national office in Denver called the allegations about Sarkar's behavior "a complete sham. I doubt you would find 1 percent of truth in them."

In 1976, Sarkar and four co-defendants were found guilty of murder and conspiracy in murder and sentenced to life in

appeal two years later when a higher court ruled that the testimony of the prosecution's main witness had not been sufficiently corroborated.

Still, parents of current members say they are terrified by what seems to be a blind allegiance to the guru.

"I don't think anyone would have the drive on their own to go out and burn themselves," one father said. "There's some kind of mind control that makes them act as automatons."

Ex-devotee's lecture tour in Europe proved fatal

By Bernard Bauer
Staff Writer

For eight years, life in Colorado was near-hell for one high-level defector from Ananda Marga.

Bishwanath Singh had moved to Boulder after a dispute with Sarkar, his guru. There, Singh set up his own meditation group, the Moksha Foundation, and, over the years, built a significant following.

Then, inexplicably, Singh disappeared during a trip to Europe last year.

Two-and-a-half months later, his badly beaten and decomposed body, stuffed inside a plastic bag, floated to the surface of a lake near Stockholm.

The prime suspect, Sten Rodenberg of Sweden, still is at large, according to police in his native country. Rodenberg is a member of Ananda Marga and was attached to the Denver branch of the sect, police say.

Arrest in killing

Two months ago, an alleged accomplice in the killing, Franz Wernet, was arrested as he arrived in West Germany from Nepal. Swedish and West German police say they believe Wernet, too, belongs to Ananda Marga.

Singh reportedly had been second-in-command to Sarkar when he left India and Ananda Marga in 1973. In Boulder, his popularity grew quickly, and, according to followers, extremists in Ananda Marga became jealous of his power.

By 1980, Singh was traveling around the world, lecturing on his religion. Then, in February 1981, Rodenberg, the suspect in the killing, rented an apartment near the guru's residence and became an apparently devoted disciple.

Organized tour

Few people realized that Rodenberg, then 24, had been an Ananda Marga member for seven years and was a trainer who traveled around the United States inducting new members.

Rodenberg eventually convinced Singh to embark on a European lecture tour, which he volunteered to arrange. The suspect then left for Sweden.

Singh disappeared on April 30, the day he arrived in Sweden. His decomposed body was found July 12 inside a plastic bag weighted with rocks.

Jan McCoy with the Daily Camera of Boulder, Colo., contributed to this story.

Peninsula center trains disciples

At a large wood-and-glass home in the foothills above Los Altos, Ananda Marga recruits from North and Central America and the Caribbean are indoctrinated in the group's political and religious precepts.

About 900 people have been trained at the tax-exempt center since it opened in 1972.

Six devotees, led by an Indian monk, live full time in the house, located at 27160 Moody Road on unincorporated Santa Clara County land bordering the town of Los Altos Hills. Trainees pass through the center in small groups for six-week training sessions that cost \$200.

Few earthly goods

It is a spartan existence. Followers, called Margis, sleep on the floor and have few possessions.

Each Sunday at noon, the disciples provide food for indigents in downtown San Jose. On Sunday nights, about 30 people gather at the house for chanting and meditation.

The training session follows a schedule that includes five hours a day of meditation and indoctrination. All members are vegetarians and eat breakfast and dinner together.

"Many Margis feel a keen sense of solidarity," said Bob Lassen, 31, of Atlanta, who was recently trained at the center. "Ananda Marga is a solidarity movement. It's similar to the Polish solidarity movement. We're catalysts."

The sect also runs the Ananda Marga School for preschoolers near Los Altos Hills. Teachers meditate among the children to calm them, and parents whose children attend the school praise it highly. The sect's philosophy is not part of the curriculum, according to both teachers and parents.



Assignment overseas

Former members of Ananda Marga say the Los Altos Hills training center was co-founded by a Maryland woman named Victoria Sheppard, who apparently was the first devotee in the United States.

Sheppard, 35, who adopted the Sanskrit name "Madhuri" — "Sister Full of Divine Sweetness" — later was sent overseas as a missionary. She ended up in the Philippines, where, police said, she attempted to murder an Indian diplomat.

Sheppard was convicted of the crime, but her conviction was reversed last year by an appeals court in Manila. Her co-defendant, Steven Dwyer, 33, had his appeal rejected. His last hope lies with the Supreme Court of the Philippines. Neither Dwyer nor Sheppard could be reached for comment.

"We know full well that my son isn't capable of this," said Dwyer's father, William, who lives in Wichita, Kan. "He's some part of the Ananda Marga hierarchy in Manila. Their major thing in life is to help poor people. They're just working their heads off to try and help the poor people."

— Bernard Bauer

Nap time for John Ratliff, 3, at the Ananda Marga School gives Randy Goldberg a chance to meditate.

COMMENTARY ON THE "MERCURY NEWS" ARTICLE, "Ananda Marga: a deadly mix of yoga, violence?"; San Jose Mercury News, San Jose, California, August 15, 1982; by Bernard Bauer, staff reporter.

Commentary by Vimala Schneider

To whom it may concern:

I have attached a copy of the Mercury News article, with notes and highlighting. The following commentary further elaborates on specific points checked in red on the attached copy. This article came out just after Indira Gandhi's visit to the U.S., and it was syndicated on the Knight-Ridder News Service to papers all over the U.S. and around the world. The article caused extensive long-range damage to Ananda Marga's service projects. Schools and homes were inundated by calls from concerned parents and citizens, community center yoga programs were cancelled or turned down; members and their families were shocked and frightened by the accusations in the article. In addition, the article was used by the State Department in the months following to explain to inquiring congresspeople the reason for its denial of a visa for Mr. Sarkar.

1) Concerning the stabbing of the Indian attache in Washington D.C.: What the State Department did not tell Mr. Bauer was that Ananda Marga called and wrote both the Indian embassy and the State Department ahead of time, after receiving copies of threat notes from the anonymous "UPRF", and warned them that the UPRF, suspected to be planted provocateurs or Indian intelligence people, had sent the note, and requested protection for embassy staff and an investigation. (See The Politics of Prejudice, p. 15A). The FBI opened a grand jury investigation later in which they led Ananda Marga members to believe they suspected a young woman A.M. member in the stabbing (in spite of the fact that the Indian diplomat himself described his assailant as a dark-skinned man). However, when later that same woman was framed on an explosives charge in Bangkok (see The Politics of Prejudice, p. 35), the State Department sent a telegram to the embassy in Bangkok saying there were no grounds for extradition. No one has ever been arrested or charged with the stabbing.

2) Nine incidents are "checked" at the beginning of the article. Out of these nine incidents, only two resulted in arrests of Marga members: the Cameron case and the Manila stabbing. Both cases have resulted in retrials of one kind or another, and evidence of "frame-ups" caused much speculation about the nature of the incidents and arrests. Please see The Politics of Prejudice, p. 30 (Cameron case), and p. 27 (Manila case).

3) The bomb explosion in Kuala Lumpur is a typical example of selective release (or selective reporting) of information. I've attached copies of telegrams from the American Embassy in Kuala Lumpur about the incident. Note the vague "supposition" and admitted lack of any evidence. The only indication of Ananda Marga involvement came from the Indian Press. This is typical of the series of incidents during that period. Not only Ananda Marga, but government people in India at that time suspected Indira Gandhi of masterminding the whole thing during her brief period out of office.

4) Mr. Bauer indicates that Indian intelligence warned the FBI about a Marga-planned assassination of Indira Gandhi. The Indian Government cannot substantiate their request for an investigation or come up with any firm evidence to support their allegation that A.M. members in the U.S. would attempt such an act, beyond their own fabricated "evidence" from 1977-78. The FBI admitted, according to Bauer, that they didn't investigate Ananda Marga "as an organization" until recently; and then at the request of Indian intelligence agencies, at the time Mrs. Gandhi was visiting the U.S. This "investigation" of Ananda Marga must have been conducted very discreetly; no Ananda Marga member or official was ever questioned, and none of the Ananda Marga offices were ever contacted by the FBI.

5) On the alleged assassination threat in Manila, see The Politics of Prejudice, p. 20-21.

6) On the "unconfirmed report" that A.M. has terrorist training camps; Ananda Marga does have retreats, sparsely attended, where sports, martial arts, and new age games are part of the program. If this is what the FBI considers a terrorist activity, many Americans are indulging in extra-curricular terrorism.

7) Mr. Bauer's "facts" about the so-called dogma of Ananda Marga come from Indian government propaganda put out in October of 1975, during Mrs. Gandhi's Emergency (see The Politics of Prejudice, p. 9-10). In the section entitled "Cult's Guru Inspires Devotion. . .", Bauer describes Nawal Kishore, the writer of the above-mentioned pamphlets, as a former high-ranking monk in Ananda Marga. However, no one in Ananda Marga can identify Mr. Kishore, and the senior monks and members I interviewed in Calcutta said he had never been a monk. Kishore works for a communist newspaper in Calcutta and has also written a book calling for closer Indian-Soviet cooperation. All of the allegations about Mr. Sarkar's personal conduct come from pamphlets written by Nawal Kishore.

8) Mr. Bauer calls Subash Chandra Bose "a radical Indian nationalist who recruited 90,000 soldiers to fight with Hitler..." Anyone who knows anything about Indian history would be disgusted by this ignorant and simplistic statement, made only for the purpose of mentioning Mr. Sarkar and Hitler in the same sentence. Pope Pius XII was much more friendly with Hitler than any Indian government leader; and that is just as irrelevant.

9) The article asserts that Mr. Sarkar defied the State Department's denial of his U.S. visa and landed at San Francisco Intl. airport, from which he was "sent away". This is a direct fabrication. What actually happened: Ananda Marga officials were assured by San Francisco immigration that Mr. Sarkar would be allowed to change planes in San Francisco on his way from Taiwan to Jamaica. However, he was not allowed to board the plane in Hong Kong, because, unbeknownst to immigration officials in San Francisco, the State Department had communicated directly with Pan Am personnel in Hong Kong, ordering them not to allow him to board.

10) Ananda Marga does not recommend a "regimented" lifestyle. Most of its U.S. members are people with families and careers who are involved in their communities; meditation, yoga health practices, and social service are recommended ingredients to vastly differing personal lifestyles. See The Politics of Prejudice, p. 47.

11) Mr. Bauer quoted a "declassified but heavily censored CIA document". I have searched through Ananda Marga's file of declassified material and have been unable to find this document. I feel sure that, if we were able to obtain it, we would find that the quote is actually a direct quote from Mrs. Gandhi. The language is typical of an Indian politician, but not that which is generally used by U.S. Government personnel.

12) Regarding the Singh murder, the State Department told Bauer that an Ananda Marga member was arrested in Germany. But in fact, the person was questioned and released. Bauer refers to Singh as having been "second in command" - a fabrication. He makes up a scenario about Singh's rivalry with Ananda Marga, which is also a fabrication - Ananda Marga is 28 years old and has an estimated membership of millions worldwide; Singh's following was a handful of people in Boulder, Colorado - there could hardly be any jealousy. No Ananda Marga official was ever questioned in the case, and there is no evidence of Ananda Marga involvement in his murder.

Finally, the fact that the State Department released Ananda Marga's Freedom of Information Act/Privacy Act documents to Mr. Bauer two months before releasing them to Ananda Marga, which had filed a request almost two years previously, indicates that the State Department used the San Jose article to disinform the public.

Why would the State Department want to spread disinformation about Ananda Marga?

The State Department may well believe the allegations about Ananda Marga, if not in particular, then at least in general. They may think, "where there's smoke, there's fire", and that with so many allegations, something must be true. Ananda Marga members say that the Indian Government, and specifically Mrs. Gandhi, backed by Soviet intelligence, has engineered a massive disinformation campaign which may have taken the State Department in.

The U.S. Government may be trying to please the Indian Government. The U.S. and the Soviet Union compete for influence in India. The Department admitted some of its moves against A.M. came at the request of the Indian Government.

As a result of diplomatic pressure and the Indian Government's campaign, the State Department denied Mr. Sarkar a visa and has been determined to keep him out of the U.S. The Department may have been trying to prejudice the court case brought by A.M. members in 1979, which was in the "home stretch" of appeal when the San Jose article came out. They know that if the case gets to court, they will have a very difficult time substantiating the "facts" in their affidavits. They wanted to be sure the case was dismissed in the lower court, and it was. They have no reason to suspect that Mr. Sarkar's visit would cause violence; he visited sixteen countries in 1979 without incident.

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Department of State

INCOMING
TELEGRAM

E/R
(GPM)

PAGE 01 KUALA 88787 178948Z 1498
ACTION EA-12
INFO OCT-81 NEA-18 150488 (IAE-88) OCDE-88 PM-85 H-81
INR-87 L-23 NSAC-88 NEC-38 PA-61 PRS-81 SP-82
SS-15 USIA-88 SY-88 ACDA-12 COME-88 MCT-81 A-81
DPR-82 HA-88 -----019189 178951Z /15

P R 178928Z NOV 77
FM AMEMBASSY KUALA LUMPUR
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 738
INFO AMEMBASSY BANGKOK
AMEMBASSY CANBERRA
AMEMBASSY JAKARTA
AMEMBASSY MANILA
AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI
AMEMBASSY SINGAPORE

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE KUALA LUMPUR 8787

E. O. 11652: NGRA
TAGS: PTC NY
SUBJECT: BOMB EXPLOSION NEAR AIR INDIA OFFICE

Z

REF: FBIS BANGKOK 181205Z NOV 77

1. AT 9:32 MORNING NOV. 16 A RELATIVELY POWERFUL HOME MADE TIME BOMB EXPLODED ON THE 14TH FLOOR OF A HIGH-RISE OFFICE BUILDING IN DOWNTOWN KUALA LUMPUR. THE BOMB WHICH REPORTEDLY WAS DISCOVERED AT 8:58 AND INCLUDED CLOCK WITH ALARM SET AT 8:48 WENT OFF IN A LAVATORY NEAR AN OFFICE SPACE RENTED BY AIR INDIA (THE MAIN TICKET SALES OFFICE IS ON THE GROUND FLOOR). JUST AS A POLICE BOMB SQUAD ARRIVED, SEVERAL POLICEMEN WHO HAD CORDONED OFF THE AREA WHERE THE BOMB WAS FOUND WERE SHAKEN UP AND SLIGHTLY INJURED BY THE BLAST WHICH BLEW OUT AN EXTERIOR WALL PANEL AND SEVERELY DAMAGED THE LAVATORY. POLICE ARE CURRENTLY STUDYING REMAINS OF THE DEVICE IN AN ATTEMPT TO IDENTIFY TYPE OF EXPLOSIVE USED.

2. COMMENT: LOCAL SUPPOSITION IS THAT BOMB MAY HAVE BEEN PLANTED BY FOLLOWERS OF INDIAN ANADA MARGA RELIGIOUS SECT. AND PESS REPORTS OF BOMBING NOTED THAT POLICE HAVE NOT RPT NOT RULED OUT POSSIBILITY THAT THIS GROUP MAY HAVE BEEN INVOLVED. POLICE HOWEVER HAVE NOT RPT NOT INDICATED THAT THEY HAVE ANY FIRM EVIDENCE WHOSE HANDIWORK THIS WAS.
MILLER

DEPARTMENT OF STATE A/CDC/MR	
REVIEWED BY <u>G. S. M.</u>	DATE <u>6/13/81</u>
EDS/SEC ADJUTANT GENL	_____
TS AUTH.	_____
EXCHANGE FILE NO.	_____
DECLASS. AUTH.	_____
RELEASE AUTH.	_____
PA or FOI NUMBER	_____

UNCLASSIFIED

New Delhi A-216

UNCLASSIFIED

Incident in Kuala Lumpur

The Indian press reported another incident November 15. A crude bomb planted in a rest-room of the Air India office in Kuala Lumpur exploded as police attempted to remove it. The explosion caused damage to the building and slight injuries to policemen. The Indian press has suggested that the bomb was the work of the Ananda Marg, although one report notes that there are no known Margis in Kuala Lumpur.

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CONFIDENTIAL
 Department of State

INCOMING
 TELEGRAM
 4299

PAGE 01
 ACTION YO-05

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C O N F I D E N T I A L CALCUTTA 1119

E.O. 12065: GDS 6/22/85 (MCCULLOCH, G.C.) OR-V
 TAGS: CVIS
 SUBJ: TRAVEL OF ANANDA MARG LEADER, P. R. SARKER

REF: NEW DELHI 7358 AND PREVIOUS

1. C-ENTIRE TEXT.

2. LOCAL LARGE CIRCULATION CALCUTTA ENGLISH LANGUAGE DAILY
 NEWSPAPER REPORTS ON JUNE 22 THAT ANANDA MARG LEADER
 P. R. SARKER (AKA ANANDA MURTI) HAS RETURNED TO INDIA
 FROM HIS RECENT TRIP TO EUROPE. IT IS FURTHER REPORTED
 THAT THE SUPREME COURT OF INDIA HAS OVERTURNED A LOWER
 COURT RULING PROHIBITING FURTHER FOREIGN TRAVEL BY SARKAR.
 ALTHOUGH WE HAVE NO INFORMATION THAT SARKAR INTENDS TO
 TRAVEL TO THE U.S., WE ARE REPORTING ABOVE MERELY TO
 DRAW ATTENTION TO FACT THAT SARKAR IS NOW FREE TO
 TRAVEL SHOULD HE SO DESIRE. PERKINS

CONFIDENTIAL

Ananda Marga

North American Sectorial Headquarters: 854 Pearl St. / Denver, Colorado 80203 / (303) 832-0465

July 14, 1982

Bernhard Bauer
San Jose Mercury
750 Ridder Park Drive
San Jose, CA 95110

Dear Mr. Bauer,

Thank you for calling me yesterday. I sincerely hope that I can still help you in your work to complete your article.

If you are concerned for the "anarchy" of a photograph and material regarding the Varanasi massacre, I would indeed deeply appreciate if you would be kind enough to highlight this unjust event and the conditions of government persecution and gross injustice which have surrounded this years proceeding and following it. There has been a long list of "allegations" against Ananda Marga which have been made by those very groups which were behind the terrorism that led to the massacre, would do little to relieve the pain of those who have suffered a great human tragedy. Considering the 17 young monks and nuns lie dead; the coldblooded murderers are still walking freely around the streets of Calcutta and hundreds of other monks and nuns are living in constant fear, helplessly watching the communists prepare the ground for another attack, while all our desperate pleas for police protection are being ignored; it would hardly be appropriate for your paper to unnecessarily add insult to injury by printing a sensationalistic article depicting Ananda Marga as a terrorist organization.

Yesterday you suggested that the massacre would not figure highly in your article because it took place in India. If you are to follow this principle consistently, then I am sure that you would also not give ~~me~~ any mention of allegations against Ananda Marga. Neither Ananda Marga, nor any of our members in the U.S. have ever been officially accused or charged with any subversive, illegal or criminal activity. Our social services have been widely documented and appreciated by respected and established private and governmental bodies throughout North America. We would love to see some justice done by having our real activities highlighted. However, at the moment the most important thing is

Service to humanity is service to God

ANANDA MARGA

September 3, 1982

The Editor

"BOULDER DAILY CAMERA"

On behalf of Ananda Marga in North America, I hereby demand a retraction of the article entitled: "Bliss or Violence?" which appeared in your newspaper on August 15th, 1982. The article included numerous false informations. Litigation has already been initiated against the course of the article.

Sincerely,

A'c. Da'mesha'nanda Avt.
Office Secretary,
Ananda Marga, Inc.

[Handwritten signature]

Office of the Editor
Boulder Daily Camera

Ananda Marga

North American Sectorial Headquarters: 854 Pearl St. / Denver, Colorado 80203 / (303) 832-8465

September 3, 1982

The Editor
ROCKY MOUNTAIN NEWS
400 W. Colfax Ave.
Denver, CO 80204

On behalf of Ananda Marga in North America, I hereby demand a retraction of the article entitled: "FBI checking cult reputed to mix killing, good work" which appeared in your newspaper on Monday August 28th, 1982. Litigation has already been initiated in against the source of the article.

Sincerely,

A/c. Dāśeśha'nanda Avt.
Office Secretary,
Ananda Marga, Inc.

Service to humanity is service to God

ANANDA MARGA INC.967 Blue Ridge Ave. N.E., Atlanta, GA 30306
(404) 876-3585

Dear Sir:

This letter is in response to the "Sunday Special" on August 22, page 2. The article about Ananda Marga raised many questions, but since space is limited, only a few points can be clarified.

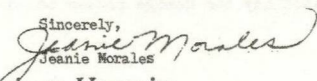
Of the 200 charges brought against P.R. Sarkar, every one of them has been disproved or dropped. Particularly the statement that Sarkar was "convicted of murder" is totally false. Mr. Claude Armand Sheppard, a neutral observer from the International Commission of Jurists and the International League for Human Rights, concluded in his report on the trial of P.R. Sarkar that, "prosecution and government were obviously intent on using the judicial process for purely political motives of discrediting and destroying Ananda Marga". It was a climate of fear, repression and total suspension of civil rights by Gandhi's "Emergency Rule", that Sarkar was convicted of "conspiring to murder". After the Emergency Rule was lifted, Sarkar was able to receive a fair trial. He was acquitted and honorably released August 2, 1978.

Concerning the FBI investigation about reports of paramilitary terrorist training camps in the U.S., the FBI has said that the investigation was started on the personal request of Indira Gandhi as a part of the security precautions for her visit to the U.S. earlier this year. In light of the evidence of Gandhi's relentless persecution of Ananda Marga, one may conclude that she has misled the FBI in order to harass and defame Ananda Marga in the U.S.

A lot of innuendo, hearsay and opinions, but very little fact, have gone into this article. Inflammatory, red herring words like "gestapo branch", "megalomaniac", "murder squads", etc., run rampant through the article. Ananda Marga in the U.S. operates 23 schools, 11 homes, 6 medical clinics, 9 whole foods stores, 3 coops and countless free-of-charge meditation classes. These are facts. The members of Ananda Marga kindly request a retraction of this article and an apology, since much harm has been done by this syndicated article.

Thanking you in anticipation,

Sincerely,


Jeanie Morales

Realization of Self and Service to Humanity

Ananda Marga

North American Sectorial Headquarters: 854 Pearl St. / Denver, Colorado 80203 / (303) 832-6465

August 28, 1982

Dear brothers and sisters,

Recently a very negative article about Ananda Marga was written and is being circulated all around the United States. We are writing you in regards to what you can do in response, to inform you what we are doing here, and to tell you of some other developments.

The original article was written by Bernard Bauer, a writer for the San Jose Mercury & News in California, and was carried by the Knight Ridder News Agency of Miami, Florida, which has over 30 member newspapers in its distribution system. His article was carried in its entirety in the San Jose paper on Sunday, August 15, with almost two full pages being devoted to slandering Ananda Marga based on hearsay, commentary and documents from "former cultists" and the FBI and CIA. The same article, though in most cases edited down considerably, has appeared in 20 - 30 cities.

This afternoon we received word from AP, UPI, and the New York Post that they were carrying similar articles, to be based on the original Bauer article.

Already as a result of just these articles, Margiis have reported confusion and dismay among family, friends and sympathizers. Media attacks are always aimed to do the most damage without the necessity for an actual confrontation. To offset the damaging publicity, we request your help in the following ways.

1) Write letters to the editor of your local newspaper (if it ran the article), including information from the enclosed fact sheet in your own words. Have as many Margiis and sympathizers as possible write these letters. Keep writing and pressuring the paper until your responses are printed; remember that if you can disprove even three points in an article like this, the whole article's validity comes into question. Please call us if you need specific information on any allegation.

2) Write individual and/or group letters to Mr. Robert Ingle, Executive Editor of the San Jose Mercury & News, 750 Ridder Park Dr., San Jose, CA 95131, detailing your concerns due to the publishing of the original article. To help you with this, keep records of losses sustained due to the bad press, such as any threatening calls, projects that have failed or been cut off or down in funding, etc. Also express your outrage with the article, and request that an apology and retraction be printed in a prominent location in the newspaper, and that such retraction be made available to all the wire services for immediate release. Stress that time is crucial in their response, since with each day the damage caused to our work grows.

Service to humanity is service to God

3) As part of this and future efforts, please keep a record of your activities and contacts, including the name and title of person contacted, the date and time, and what occurred. Please also send us copies of the original article from your paper, plus copies of any submitted and published responses from your end.

4) Please appoint one person as the "spokesperson" for Ananda Marga in your area. All interviews and communications with us and the media should go through this person.

Other news:

We have received word that Baba has begun touring India, and that only a few final signatures are needed to end the last case pending. This means that we may expect a world tour as soon as the beginning of the year. We need to begin preparations for Him now, and our work for public relations is instrumental in paving the way. There is still a chance to reverse the harm caused by this article if we act quickly.

May your work for Him be crowned with success.

Your brother in Baba,

Vinaya
for
Public Relations Board

FACT SHEET - TO AID IN COUNTERING NEGATIVE PUBLICITY August, 1982

THE INDIAN SITUATION

Background for persecution:

- 1) 1966. The strong impact Ananda Marga was making in many areas of India concerned various local officials. Local authorities and political factions began to join in opposition.
- 2) Members of Ananda Marga, holding senior public posts, openly opposed widespread administrative corruption within the government.
- 3) Conservative religious leaders reacted to Ananda Marga's opposition to dogmatic and superstitious practices.
- 4) Communist parties felt threatened by competition for support among the working classes and disaffected intellectuals.
- 5) Pro-Moscow communists held a strong position within Mrs. Gandhi's first term in 1967. The government's opposition to Ananda Marga was goaded by the Soviet Union which also took an extremely hostile position towards Ananda Marga.

Early incidents:

Ananda Nagar

Year: 1967
 Place: Ananda Marga Headquarters, Ananda Nagar, Purulia, West Bengal
 Description: Five Ananda Marga monks were murdered in an attack by intoxicated tribal people and hired thugs, orchestrated by local communist party leaders.
 Outcome: 49 Margiis were arrested. They were charged with starting a riot. All were acquitted. Ananda Marga filed counter charges. 18 communist party leaders were found guilty of conspiring to murder and received jail sentences.

Cooch Bihar

Year: 1969
 Place: Cooch Bihar, West Bengal
 Description: One Ananda Marga member killed by a bomb as hired thugs attacked the spiritual congregation site. 200 Margiis arrested for "breach of peace". Charges were dropped in court. Quote from police report on case: "Final report under section 173, C.R.P.C. District Coochbihar, final report No. 569, dated 10/16/70, police station Kotwali. . . . some CPM (Communist Party) leaders misled and misguided the mob that the Sadhus (Margiis) were the spy of CIA and their holding religious meeting would be detrimental to the society. This maneuvering with ulterior motive led the whole thing to such a chaos that it served the purpose of the so-called CPM leaders."

Early incidents in India, cont.

Government ban

In May, 1968, the Home Ministry proclaimed a ban on public servants participating in Ananda Marga. Ananda Margiis who worked as public servants immediately challenged the ban through the judicial system. The Supreme Court overturned the ban and the Margiis were permitted to continue their employment.

The persecution of P.R. Sarkar

- 1) Sarkar was held in jail for six months before formal charges were brought.
- 2) Charges were based solely on the testimony of one of the original co-accused who had been held in custody for the same length of time and turned approver.
- 3) Of the original 200 charges brought against Sarkar, every one of them has been disproved or dropped.
- 4) Sarkar was held in jail for two and a half years before the case came to trial.
- 5) Sarkar suffered permanent injury to his vision and hearing, as well as temporary paralysis, after an attempt on his life in February, 1973. Government authorities refused to investigate the incident. Sarkar suffered continuous harassment and torture during his five-and-a-half-year protest fast which followed.
- 6) Internationally renowned lawyer, W.T. Wells, Queen's Council, observed the trial. In his report he called upon the Indian government to meet Sarkar's legitimate grievances.
- 7) Mr. Claude Armand Sheppard, a neutral observer from the International Commission of Jurists concluded in his report, "prosecution and government (were) obviously intent on using the judicial process for purely political motives of discrediting and destroying Ananda Marga."
- 8) In March of 1975 Prime Minister Indira Gandhi was convicted by Indian High Court of fraudulent electoral activities and violating Indian election laws. On June 24 the Indian Supreme Court barred Mrs. Gandhi from participating in parliamentary proceedings and from receiving her salary as a parliament minister. On June 26 she announced the "State of Emergency" which gave her power to have more than 150,000 political opponents thrown in jail. (Amnesty International estimates) Ananda Marga was banned along with other organizations and 4,500 Margiis were jailed. During the extreme situation that prevailed during the "State of Emergency", Sarkar's lawyers were unable to present a single witness for the defense; the media was banned from covering Sarkar's trial; the police and courts were under the direct control of the central government of Mrs. Gandhi. It came as no surprise when Sarkar was convicted and sentenced to death (later reversed to life imprisonment) in 1976.
- 9) After the emergency was lifted Sarkar was able to receive a fair trial. He was acquitted and honorably released August 2, 1978.

THE CBI/KGB CONNECTION

- 1) When the court found the charges against Sarkar to be unfounded and baseless and subsequently acquitted him in 1978, there was no doubt that the CBI (Central Bureau of Intelligence in India) had concocted the false allegations.

- 2) After the overt attempts to destroy Ananda Marga in the late 60's brought nothing but embarrassment to the governmental authorities, a covert campaign was launched with the help of the CBI.
- 3) In April, 1973 one Ananda Marga monk, Acarya Diineshvarananda, shocked by the attempt on Sarkar's life and the subsequent obstruction of investigation, performed the ultimate non-violent protest by self-immolation in Delhi. Police arrested five Margiis and charged them with murder, claiming that they had murdered him and set him alight. However, film taken by a reporter revealed the truth and they were acquitted later, but the film was never released to the public. After an attempt on his life in which his secretary was killed, the reporter fled India for asylum in Switzerland. There he made public details of the CBI's attempts to silence him.
- 4) Early in 1975 a confession made by the person who threw the grenade implicated Mrs. Ganhi in the assassination of railway minister L.N. Mishra. When the case was handed over to the CBI the taped confession was removed and the person released. After the "State of Emergency" was announced in June the CBI arrested five Margiis and charged them with the murder. Since then prominent lawyer N.M. Tarkunde published a report (which he presented to the Prime Minister Morarji Desai). It concluded that the evidence against the Ananda Marga members was wholly fabricated and that a valid initial inquiry was "deliberately sabotaged" by Mrs. Gandhi. Mishra's widow also came out in public saying she was convinced the Margiis were innocent. The case is still pending in Delhi, under Mrs. Gandhi's new regime.
- 5) During the "State of Emergency" a booklet called "Ananda Marg - The Truth" (with a skull on the cover) was circulated in the thousands to governments and press all around the world. It was kept in stock in most Indian foreign missions to give to anyone inquiring about Ananda Marga. The booklet contained photographs of skulls, daggers and corpses and was packed with false allegations concerning Ananda Marga and Sarkar personally. Charges of "ritualistic homosexuality" originate from this book. The author is Nawal Kishore, who alleges to be a former monk in Ananda Marga. Through the Library of Congress in Washington D.C., it is documented that another book is available by Kishore, called "Towards Closer Indo-Soviet Cooperation". The strategy adopted for defaming Ananda Marga in the book was parallel to well-documented KGB operations against Catholics in Poland.
- 6) After the emergency, Ananda Marga brought 500 charges against the CBI and Indira Gandhi over injustices committed during the emergency. CBI officers feared subsequent investigations and possible prosecutions and renewed hostilities against Ananda Marga, hoping that reaction by Margiis would turn the new Janata government against them.
- 7) The CBI influence in the Sarkar case did not diminish in spite of the sacking of its director in New Delhi. Further threatened attacks on the security and safety of Sarkar brought demonstrations throughout the world in August 1977.

CAMPAIGN TO DISCREDIT ANANDA MARGA AROUND THE WORLD (UPRF, Etc.)

- 1) See enclosed statement by P.R. Sarkar, of October 16, 1977.
- 2) CBI made public threats to "exterminate Ananda Marga" in India.
- 3) Ananda Marga spokespersons have condemned all actions of the so-called Universal Proutists Revolutionary Federation (UPRF) and disclaims any connection with these actions.
- 4) Threatening letters signed "UPRF" were received by Indian

page 4

missions in many countries. The letters and allegations by Indian government officials implicating Ananda Marga received extensive coverage in the press.

- 5) In the following incidents: New York, Los Angeles, Washington DC., Canberra, Stockholm, Copenhagen, Paris, Melbourne, Ottawa, Hong Kong, Kuala Lumpur, no Margiis were arrested or charged, much less convicted. The crimes and threats were strongly condemned by Ananda Marga spokespersons.
- 6) Manila case: Ms. Victoria Sheppard was acquitted on appeal. The inconsistencies and contradictions in the "evidence" presented by the prosecution are too numerous to mention. In an unprecedented verdict the judge convicted one and acquitted the other. The same judge has stated in public that he had been under indirect pressure from Indian government authorities, and mentioned the name of Indira Gandhi.
- 7) Hilton Bombing, Sydney, Australia. No Margiis were ever charged, much less convicted of this crime. One week after the Hilton bombing one ex-convict, ex-heroin addict, ex-Hare Krishna infiltrator volunteered to join Ananda Marga as an undercover agent. The police accepted. One week after he had framed three Ananda Marga members in the Cameron case he alleged that he had heard the same Margiis confess to the Hilton bombing. However there was no evidence against them and no case was filed. The story was leaked to the press, which virtually conducted its own trial of Ananda Marga with tremendous anti-Ananda Marga propaganda. The Australian public was convinced that the Margiis did it. Since then the opinion of the press and subsequently also the Australian public has switched to the theory that the bomb had been planted by the Australian Secret Intelligence Organization (ASIO). This theory has been argued in the parliament by several prominent MPs. A policeman who was injured and barely survived the Hilton bomb explosion has publicly charged that he knows the bomb was planted by the army on direction of the ASIO. He has promised to reveal details during the fresh inquiry into the bombing coming up on September 27 in Sydney. Overwhelming documentation is available to prove that the Margiis were framed. The intention of the ASIO was to find the bomb and defuse it. Shortly after the Hilton incident ASIO won increased scope, autonomy, and authority to conduct undercover operations, wiretapping, and surveillance. These increased powers were used to withhold crucial evidence from the jury in the Cameron case, i.e. the files on the undercover agent mentioned above, which could have linked the ASIO with the frame-up.
- 8) The Indian High Commission in Australia insisted that Ananda Marga was responsible for incidents at the High Commission building. However, even the already antagonistic Commonwealth police admitted on occasions that the Indian delegation was in fact behind several of the incidents, not the Ananda Margiis. Police revealed that one Indian intelligence agent had planted a bomb in the High Commission building (for which Ananda Marga was initially blamed by the High Commissioner). This received widespread coverage in the Australian press.
- 9) On New Year's Day, 1978, an Air India Jetliner crashed just after takeoff from Bombay airport. The press received an anonymous phone call from the so-called "UPRF" claiming responsibility. The press went on to blame Ananda Marga. The story was printed prominently all over the world, including the New York Times. The antagonism against Ananda Marga rose as the casualties had been in the hundreds. One week later, the investigators concluded that the crash had been

- caused by a flock of birds that had been sucked into the jet engine just after takeoff and caused a fire and explosion. This information did not receive much circulation in the media.
- 10) One Indian "journalist" name Chandraprakash Gupta was arrested in Indore, India, and convicted of sending death threat letters to Prime Minister Morarji Desai and other Indian government personalities in the name of "UPRF" in order to defame Ananda Marga.
 - 11) One bank robbery in India was blamed on Ananda Marga after the criminals had left a note blaming "UPRF". The criminals were later arrested and they turned out to be hardened criminals well known to the police. They admitted writing the note to confuse the police.
 - 12) Every indication is that the "UPRF" was a concoction by Indian intelligence to defame Ananda Marga. No one has ever seen a member of the "UPRF"; they have no publications, no history and have not been heard from except during those few months in 1977 and 1978. Ananda Marga has disclaimed any knowledge or connection with this alleged organization. Ananda Marga has also denounced all the actions committed in the name of the "UPRF".- Please consult Sarkar's statement.

OTHER ALLEGATIONS MADE IN THE PRESS

- 1) Ananda Marga disclaims any knowledge of or connection with the apparent murder of Bishvanatha Singh (of Boulder, Colorado) in Sweden. Any suggestion that there had been tension between Singh's group and Ananda Marga is completely false; rather, the relationship was good. No member or ex-member of Ananda Marga has been convicted in this case. One Ananda Marga member in Germany was arrested and questioned by police, and later released and all charges dropped.
- 2) Conspiracy to assassinate Indira Gandhi. This allegation is totally baseless. The FBI says they were warned by "Indian intelligence in the U.S." In light of the evidence of Indian government and intelligence persecution of Ananda Marga, one may easily conclude that this information is incorrect and deliberately misleading.
- 3) FBI investigations about reports of paramilitary terrorist training camps in the U.S. The FBI said the investigation was started on the personal request of Indira Gandhi as a part of the security precautions for her visit to the U.S. earlier this summer. In light of the evidence of Gandhi's relentless persecution of Ananda Marga one may conclude that she has misled the FBI to harass and defame Ananda Marga in the U.S.
- 4) "Reports that Ananda Marga is planning more terrorist activities" are completely baseless. All charges of terrorist activities by Ananda Marga have been disproved. Ananda Marga believes these so-called reports are non-existing or fabricated by Indian intelligence.
- 5) Threats against the Pope. This charge is baseless. Filipino police harassed Ananda Marga offices for no reason in the days before the Holy Father's arrival on the island. The police never received any written or oral threat against the Pope from Ananda Marga nor from anyone else. Their source for the threat was anonymous.

page 6

- 6) Sarkar's alleged visit to San Francisco. The allegation that Sarkar had been "defying the State department ban" on his visa and "detained" and later "sent away" from San Francisco airport gives the implication that Sarkar wilfully and consciously attempted to break U.S. immigration law. The fact is that Sarkar never boarded nor attempted to board any plane bound for the U.S., and he never was in San Francisco. Considering the well known policy that no airline will allow any passenger aboard without a U.S. visa on a U.S. bound flight, the whole charge becomes absurd. (In this allegation the author of the San Jose article does not quote any source, rather he states bluntly as a fact; this statement may therefore be libelous).
- 7) Reason for denial of Sarkar's visa. Sarkar has toured more than a dozen countries around the world without incident. Australian immigration authorities have reversed their original denial of a visa to Sarkar and assured our representatives that Sarkar will be able to receive a visitor's visa whenever he is ready to apply. The only purpose of a proposed tour by Mr. Sarkar in the U.S. would be to provide spiritual inspiration and encouragement to members and guidance for Ananda Marga social service work. Some members of Ananda Marga are currently pressing an appeal in a lawsuit against the Department of State. The Margis charge that the State Department's denial of a visa for Sarkar is an encroachment of their rights to religious freedom guaranteed under the U.S. constitution. There is no base and no precedent for the State Department's fear that a visit by Sarkar "might lead to acts of violence." There have been indications from sources within the State Department that the main reason for the denial of Sarkar's U.S. visa is to avoid putting unnecessary strain on the already tense diplomatic relationship between the U.S. and Indian governments. The U.S. received harsh admonition from India for granting a U.S. visa to an India separatist leader from the Punjab last year. The Indian government in Delhi summoned the U.S. ambassador and questioned him about U.S. commitment to India's territorial integrity. One can see that the relationship between the two countries, with the Soviet Union peering over the shoulder of India, is very delicate.
- 8) It is incorrect that Subash Chandra Bose fought with Hitler against the allied forces. Bose fought against the British in India to liberate his country from the bonds of colonialism.

Ananda Marga
 154 Peori St.
 Denver, Co. 80203
 (303) 632-6666

Statement made by Mr. P. R. Sarkar concerning acts of violence

October 16, 1977

"I completely disavow the acts of violence, and even if some misguided youths who have no faith in the Marg's ideology are involved in such acts, I will not obtain my release in this way."

"The C.B.I. and a foreign power are unnerved over the good relations we have with the Janata Party. The recent acts of violence inside and outside the country are nothing but the outcome of their joint conspiracy."

"The C.B.I. bureaucracy thinks that if the Janata Government conducts a thorough inquiry into C.B.I. conduct as regards Ananda Marga during the Congress regime, many of its top officers will be unmasked, so they are trying their best to insure that our relations deteriorate."

"The foreign power has the unfounded fear that Ananda Marga emergence would mean the growing influence of the U.S. in India. This is nothing but sheer nonsense, but this is what they think."

Printed in France by Amazon
Brétigny-sur-Orge, FR



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Memoir

Told with simplicity and devotion, Dada Nityashuddhanda recounts his thirty-five years with his master, Shrii Shrii Anandamurti, beginning in India during the 1960s and later taking him to America, Europe, and the Middle East. Through Dada's eyes, we get a unique glimpse into the life of the great Tantric master, as well as a behind-the-scenes look at the mission he created, which quickly spread throughout the globe. Full of inspirational stories and the master's advice to his disciples, *Samarpan* is sure to be a welcome and enjoyable aid to anyone who wishes to progress on the spiritual path.

“Dada Nityashuddhananda's remembrances of his time with his Guru, Shrii Shrii Anandamurti are touching, heartfelt and illuminating. A worthy addition to the growing collection of writings about the life and teachings of this remarkable 20th Century spiritual visionary.”

— Dada Nabhaniilananda, author of
Close Your Eyes and Open Your Mind

