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*Swami Paramananda, Omkaram, Mahananda, Andhra Pradesh, India 1985.  
This was the photo the author used for his puja in Omkaram. Photo: Devendranath.*

## IN SEARCH OF TRUTH

### MY EXPERIENCES WITH SWAMI PARAMANANDA

AUTOBIOGRAPHY OF A YOGI IN THE WEST

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# THE ART OF MEDITATION

## Omkaram

The sixteen hour long journey became a great exertion because there were no vacant seats anywhere in the crowded train, and my spontaneous decision to go meant I could not reserve a seat. Actually, I didn't have a ticket at all, but with a lot of difficulty I was just able to buy my ticket on the train. So without a seat I was standing until I could no longer stand, and eventually I had to lay my bones down on the filthy floor in the passage just outside the indescribably stinking toilet, with lots of traffic in and out the whole night. The passengers actually had to step over my body to access the toilet, but it was the only available floor space on the whole train, and I was too tired and exhausted to reflect any further on it.

But eventually I arrived at Nandyal early on Sunday morning and went straight to the home of Satyam, who was a wealthy businessman and an old friend of Devendranath, besides being a devotee of Paramananda, of course. At once I asked him to send a telegram to Laxman Rao in Rajamundry to send me the deerskin and the *doti* that Paramananda had given me but which I had forgotten to bring with me. However, later I heard that Laxman Rao had sent them but I never received them and I never saw them again. Then I had to see Dr Devnath to treat an infection in one of my eyes that I had got on the train journey. He gave me homeopathic medicines that cured my infection in a couple of weeks. In Satyam's house I had good rest and recovered greatly for a whole week. The long halt there was due to their having to make a wooden door for the room where I was going to stay in Omkaram, as at that time it had no door. And also they had to make a big mosquito net for me, and various cooking utensils and other equipment, food, etc. had to be gathered.

By the end of the week there were rumours in Nandyal that the tribal people near Omkaram were going to kill me if I went there, and many people expressed great concern and worry about my going there. But the next day a contrary message came from the nearest village to Omkaram that sadhus would not be harmed. Still, all the people around me were very uncertain what would await me in Omkaram. Another, peculiar and odd element of uncertainty was the possibility of my losing my sexual organ there. There was a story being told that a couple of years earlier a young man had spent the night in Omkaram and on waking up in the morning he had found, to his utter horror, that his penis had disappeared without a trace of blood or wound or any outer sign of surgery. This created a great fear in

the whole area because it was known that certain tantriks had a secret science of a surgical technology with which they could perform this operation using only their bare hands, so that older tantriks with an old and useless penis, or with a deformation of any kind, would sometimes steal the healthy penis of a young man. It was a crazy thought, really, to think that somebody, in the dark of night, should come and steal your penis. But I didn't give these crazy rumours or insane stories, serious warnings or intense appeals, any consideration at all – I was going to Omkaram anyway!

When on Sunday before noon on March 17<sup>th</sup>, I could finally enter the jeep which would carry me to Omkaram via Mahanandai, Satyam's wife and several others cried at my departure from Nandyal. But I didn't worry a bit – I was beside myself with joy at finally being on my way to my target.

The time in Omkaram was wonderful with mostly a soothing silence and solitude day and night. Nothing has ever been more soul-soothing and harmonizing, or more valuable and precious to me than silence and solitude. I think it is the closest I can come to anything "holy". And thus it has always been in my life for as long as I can remember. But it didn't mean a kind of isolating vacuum – it simply meant to be outdoors in nature where everything is natural, without mechanical and unnatural noise or shouting, talk or disturbances. To be alone in the wilderness, that was the thing, so for me my stay in Omkaram was a much sought for and a great blessing.

Of course problems arose, but nothing that could not be handled and solved. The greatest problem was that my windowless, stone made room was as hot as an oven at night after I had closed the door, because the stone roof and walls stored the heat throughout the baking hot day, and there was no ventilation anywhere. It felt like my brain was boiling inside my skull, and both meditation and rest were impossible, so soon I found that I could not use the big, heavy, solid, wooden door that had been specially made for me to protect me from both robbers and wild animals at night. Instead I went to the jungle and cut some green bamboo which I bound together with rope to form a door of crossing bars. Then, with rope, I just attached the bamboo door to the metal hinges at the wall sides of the open door. It functioned quite well and the air ventilation at night was fairly good, too. Still it felt far too hot to be able to sit properly for meditation. So I decided to change my mind and instead practice *bhakti-yoga sadhana* with all my might, besides practicing three different *asanas* which Paramananda had prescribed especially for me while in Omkaram.

The room had a most fantastic resonance, so I sang hymns to Lord Shiva as loudly as I could and performed a simple *puja* to the beautiful photo of Paramananda which Satyam had given to me while staying in his home in Nandyal. The photo actually showed Paramananda sitting in meditation underneath a tree in Omkaram, when he had visited there with a party while I was in Madras. So if I was not able to meditate there myself, I could at least devote myself to the image of my guru's meditation!

Several times I got unexpected visitors. On my first day there I found that many people from the surrounding villages, out of curiosity, had walked the distance to the temple to see what kind of creature had come there to live all alone. This happened, of course, because the rumours of my coming there had already reached them long before. In India the "jungle telegraph" was still very effective at that time, way before the appearance of the mobile phone. At one point there came so many people who were only curious that I had to make myself angry to try to make them understand that I didn't want to be disturbed. Again it was the mothers who came to my rescue. Luckily, three mothers understood the situation and took charge to chase away all the people, and after that this was no longer a problem.

But I also got several nice and interesting, even touching, visits, as when an impoverished, miserable wretch of a man came with his dirty *gamcha* holding a bundle of cooked rice stained completely red with chili, which he offered me with the greatest reverence. That was surely all the food he had that day, so I felt embarrassed as I had enough food myself, and moreover, that food would be so chili hot it would be impossible for me to eat. Then what to do? In no way did I want to hurt the poor man by refusing his heartfelt, dedicated offer. I therefore accepted the bundle of rice, opened it and took one single grain of rice from the top, and then gave it back to him. That he joyously accepted as *prasad*, and the delicate situation was solved in an excellent way. The man immediately sat down in my presence and ate everything, down to the last morsel.

On two different occasions men came to me who absolutely wanted me to function as a priest in the temple for them. They wanted me to offer a coconut on their behalf to Lord Shiva. None of them knew English, so I could only understand what they meant through body language, especially when they led me by the hand to the holiest of holies, where the old *shivalingam* was, and then put a coconut in my hand. Luckily, I had once observed this ritual somewhere, perhaps in Dakshineswar outside Calcutta, so I had a faint idea of how it should be performed. And everything went smoothly – I managed to break the coconut and pour the water inside it over the *shivalingam* – so that the worshipping men were satisfied. Afterwards they wanted *satsanga* with me, so with the universal language –

"body language" – I tried to the best of my ability to make them understand that neither was it necessary to have a middle man or priest to do this worship, nor any external ritual – they could do it entirely by the inner way.

The mother tongue in that part of India is Telugu, which I could not understand at all, and which, as with the other South Indian languages, is completely different to the languages of North India – they belong to two separate language groups. Conversation was therefore out of the question, but it also happened that visitors came who had more than the average education and therefore knew English, which, after all, together with Hindi, is the national language of India. Early one morning, for example, an elderly, white haired, very sympathetic, wandering sadhu came and spent the whole day in my company. He had earlier been K. Ramakrishnan, a family man and business-man from Kerala, who in his later years had renounced everything by *sannyasa* and set out on a pilgrimage on foot to temples and holy places all over India, as the tradition goes in this incredibly varied country. As a sannyasin he had practically no more than what he was wearing, so I cooked for him and entertained him with whatever I could offer from my little "abundance".

Another time an English speaking Hindu from the nearest village came and invited me to his home for lunch. I was actually not at all interested but he approached me in such a heartfelt and sincere way that I felt it would be heartless to refuse him. So the next day he came to bring me to his home in a stately manner with a bullock cart. Politely, I seated myself on the cart, and my host went on foot proudly by the side. Actually, I would have preferred to walk alongside him, because without a thick, soft seat and a big body belt, the trip developed into complete torture for the inner organs. But I didn't want to disappoint or hurt my host, so I forced myself to be seated on the hard, spring-less cart all the bumpy way to his village. When we finally arrived at his simple, but very hospitable home, his wife had slaughtered a chicken for the great event and served it completely soaked in red chili – extra hot, I suppose, in my honour. At that time I was a strict vegetarian, nevertheless it was my principle that whenever I was invited somewhere, I would always eat whatever was served to me, so as not to offend or make any difficulties for my well intentioned hosts. Thus chicken was okay, but the problem was that it was so extremely chili hot that I found it completely inedible, and only with the greatest effort and lots of coughing and sweating did I manage to force down the portion on the plate served to me. At the same time I had to do my best not to display too much of my difficulties for my happy hosts. It was really a test of self-control, and I certainly did not feel any temptation to give in for a second portion. Afterwards I thanked them politely for the food and my host followed me back to Omkaram, luckily without the bullock cart this time.



Another man, who suddenly appeared one day and knew a little English, was very surprised to hear that I came from Norway – not that he seemed to understand where in the world Norway might be. In his mind I was a yogi who had come from the Himalayas. That my skin was white and my eyes blue was of no consequence, because in the Himalayas a yogi may look like anything. And that, of course, was true enough, according to what I had heard myself. For that matter I was wearing only a small loin cloth and a small headscarf from day one there, and I learnt from this man that the fewer clothes a sadhu would wear, the greater a spiritual person he would be. Indeed! I guess my long beard added to the image.

It also happened that extremely poor, destitute tribal people would come by and I always provided them with some of my food. To a very skinny man, who looked really miserable, and who came to me crying, I gave a lot of rice and lentils. He beamed like a sun when he left and I never saw him again. Water-melon, which seemed to go by the local name of 'karpusso', was an especially popular food to offer my guests. I ate only rice and lentils boiled together as *kitchuri* for lunch, and for supper I baked *ruti*. After the first week I felt rather weak on this meagre and vitamin poor diet but after first Venkata Reddy and then Satyam brought me water melons by car, and after finding mangoes within the temple compound, my food problem was solved. My stove for cooking consisted of three stones placed together at a certain distance, forming a triangle, so that a kettle would fit on top and firewood underneath. It functioned very well. Good drinking water was in abundance in a well with a hand pump just a short distance outside my room. Next to this hand pump I also had my baths, morning and evening.

Otherwise, shy tribal women would often come by and offer me green mangoes with great veneration. It was the beginning of the mango season, and around the temple there were huge mango trees from which I often picked windfall off the ground. Actually, they had not been blown to the ground but dislodged by parrots and other animals. The South Indians eat these green, sour mangoes as chutney, together with rice, but I always put them in the sunshine in my room to ripen. After two or three days they were ready and sweet.

The most exciting encounters I had with people were the few times that I saw members of the tribal people who lived deep inside the jungle. They looked just like the early Australian Aborigines or the Amazonian Indians, or any other tropical indigenous people, who have little or no contact with so-called "civilization". They were a most fantastic sight when they appeared almost naked with only little clothing, but abundantly decorated with white paintings, ornaments and bird's feathers, and were always armed with many types of weapons, like bow and arrow,

big knives and spears. To me it was like a fairy tale to see these people of nature in their own environment – really inspiring. The mere thought of these people having lived exactly like that, undisturbed, deep inside the jungle, for countless generations for tens of thousands of years, nay, maybe hundreds of thousands of years since the dawn of human creation, gave me an indescribably deep feeling of originality and timelessness. To see them was to experience that time stood still, and always has stood perfectly still! When they appeared they came one or two together out from the jungle and into the temple area at a distance from my room. On these occasions we each only stood still for a while and viewed each other until they disappeared, just as suddenly as they had appeared. These occasions were felt almost like eternal moments – as if exactly this situation had happened countless times before in my countless previous lives. In every life I had different roles to play in various human societies around the world, but these people were always the same – as a part of that undisturbed and original nature that they truly belonged to.

Other representatives of this nature, who often came to the temple compound during the day, were the beautiful, white-spotted chital deer, and a varied selection of birds, insects, amphibians and other animals. A resident group of Bonnet Macaques (*Macaca radiata*), numbering about twelve individuals, used to play just outside my room. They were not very much accustomed to people, so they were not naughty but always kept to their own business. I had no chance to observe the nightly visits of leopards and sloth bears as Paramananda had forbidden me to leave my room at night. But I have to confess that the last night I was there, when the full moon was shining its magic light everywhere, curiosity drove me out on to the roof for a short while to have a look-out for these animals. After about twenty minutes I climbed down from the roof and went to my room without having seen even the shadow of an animal. But at least I saw the whole temple complex and parts of the great jungle covered by the beautiful, silvery, mellow light of the full moon.

### *Banagram and Kathmandu*

The next day I went on foot alone to Mahanandi. Then I had been in the temple of Omkaram for three weeks. Many people from the surrounding villages had come to bid me farewell when I left. How they knew I was leaving that day was a mystery to me, because I had not told anyone and in Venkata Reddy's home they were not prepared for my coming. From Mahanandi I went by jeep to Nandyal where I spent the night in Devendranath's house, and the next day I took the train to Rajamundry. After a night's rest in the

house of Laxman Rao I continued my train journey to Calcutta, where Sobbo and Purnananda met me at the station. And after staying with Sobbo for a night – he had moved from Singur to Seoraphulli in the meantime – I finally reached Banagram on Thursday April 11<sup>th</sup>.

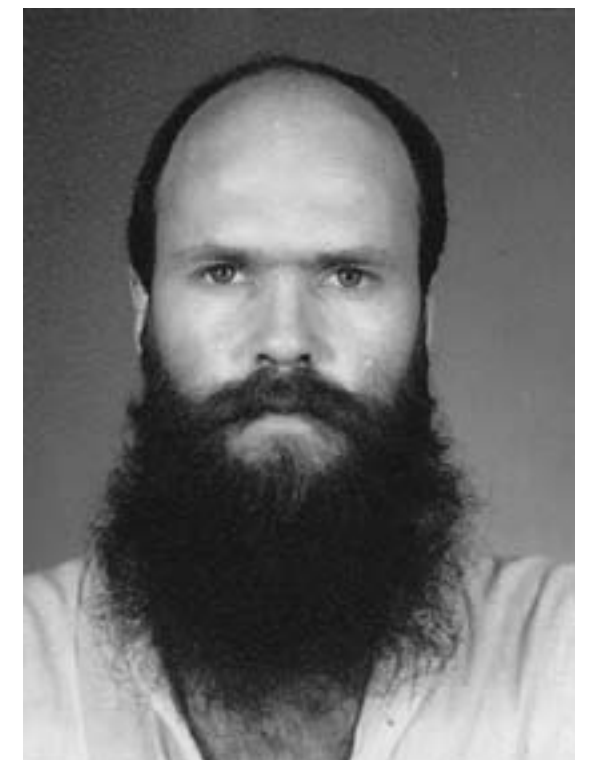
Paramananda was sitting on his veranda when I came and when I was still a good distance away smilingly signalled to me to come to him. "Oh, Bjørn, come and sit by me, I feel such *ananda* when I see you!" He clearly showed that he was greatly satisfied with my *sadhana*. That time I thought that perhaps he had appreciated my switching from my regular *jñānayoga* practice to *bhaktiyoga* practice given the situation back in Omkaram, but later I felt that even more it was my humanity in relation to the people I met with there, because Paramananda always gave more importance to that aspect of being and *sadhana*. Anyhow, I felt myself much "lighter" and "brighter", physically and mentally, than ever before in my life, and I felt that many previous inhibitions had vanished. When a little later we were alone, he only said, half asking: "Oh, did you get malaria?" "Yes", I confirmed with a smile and in a low voice, and that was all that was said between us about that matter, and it was never brought up again.

Paramananda had written a poem in Bengali and sent it to Sobbo, so that he, with my assistance, could translate it into English. We translated it and went through it word by word with Paramananda afterwards. When we finished and he had approved the final result, he gave it especially to me and said that it should be my meditation. It was the most amazing poem, "I", which was going to become an important part of me in the coming years. I also had a most inspiring conversation with Paramananda in his hut one night about my *sadhana* in Norway, but also about the possibility of him visiting Alvdal that same year, if the finances could be arranged. This was very surprising and gratifying news – I had not been counting on the possibility of Paramananda visiting Norway that early.

The reason why I had to leave Omkaram and go back to Banagram at that time, was that my visa was due to expire and I wanted to try to get a new one by leaving India for a few days for Nepal, and apply for a new Indian visa from there. Paramananda was soon to go to the Himalayas to a new ashram he had established in Baniketh, Himachal Pradesh. Before I left Banagram he handed me one thousand rupees for my travel expenses, as the little money I had brought with me from Norway was finished. I felt a little embarrassed to receive that much money from him, especially from his own hand, but he assured me that everything his was also mine. Besides, he sent me with a letter of introduction which I was to hand over to a friend of his in Kathmandu, with whom I hoped to stay for the time I needed to spend there. He read the letter out to me in English, and when he described me as a truth seeker of "extreme purity",

I was both surprised and embarrassed. I never used to have high thoughts about myself, and especially not about purity. But I noted what he said and didn't think any more about it. When we took leave of each other on April 15<sup>th</sup> he smiled very warmly to me in his usual, incomparable way, full of blessing and love, and said: "Bjørn, you are sannyasin – you have always my blessing."

I stayed a couple of days with Sobbo so that he could help me to obtain a Nepali visa in Calcutta, as he knew Nepal very well after having spent a whole year there as a school teacher before his marriage. After an okay journey by train and bus I arrived in Kathmandu in the afternoon of April 19<sup>th</sup>. While travelling by bus from Birganj, at the end of the plains by the Indian border with Nepal, and up into the mountains to the Kathmandu Valley, our bus stopped a couple of times where there had been accidents just the night before. At both places we looked down a precipitous abyss of hundreds of metres, where we could see dimly a smashed bus where no passenger would have had any chance of surviving. From a co-passenger I heard that those bus drivers who drove at night used to get high on hashish to be able to keep awake, and that they used to cut the engine as much as possible going downhill to save fuel. The bus's brakes, therefore, received too much strain with the obvious danger that eventually they would stop functioning. In addition, they drove like mad at too high a speed and with insane overtaking, etc. Together with the fact that two buses had been driven off the road and smashed in accidents in one night,



*The author's visa photo for Nepal, Calcutta 16.04.1985.  
The malaria has made its physical mark.*

and an unknown number of passengers killed and mutilated beyond recognition, this was really horror instilling and highly alarming information, and I decided there and then that I would go back to India by air. However, uphill and in daylight everything went on smoothly, and after safely arriving in Kathmandu I soon found Paramananda's friend Rattan Lal Kaul and his two younger brothers, who invited me to stay in their home.

I spent only one week in Kathmandu and Nepal as the Indian visa authorities maintained that a new three month tourist visa could only be obtained six months after my last six month period in India. Obviously, the rules had changed since my first visit to India, when I met people who had stayed in India for years on end simply by going to Nepal for a few days now and then to obtain a new visa. I was therefore only granted a transit visa for fifteen days so that I could manage to arrange for my air ticket back to Norway (I always travelled on an open return ticket in those days). As I didn't want to spend more than absolutely necessary of the travel money that Paramananda had given me, I changed my mind about going back to Calcutta by air, and instead decided to go by bus by day. It was tough enough, and I had really to make an effort to try to relax and not get nervous. But all reached Birganj with their health intact, and I could continue from there by train to Calcutta and then to Sobbo in Seoraphulli. The next day we went together to Singur where Sobbo showed me the site for a new centre which was soon to be built for the Paramananda Mission, later to be known as the "Tattwamasi Ashram". A small clay house had already been erected on the lot, and we stayed there overnight before going to Banagram the next day.

As Paramananda had already gone to the Himalayas and was not in the ashram, I spent only a few days there before going back again to Sobbo and his wife Ranu, with their little daughter Sanghamitra, who was always called "Lymme". Sobbo and Ranu were both wonderfully friendly and hospitable, and it was always a great pleasure to stay in their home. And besides, they could provide me with good spiritual company, so that we always had many interesting discussions there. They lived a very simple life, and other guru brothers and sisters on the move would always stop by their home. Sobbo only occasionally attended his workplace and was completely relaxed about his working life in government service, as he had the nature of an artist and poet. His daughter, who was then only four years old, had a French name because Sobbo regarded himself mostly as French. From his youth he had felt strongly that in an earlier life he had been the well-known French poet Arthur Rimbaud (1854–1891), and for a time because of this he had behaved in a quite unruly fashion like a mad person. When he met Paramananda in Banagram and told him about this strong feeling, Paramananda had confirmed that indeed he had actually lived the life of that great French poet. As a consequence Sobbo had learnt fluent French and wrote poems in

a grand style. Many, many years later he also actually visited France. With the help of Paramananda he soon became quite fine and normal, and also a good friend of mine.

I left India by plane on May 9<sup>th</sup>. Trishan and a new friend, Tarun, who I had met in the upcoming centre of Singur, came with me to the airport after first paying a brief visit to Tripti Ma's family at Dum-Dum, just beside the airport. Inside the airport, just after taking leave of Trishan and Tarun, I encountered serious problems. Though I knew nothing about it, reportedly, a big underground meeting in Calcutta about the forbidden organization Ananda Marga, had just taken place. The organization had, among other things, been banned by the Government on account of their being accused of murder and terrorist activity.

Ananda Marga became internationally known in the media in the mid-1970s when members of their organization carried out a couple of aircraft hijacks in an attempt to have their leader, Ananda Murti, referred to simply as "Baba" by his adherents, released from imprisonment. When I travelled overland to India for the first time in 1977, at the border between India and Pakistan, I had, very surprisingly, of all persons, met with an old school mate from Jeløya. He was on his way back to Norway driving his own car, after having seen Baba in a prison in Delhi, and talked enthusiastically about his great personality, also recommending me to visit Baba in the prison. I was greatly surprised to hear all of this, and had had no idea that a former class-mate had become a "Margi". But, thank God!, I felt absolutely no attraction for this organization, not then, not before, nor at any later time. But there at the airport in Calcutta I was stopped and taken aside at security control by civil police, suspected, as a foreigner, of belonging to this organization. Just next to me in the queue there was a Dane who was also taken aside, he was obviously already registered as a Margi in their files, and he didn't deny that he had attended the forbidden meeting, so he was expelled from the country on the spot with no possibility of ever visiting India again.

However, they knew nothing about me, so a very unpleasant interrogation followed led by two civil police officers. One of them, with such Bollywood style dramatic voice and body language that it was almost comic, asked me: "Have you seen Baba lately?" "Baba who?" I asked in return. "Oh, you know who I mean", he continued. "There are so many babas in India", I replied, "but if you mean this Ananda Murti, I have never seen him." "Oh, so you know about Baba after all!", the police man triumphantly exclaimed and really started to believe that he was soon to expose me as a Margi. "Of course I have heard about Ananda Murti", I calmly replied, "most people have heard about him." All the time I remained calm and collected, and did not allow myself to be provoked by the policemen's rude allegations or abhorrent behaviour. As I had nothing to hide, naturally I answered all the questions frankly with full openness and

truthfulness. And even if I felt uncertain about these policemen in that situation, and their dragging out the time towards the scheduled departure of my plane, I was not at any moment nervous. And as they closely scrutinized my body language all the time, they became increasingly frustrated, and one of them disappeared two or three times with my passport to check it against certain registers, while the other continued to bother me with silly questions.

All the time I maintained that Swami Paramananda was my guru and that I had spent my time in Paramananda Mission in Burdwan District. But this happened before Paramananda Mission was known in Calcutta, so when the one came back for the third time, and this time with my passport in his hand, and they questioned me a last time about my affiliation, I added that it was in the tradition of Ramakrishna, Sarada Ma and Vivekananda. Then suddenly the whole situation totally changed and both policemen saluted me in the Indian way, while they bowed and scraped and deeply excused the incident. They even asked my forgiveness as they returned my passport. And then they disappeared from my sight with a certain haste. I could not help chuckle a little to myself – something like this would only be possible in India and probably in no other country in the whole world!

### *Malaria in Norway*

Back in Norway the malaria symptoms eventually re-emerged, and the first time this happened I was sitting in the train between Oslo and Alvdal. But in Norway they appeared in a different way than in India. The extreme shivering was like before, but the very high, accompanying fever was at a much lower and acceptable level, and also didn't last very long. Besides, the attacks appeared only every second day, not daily as in India. Completely helpless with such a serious disease alone in Shantibu, I therefore took the train to my parents in Moss on one of the symptom-free days. There I saw a homeopathic doctor who gave me very good medicines which actually worked very quickly and also so thoroughly that I was never again attacked by bouts of malaria. The only trace I felt afterwards was a peculiar cold in the body for a single day in February every year for about fifteen years afterwards – probably on the same day as I first had been attacked by malaria in India in February 1985. Of course the malaria hasn't left my body but has been dormant there ever since.

But as I was now well again I could go with Jørn on a twelve day car cum camping trip in the last days of June and the first days of July. We drove from Oslo to Stock-

holm in Sweden and from there by ferry crossed to Åbo and Helsinki in Finland, and then northwards through all of Finland to Finnmark in North Norway, where we participated in the outdoor wedding of one of Jørn's childhood mates. After that we travelled southwards through all of Sweden to Røros and Alvdal in Norway. A few days after arriving back in Shantibu I received a very inspiring letter from Paramananda on July 9<sup>th</sup> in which he enquired about my *sadhana* and gave the following advice:

See the mind has innumerable *Britti* (modifications or stuff). So the mind seems to be many. Indeed it itself is one. When the *Brittis* decrease to one, it is called Super Mind. But still it is mind. When the *Britti* is zero, the mind vanishes. Then it is felt 'I am That'. So our subject should be one that of *Atma-tattwa*. It will lead us to the Self-realization.

He ended his hearty letter by writing that his blessings always follow me on the path of realization. I replied to him that to look into his beaming face, smiling with eyes overflowing of divine blessing – that is like seeing my own Self.

For the rest of the Summer and Autumn at Shantibu we prepared for the coming of Paramananda. Repairs, renovation, painting, etc., were undertaken to the extent that our very limited budget allowed, and several of my old friends turned up for voluntary work. However, we managed to collect the necessary money for Paramananda to stay for one year in Norway, and my friends in America guaranteed money for his air ticket when the time came. I informed Paramananda about all of this in a letter by August. However, it became clear that for him such a long distance trip to a foreign country would require long preparation in many ways, and actually, it took four years still before we could travel together to Norway from India.

While I had been in India I had won the court case against the Government in the form of the Department of Justice, which I had delivered at the Oslo City Court just before my departure to India in October 1984. That is, after the Attorney General on behalf of the Government took charge of the case he found that obvious faults had been committed in the handling of the case, something that was completely in line with my claim in my written plea, so that he asked for a settlement. I agreed, with the condition that the Government should cover all the expenses of the court. And so, as that was their least problem, after an amicable settlement the case was closed.





*My good friend Tarun, as he looked like during the 1980s.*

*After our first introduction in 1985, Tarun always came to be with me as soon as he heard of my arrival in India. He followed me almost like a shadow and always wanted to help me with everything. At the same time he was softly spoken and modest, and always kept himself in the background. Always faithful and reliable.*

*Tarun took sannyas from Paramananda among the 2<sup>nd</sup> generation sannyasins during the 1990s.*

*From the very beginning I sometimes heard him complaining of headaches, but it was not until the end of his life that he was diagnosed with a fatal brain tumor. Too young, he left his body in 1998, in Paramananda's ashram for Ayurvedic medicine in Bankura, where he had received treatment.*

## GLOSSARY (simplified)

**ananda** – bliss, joy (divine).

**asana** – physical body posture in Classical Yoga.

**atma-tattwa** – the principle of the Self.

**bhakti-yoga** – the Yoga of love and devotion.

**britti / vritti** – obstacle or modification or propensity of mind, caused by worldly attachment (*britti* = Bengali pronunciation).

**dhoti** – garment worn by men (equivalent of women's *sari*).

**gamcha** – a multi purpose thin cotton towel in Bengal (not terry, but more like a very, very, big handkerchief).

**jñāna-yoga** – the yoga of wisdom; one of the major forms of yoga in which traditionally the power of the intellect's discernment is the main factor; the science which demonstrates that by self-knowledge, self-control, and self-reverence the human being can attain the highest end of life, and which teaches a system of self-development through the expansion of the understanding, with a view to transcend the limitations of nature and mind.

**kitchuri** – popular dish in which rice and lentils are boiled together into a porridge, and often mixed with spices and vegetables.

**prasad** – holy food that is eaten by the worshipper after it has been offered to a deity, God or Guru.

**puja** – worship by rituals, with outer objects, like flowers, incense, food and other effects.

**ruti** – a round, flatbread made from wheat flour, the slightly thinner Bengali equivalent to the North Indian "*chapati*".

**sadhana** – 'which leads straight to the goal'; a person's spiritual search or quest for truth (which involves personal commitment and practice); the collected effort – physically, emotionally and spiritually – for the realization of life's end. See *sadhu*.

**sadhu** – a person who performs *sadhana* (also *sadhak* for man, *sadhiki* for woman); respected and revered, wandering holy man or woman in India. See *sadhana*.

**sannyasa** – a free and loosely organized age-old order of spiritual world teachers, who spread culture and spiritual science to all parts of the world; the last of four stages in a Hindu's life, in which one dedicates oneself fully and completely to the search for truth; a three day ritual which frees the individual from all social bonds and duties of society to become a sannyasin or sannyasini. See *sannyasin*.

**sannyasin** – a dedicated truth-seeker who wears saffron coloured robes (*gerrhua*), usually with the title *swami* and *ananda* as suffix in the name, who has renounced family happiness and personal career to help people wake up spiritually. See *sannyasa*.

**satsanga** – 'gathering for truth'; a popular type of company with questions and answers, between guru and disciples or spiritual head and audience.

**shivalingam** – a phallus in the form of a (usually) black, cylindrical stone which is erect and rounded at the top, and which symbolizes Shiva and is an object of worship.

**Tattvamasi** – "That Thou art"; one of the most famous formulas from the Upanishads and the Vedanta philosophy, and a much used mantra.

# Continuation follows in the next number next week.