



The Mt. Tron Mail

July - August 2018 * Mt.Tron University of Peace Foundation * No. 1-2 Vol. 21



*When the flowers of the Rosebay are left only at the higher end of the stalk we understand that Summer is on the wane. But then flowering started nearly two weeks earlier than usual this Summer. From Neby at Tynset with Mt.Tron in the background, on 07.08.2018 at 0959 hrs.
Photo: BP.*

Many visitors to Tronsvangen Seter

Summer time means busy days at Tronsvangen Seter. After registering at Booking.com in April, and later also at Expedia - Hotels.com, overnight visitors have veritably poured in to Tronsvangen Seter. In addition nearly as many have booked a room direct by phone as through these two big booking companies. But luckily there are also many friends and acquaintances during this time who visit and stay for longer than only one night.

Booking.com and Hotels.com

Overnight visitors

From the moment in April when Tronsvangen Seter Operation Inc. registered with the world-wide booking company Booking.com, bookings for overnight rooms started to pour in. By the end of May we also registered with Expedia - Hotels.com, where many in search of overnight stops visit on the Internet. But so far most visitors have come through Booking.com. In addition we take nearly as many bookings from people calling us direct by phone, as we do through these two big booking companies. We do not know how they know about us; it might be a good idea to start asking the visitors about this as a matter of routine. It is far more profitable for us that people call us directly themselves as both the booking companies charge as much as 15% commission on each booking. It is a relatively high price to pay only for availability on the Internet, but all in all it is of course profitable. The visitors making internet bookings come from, besides Norway and Scandinavia, many countries in Europe, and from Russia, Ukraine, Belarus and the USA.

Voluntary work and economy

Most of the visitors are passing through and stay for only one night, so every day there is much work for laundry and preparation of rooms for new guests. All of this is work which is done voluntarily by the residents, together

with all the other necessary work such as in the kitchen and garden and caretaking work, cleaning of common areas and all the many other odd jobs that come with a relatively big place such as Tronsvangen Seter.

Friends who come for holiday for a week or two, lend a hand with the cleaning and caretaking of various kinds, and without this voluntary work there would have been no means to keep the place running. Most of the people coming here, whether visitors or friends, quickly become fond of "The Seter" and clearly value idealism and voluntariness - something that is reflected in the positive feedback evident from the booking companies, in our guest book, and in the donation box at the reception.

After nearly three years with only expenses, in part very large items of expenditure, it is good for the budget finally to have some income. The huge demand for renting rooms gives hope for an economically viable operation going forward. The operating costs are high, and still several huge investments are necessary to get to the operating standard needed. Our goal is to have at least five or six paying residents who more or less will cover the regular monthly expenditures, so that we need to depend to a far lesser degree on chance visitors. In that way we will also have more free scope to develop those activities we actually want to have at Tronsvangen Seter.



Panorama of Alvdal with Mt.Sølknletten and Mt.Rondane in the background, seen from Tronsvangen 30.03.2018. Photo: BP.

Photo revue from the last half year



Top:

The winter was unusually rich in snow in Alvdal as in the rest of the country. There was also much cold, and not in a very long time did we experience such an "old fashioned" winter!

Photo: BP.

Middle:

Thamba, Preeti and Ira moved from Karihaugen in Oslo to a newly renovated house at Moan in Alvdal from the beginning of March this year. For a while they lived at the Seter while the carpentry and renovating work took place, while at the same time Ira began in the first class at Steigen primary school. The picture is from the very first little "housewarming" when they moved in and is taken on 09.03.2018. In front is Ira, and behind from left Preeti, Thamba, Erlend, Live, Kent and Bjørn.

Photo: Sham Babitha Stapnes.



Petter Østbye Sagen from Hamar is a serious young man who visits the Seter as often as he can. He is partly raised at the family's cabin at Tronsvangen, and contacted us five years back to learn meditation. The picture is taken here at the Seter 02.03.2018 by BP.

Photo revue (cont.)



This page:

From the inauguration party in the house of Thamba and Preeti and Ira at Moan in Alvdal, March 31st 2018. Many people, food and drink, coffee and cakes, song, music and dance.

Next page:

From the celebration of Thamba's 40th and Srielango's 50th birthday, the same evening at Tronsvangen Seter, with homemade cream cakes.

All photos: BP.

Photo revue (cont.)



This page:

At Tronsvangen we experienced full summer already from the beginning of May, and from the start of June nature stood in full bloom and bird song could be heard 24 hours a day!

Topmost with view towards Sørkletten on Mt.Tron, and below with view towards Alvdal, Mt.Sølnkletten and Mt.Rondane.

An Icterine Warbler sang tirelessly and beautifully both from branches of fur and birch, while the Midsummer Day-flower and the tiny Forget-Me-Not gleamed in the sunshine.

All photos were taken on June 6th before Noon, by BP.



Top left: Olav Aaen from Wisconsin in USA is nearly an annual visitor and knew Einar Beer since the end of the 1970s. Here together with his beloved Pilar outside on the veranda, together with Bjørn on July 7th. Photo: Kent.

Top right: Sonny Wadstedt and Pernilla Lorentzon from Sweden are new friends who are coming as often as time and opportunity permit, and stay for some days for inspiration and to lend a helping hand. Photo: BP.

Middle: Joydeep from Bengal in India came from Italy with two friends on July 18th and stayed for ten days. Here at Shantibu on July 22nd in front from the left in white, by his side Knut Helge Bakos and Tripti Ma. Standing behind from left: Live Ness, Viggo Ree, Elfi Sverdrup, Bjørn, Kent, Claudia and Sham Babitha Stapnes. Photo: Enrico. **Over:** Every day lunch was served on the veranda at the Seter in wonderful weather, and we were also bathing in the river Glomma at Kvebergbrua. Photo: BP.

Photo revue (cont.)



Previous page:

On July 27th, early in the morning, a walk to Baral's Grave on Mt. Tron was arranged, as some close friends had never been there before. Thamba, Srielango, Karuna, Sham, Sathya and her father, all walked together with Bjørn. It was a wonderful experience in wonderful weather, and alongside the 2,8 km long, marked path (from the Peace Plateau) we saw several large grouse families at close range. Photo: Thamba (top) and BP (all the others).

August 9th another tour on Mt. Tron, and this time the newly restored road to the top was tried out. On the top a nice information board has been put up where all on the left side is about Baral and the University of Peace.

This page:

The tour was together with Tove Lindboe Hansen (over to the left, and on the previous page, bottom left) from Sandvika in Bærum outside Oslo, who has been on a three weeks retreat at Tronsvangen Seter.

Firstly the Monument on the Peace Plateau (top) was visited, and thereafter the mountain summit (previous page). From the Peace Plateau Mt. Snøhetta at Dovre in the West became clearly visible in the camera lens with 60x optical magnification (over to the right).

All photos: BP.



Who was Sri Ananda Acharya?

On Mt. Tron in Alvdal, Norway, during the first part of the previous century, an Indian Yogi and Sannyasi lived for nearly 28 years. Still he is widely known still, throughout the whole district, as “Baral”, but who knows the whole story or knows how he really lived there?

Sri Ananda was what the Indians call a Rishi - a Self-Realized seer and sage. He settled down in the West to counteract the destructive forces which reigned during the First and Second World Wars, and to make the foundation for the new, spiritual age which is now under development.

Childhood and adolescence in India

Even before he was born his mother had a revelation that she would be giving birth to a divine son. He was born in the very early morning on December 29th 1881 in Hooghly, in what is now West Bengal, not so far from present day Kolkata. His family name was Surendra Nath Baral, and the Baral family was known as the foremost family in Bengal and of royal descent, who earlier had owned huge estates. By the time of Surendranath most of the former material glory had become history, but he grew up in relative prosperity without material worries. Still, he was sensitive to life, both inner and outer, even as a child, and already at that early age he understood that he would become a Sannyasin - a free and wandering, holy truth seeker, who has renounced all personal career for the sake of helping his fellow human beings to spiritual enlightenment. Therefore he was initiated into Sannyasa by a great Guru already as a boy, and adopted more and more this lifestyle, even though his Guru advised him to follow ordinary schooling, education and home life until he became an adult. This ended with him taking his M.A. degree in philosophy at the University of Calcutta (Kolkata) and appointment to a professorship in logic at the Maharajah's College of Burdwan (West Bengal), where he worked for two years until he quit his post in protest against the inhumane orders of the British authorities.

But throughout his youth he had, on the advice of his Guru, taken every opportunity to undertake long journeys all over India, and he would stay for extended periods in the ashrams of various gurus to learn everything of spiritual schools and traditions, people and cultures in the extremely varied and extensive India. At the same time he also practiced yoga regularly for many years, and mastered the art to perfection. When he resigned from his professorship in Burdwan, it was also because his mind had become more and more steadily absorbed in the inner unity. So after Burdwan he started out on foot determined to cross the Himalayas to go to Lake Manasarowar and Mt. Kailash in Tibet. On the way there, while following the river Ganges upwards and spending a night in a cave by its shores, he had a great revelation of going to the West to teach the people there Shanti Veda



- the wisdom of peace. So the next morning he therefore returned to Bengal and started making preparations for the long journey to Europe.

The stay in England

The steamship voyage from Calcutta via Colombo in Ceylon (Sri Lanka), through the Suez Canal to the Mediterranean Sea and to the final destination of Marseilles in France, took three weeks and proved to be very hard on him as a deck passenger outside in all kinds of weather. In addition he was a strict vegetarian and could hardly eat anything of the food served on board the French vessel. His journey continued through France and across the English Channel to London, by train, boat, and again by train. When he finally stepped off the train in London on August 15th 1912, without any address or contact and without any money, exactly one month had passed since

he had left Indian soil for good.

The little over two years that he spent in London also proved, in various ways, to be very hard. First of all because it was extremely difficult to get vegetarian food anywhere, but also because he hardly had any money, and then he had to endure unending disrespect, insults, humiliation and exploitation. In addition some people gradually tried to influence him with black magic and evil forces of various kinds, something that he experienced as very disturbing. Still he utilized his time very well by self study at the Oriental Department in the British Museum, where he found old Sanskrit texts that he translated into English and then published in book form. Contemporaneously he held weekly lectures at two different, renowned societies throughout his stay in London, but he neither ever received his due honorarium for any of them from either body, nor royalties for any of his books. However, he also regularly held series of private lectures which brought him some income, additionally his growing number of disciples gradually gave him a helping hand. But for the most part the two years in England were characterized by great distress and hunger. He also managed to spend a month in Wiesbaden in Germany during this time. But when the First World War broke out during Summer 1914 and England soon was drawn into it, one of his English aristocratic disciples brought him over to Norway. They arrived in Kristiania (Oslo) one late December evening in 1914 and resided in a big, private house in Incognitogaten, just behind the Royal Castle.

The refuge in Norway

In Norway he ate and lived well in the beginning, and series of lectures on Indian philosophy were arranged both at the University of Kristiania (Oslo, 1915) and at the University of Stockholm in Sweden (1916), which were afterwards published in book form in two languages. This was the first time that Indian philosophy was being systematically presented to the Western world, and moreover by an Indian academic who was at the same time a sannyasin and thereby also a direct carrier of those philosophies that he presented. In addition, there was extensive private lecturing. The months of Summer were spent in the Norwegian high mountains, in Telemark and Jotunheimen, where he resumed the translation work that he had started in London.

But also in Norway the negative occult influences on him continued, and now with a renewed force, especially since she who was his host and benefactor, and who had invited him over to Norway, the very wealthy aristocrat Miss Hermoine Ramsden, was the president of the Norwegian Society for Psychic Research and a passionate spiritist. She frequently held huge spiritistic seances in her home in Incognitogaten and had a huge circle of influential persons around her. About the turn of the

previous century (1880-1930), such activities were very popular among large parts of the public and much more widespread than today, before conventional science had become firmly established in society. Various members of the social elite such as lawyers, scientists, members of the government and officials and even the Prime Minister of Norway belonged to this society, and Miss Ramsden had great plans for Sri Ananda as the figure head of the society (not unlike the Theosophist's plan for the young Krishnamurti). On top of that Miss Ramsden one day very surprisingly proposed marriage to him, without any prior cause for such an event. She was 20 years older than him and could have been his mother, and moreover this was in every way unthinkable for Sri Ananda, so he rejected the proposal. This, together with another occasion when, in the presence of her and many others, he openly spoke clearly and strongly against spiritism, made her turn completely against Sri Ananda and she could never ever forgive him for what had happened. All this made Sri Ananda wish to get away from town life and out to the countryside where otherwise people and conditions were more natural than in the town.

Gaurisankarseter at Tronsvangen

During the first series of lectures at the University of Kristiania, Sri Ananda met the Norwegian engineer and rich man's son Einar Beer together with the English academic Miss Amy Lena Edwards, who both became among his three closest friends and disciples for the rest of his life. Miss Edwards got him away from Kristiania by bringing him to Stockholm, Gudbrandsdalen and Jotunheimen, and Einar Beer found Tronsvangen for him, in what was then Lille Elvedal (now Alvdal). Sri Ananda went by train up through the Eastern Valley (Østerdalen) and arrived in Tronsvangen on September 28th 1917. There he bought an old two-storied log house and guest house called “Ingridseter”, which he renamed “Gaurisankarseter”. And here he lived for the rest of his life for nearly 28 years until the Day of Armistice, May 8th 1945, as the very first Indian Sannyasi to settle down permanently in the Western world.

At Gaurisankarseter he was utterly productive during all these years and wrote a large number of books in various genres. But most of all there were many collections of poems, for which, for the very few that have been properly known to the world, he reaped the highest recognition. His contemporaries compared him with the greatest English poets like Byron, Shelley, Wordsworth, Carlyle and Tennyson, and his own countrymen in India compared him with the Nobel Prize winner Rabindranath Tagore. He also cooperated with Nordic authors like Arne Garborg and Johannes Hohlenberg on the translation of the two great Indian epics, Ramayana and Bhagavadgita, from original Sanskrit into the Scandinavian tongues.

Who was Sri Ananda Acharya? (Cont.)

Besides writing poems and books, Sri Ananda received a large number of visitors through the years. Among village people, schools, clubs and societies, and the guests at Tronsvangen Seter Hotel, it was always popular to pay "Professor Baral" at Gaurisankarseter a visit. There they would always receive a lecture, advice on various personal matters, food and good hospitality, and a present when they left. In the kitchen "Sister Samvida" (Miss Ellen Margareth Jewson) was always busy and occupied. She came over from England to Tronsvangen during Summer 1922 and remained with Sri Ananda for the rest of his life, becoming the third person in his inner circle. Miss Edwards or "Sister Seva", functioned as his secretary or literary partner, while Einar Beer worked on everything from cowshed maintenance and personal messenger to business and publishing. Sri Ananda had his own publishing house, Brahmakul, and had many animals at his seter, which functioned as a retirement home for several of the aged animals of the village, whom the owners refrained from slaughtering. At Gaurisankarseter they obtained the peace and quiet to die a natural death. Sri Ananda's white horse, Bålkari (lit. 'Valkari', from 'valkyrie'), whom he used to ride and with whom he is often associated, reached 39 years of age, probably the oldest horse ever in Norway.

Sri Ananda became widely known for his great hospitality and generosity. Not a single day on Gaurisankarseter passed without a gift being sent to neighbours or friends or other people in the village. Often it was toys that Sri Ananda had had made for children, or furniture to adults, or it may be food or books, but most of all greetings and poems of various kinds, all delivered by personal messenger, Einar Beer, after translating the poems and greetings. In this way "Baral" has become a concept in all of the North-Eastern Valley, even to this day, and posterity has honoured him in various ways over the years. And in this manner Sri Ananda demonstrated a concrete example of friendship and peaceful coexistence. But his greatest work was done on the inner plane - for the future. He made the foundation for the University of Peace, which today is a concrete project - "The Mt.Tron University of Peace" - and which will be developed in the near future. While at the same time mentally he made the foundation for the new age which is now coming. His real mission was to clear the way for a still greater manifestation who would come after him whom the Hindus call Kalki Avatar. Kalki Avatar ends the over materialistic Kali Yuga and initiates the beginning of Satya Yuga - the Age of Truth - which will bring about a thousand years of spiritual culture, friendship and humanity in the world.

Samadhi on Mt.Tron

In the life of Sri Ananda there was lots of drama, lots of peculiar happenings and many tragedies, for instance when Arne Garborg stole his book, Ramayana, and published it as his own, or when the always active spiritists conspired against him and managed to have a sentence in an affiliation case attached to his person six years after he himself had left this world. He had countless visions, undertook many fasts and much sacrifice, and would frequently merge into Samadhi - the highest spiritual state - for many days in a row. He endured inhuman ordeals and horrible attacks, and exercised superhuman patience and endurance. And in the middle of all this he never compromised his true nature or stopped producing the most beautiful poems or showing care and generosity towards his fellow humans.

At last, on the international Day of Armistice May 8th 1945, just in the same hour as radios all over the world announced peace at the end of the Second World War, he entered into his final Samadhi and remained in it for 37 days before he was declared dead on June 14th. Physiologically the deepest Samadhi is like a kind of hibernation in which the frequency of the heart, the blood circulation and the respiration are being reduced to an absolute minimum and are barely noticeable. Most people will think that the person is dead, but the body is not stiff or cold, and hair and nails are growing. The mind is passive (neither active nor inactive), and the human being has come back to what in truth it is - to its source before all life began. After a spectacular, long funeral procession of many hours in the Summer night with a long train of mourners accompanying the coffin up on the mountain, he was buried high up on Mt.Tron at dawn on July 1st, with a view towards Mt.Storsølen, Mt.Rondane, Mt.Snøhetta and Lake Savalen. But his spiritual heritage lives on in the best condition even today.

Source:

Bjørn Pettersen: Baral - The Sage on Mt.Tron. Swami Sri Ananda Acharya. A biography and anthology, 2018. (Transl.)



ADVERTISEMENT (Norwegian):

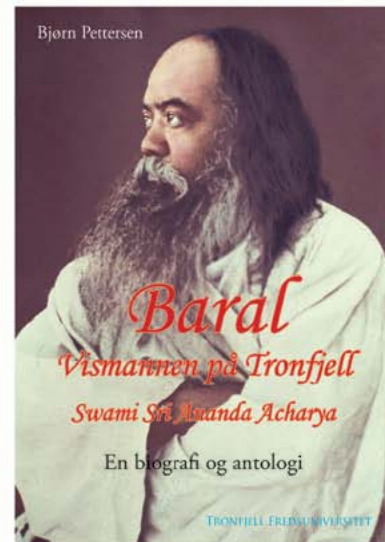
Endelig er den her - boka om Baral eller Sri Ananda Acharya - vismannen på Tronfjell!

Denne boka har vært etterlengtet en hel mannsalder, og forfatteren - Bjørn Pettersen - har brukt 40 år av sitt liv på den åndelige arven etter Baral. Dette er aller første gang en helhetlig historie om Sri Ananda gis ut, og ingen andre nålevende personer har noen kjennskap til det meste av det stoffet som her publiseres. Publikum får nå et innblikk i Sri Anandas helt unike liv i India, i England og i Norge. Leseren kan se fram til et litterært og åndelig festmåltid, for her, på tross av stor dramatik og mange tragedier, er det uendelig mye vakkert og sjeleoppløftende å lese og å leve seg inn i.

Boka er innbundet og har 470 sider med 74 fotografier. Biografien har 22 kapitler og antologien presenterer 25 titler. Den har både forord og etterord, og en ordliste over sanskritord helt til slutt.

Tittel: Baral - Vismannen på Tronfjell. Swami Sri Ananda Acharya. En biografi og antologi
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Bestilles: www.tronsvangenseter.no (eller gjennom bokhandelen) **Pris: kr. 460,-** **fritt tilsendt i Norge**



"The Baral-book"

Arts Council Norway

The book about Swami Sri Ananda Acharya - Baral - was first published in the beginning of April this year, after delays, faulty printing and delays again from the printer in Denmark. Therefore it could not be published at Christmas last year, as had been planned.

In the meantime we applied the purchasing system of the Arts Council for the book ("new Norwegian factual prose for adults"), but unfortunately it was refused without giving any reason (of a total of 36 titles only 8 were approved). The unique cultural history the book contains, should be nationally regarded, and cultural Norway should have been conscious of their responsibility about this publication. If the book had been approved the Arts Council would have purchased a large number of copies from the publisher - The Mt.Tron University of Peace - and distributed them to public libraries all over the country, and the author would have received a royalty that would have been just enough to cover the printing costs of the book.

Our external consultant, who sent in an independent, editorial quality control of the manuscript to the Arts Council, concluded that the manuscript "in terms of quality, both in form and content, in all ways equals publications from big Norwegian publishing houses". Moreover, the book has gained favour with some of our foremost religious historians.

The Book Base

Nonetheless, very soon after publication the book was registered at The Book Base, which is the owner, leader and developer of **The Norwegian Book Data Base**, whose goal is "to collect, quality approve and increase

the value of information about books and other articles, together with the making of accessibility of such information in order to organize an effective distribution, marketing and sales of books and other articles". In practice it means that the book is made accessible for the main part to all schools, libraries and bookstores all over the country, so that anyone may order the book for loan from any library, or order the book for purchase from any bookstore anywhere in the country. However, the distribution of the book is being done by us, so that all place their orders directly with us, i.e. The Mt.Tron University of Peace.

Sales

Baral - The Sage on Mt.Tron (transl.) was printed in a first edition of 1000 copies. Not a single advertisement for the book was published anywhere but there was a good coverage in the local press at the time of publication, and the book has sold well in local bookstores, from Hamar and Elverum in the South to Røros in the North. Most copies have been sold in Tynset by two different bookstores, and in Alvdal people bought extra copies straight away.

All in all, during the more than four months that have passed since publication, about 330 copies of the book have been sold (of this about 40 are gifts and 7 are compulsory duty), which so far covers about half of the printing costs. By advertising and a little promotion beyond only the local, the sales will most probably be sustained, and then, of course, Christmas is approaching ... And then this is not the type of book that has a short "fresh produce" sell by date, but can safely be sold for many years to come. Already an international edition of the book is under preparation, and the English translation is already finished.



Above:

Mt.Tron seen from Neby at Tynset, with the river Glomma and Tjøn-nområdet in the foreground, on August 7th 2018.



To the left:

Common Tansy is a beautiful medical plant which blooms in all its splendour at this time. It willingly grows together with another medical plant, Rosebay, and manifests some of nature's most beautiful decorations alongside the country roads of the North-Eastern Valley in Summer. The picture is from the same place and time as the above. Both photos: BP.

The Mt.Tron Mail - the newsletter for those interested in the establishing of the Mt.Tron University of Peace

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