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*Swami Paramananda at Ranchi, Bihar, June 1983. Photo: BP.*

## IN SEARCH OF TRUTH

MY EXPERIENCES WITH  
SWAMI PARAMANANDA

AUTOBIOGRAPHY OF A YOGI IN THE WEST

BJØRN PETTERSEN

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Bjørn Pettersen

and

Mt.Tron University of Peace Foundation  
2560 Alvdal  
Norway

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# LIFE TOGETHER WITH PARAMANANDA

## *Baul on Mt. Tron*

Paramananda was accommodated in the newer log house which was a combined library and office building, and slept in my old bedroom there. I stayed in the old building which had a kitchen, living-room and bathroom, so that we had one building each. I always took care not to disturb him in his house and only called him when food was ready or there was a telephone call for him or when we had visitors. He spent his time reading books and writing letters, and he also wrote many poems but foremost he was writing a book on *Baul*. He said that Shantibu was good for research and meditation, and the first time he entered the old building he remarked at once that it contained a “very high frequency”, as he called it. In the evenings he used to come to the old building to watch television, which I had borrowed from my parents for this purpose.<sup>1)</sup> Otherwise we had long talks after the meals. Paramananda used to talk to me about Vedanta and Realization, but most of all about Tantra and *Baul*.

Whenever we were alone he used to tell me the most fantastic things about the relations of men and women, and about such traditions in India which have been kept strictly secret and only transmitted orally from guru to *sishya* through generations. Actually, he transferred a complete science of *baul sadhana* to me, and authorized me both to teach it to others and to write a book about it. He said that book would be very famous and that it was greatly needed. He also said that it was impossible for him to talk about this subject in India, not only because most people there were not ready to accept it, but also because there was no one ready even to listen to it. Only I was fit to receive it in its entirety and able to pass it on, he said. He confided to me that his intention with the ashram at Banagram had been to create a much more liberal society than it had become, but that he had had to abandon this idea because India still was not ready for it. At an early stage he had asked two of his very nearest friends and disciples, each separately and at different times, if they could agree to do *baul sadhana*, on the basis that he actually meant that they would need it. But both of them had regarded him with disbelief and exclaimed: “Are you mad?!” And after these incidents Paramananda had never again mentioned anything about this to anybody. Therefore he had had to wait for more than ten years and travel all the way to Norway to be able to impart this most important message for the future!

Through these conversations with Paramananda a whole new world opened up to me. Earlier, from much of the traditional, Indian, spiritual literature, I had understood that everything pertaining to sex and sexuality was low, bad and impure, etc., and that any such activity was completely contrary to spiritual development. But with Paramananda everything was so liberatingly natural and was put in its right order in life. He was fully without any prejudices and had a wonderful insight into, and acceptance of, every aspect of being human. For instance he would hold that no one could be realized without first having had that most important experience in life, namely sexual intercourse with the opposite sex. Really something to think about for all those puritan monks and nuns who have purity complexes and sexual aversions! For my own part this was exactly the insight that I needed. Paramananda made me become friends with my own body and sexuality, and in a natural way to get both the perspective and control over these, so that sexual consciousness never again felt like a problem to me. When, for instance, I asked him, at an early stage in my relationship with him, what I should do when I would feel sex consciousness drifting into me and sexual tension building up in my abdomen, he gave a big smile and only said: “Enjoy it! - It is a nice feeling!” Such was Paramananda, wonderfully liberating and natural!

This was a whole new way of thinking to me and it felt fantastic. It was an enormous relief to be able to accept this fully and at the same time be completely certain that it was the right thing to do. Earlier my relationship with sexuality had been a conflicting mix of suppression and surrender. Paramananda, however, made me understand that neither one is the right way, but that instead I had to consciously channelize and purposefully direct this energy. This, I sort of knew already, but what was new with Paramananda was the complete acceptance of sexuality and that it was an implicit good to us humans. After all, everyone has come into this world exactly this way, through sexuality and sex organs! It became clear to me that to Paramananda learning really meant that one would learn through trust and friendship on every possible level. He also made me understand that *brahmacharya* does not mean the complete renunciation of every sexual activity in thought, speech or deed at any time, as is the traditional understanding in India, but that in principle it only means that one doesn't lose one's energy. After a while he taught me special techniques so that I would gain full control of these forceful energies.



*Guruji said the north face of Mt. Tron was looking very powerful. Here with snow in the middle of October, and with the river Glomma in front. All the trees on the river bank have shed their leaves, preparing for winter. Photo: BP 2012.*

As soon as I felt any sexual tension in my abdomen, immediately I could lift and direct that same energy up to my head – either entirely so that it fully disappeared from my abdomen, or I could make it circulate in a closed circuit between the two poles of my body and really “taste” the strong feeling. Such a circulation of energy felt completely fantastic – physical, emotional and spiritual at the same time – the very essence of *Baul*!

The wonderful thing about *Baul* is that one doesn't need to think about any god or any supernatural being – one does not need to seek outside the framework of one's own physical reality – so that essentially the idea about *Baul* is fully and completely human, and its goal is only to regain man's original condition which is Naturality. The Absolute Bliss or Ecstasy or Love or Harmony, or whatever one chooses to call it, that all humans, consciously or unconsciously, seek in life, can be achieved in this way. For a *baul* the human being is everything, and his or her search for truth is a search for the human entity. The spiritual core in *Baul* is love for humans – a universal love that embraces all and expels none. For the natural *bauls* all humans are near and dear, their soul mates and their life and being. A *baul* finds his or her truth through life, and the whole universe with its creation is viewed from the nature of his or her own physical existence. *Baul* love comprises humans and nature on all levels, even if the movement is always upward towards an experience of bliss in Absolute Consciousness. A *baul* is one who is absolutely ‘mad’ or ‘crazy’ for this, which is the literal meaning of the word ‘*baul*’.

Paramananda taught me many wonderful things that he told me to practice and which I cannot relate here because they were individually adapted to me. *Sadhana* – no matter what kind of *sadhana* – is always an individual practice, and Paramananda always taught all who came to him individually. With reference to certain gurus who had come from India to the West, he said it was completely wrong of them to teach the same technique to all. *Sadhana* always has to be adapted to the individual's nature and tendency, and is a private matter between teacher and pupil which concerns no one else and about which no other should know. In my case I can relate one important thing to ease the reader's understanding of my tendency. Paramananda told me that I had made a strong *samkalpa* or determination in my previous life as Anandacharya to practice Tantra and to solve the mystery of sexuality, something that, instantly, as soon as he had uttered the words, I knew was correct. I knew that that was the cause of my interest in these things from my earliest childhood (from my fourth year), and besides, this force in me seemed stronger than in any of my playmates and friends. It had also led to problems of excessive masturbation (Paramananda always used the striking expression and negatively loaded “master-beating” for ‘masturbation’, which sounded somewhat similar) right from childhood. He said that this thing about sexuality was my only problem in life – and that I had had that same problem in all of my other lives, too – but that now, with the practice of *baul-sadhana*, I would be able to solve it and be completely free:

Bjørn, you have almost no ego – it is very, very small. It is only this one problem you have – otherwise you have no problems at all. When you overcome your sexual problem I think that you will be very free, but you will need a prolonged, lasting experience first. <sup>2)</sup>

Paramananda chose to confide in me three deep secrets – three very intimate and private details from his own life – that he told me never to relate to any one, which I promised him and which promise, of course, I certainly will keep. But he told me other things from his life which are not secrets and which it will be good for the public to know about. For instance he told about an instance in Krishnadebpur when he was five and a half years old. One day, on the way to school together with one of his sisters, he had seen two dogs mating in the street, and that was the very first time he had seen or experienced anything sexual in his life. The sight made such a profound impression on him that he immediately went into deep *samadhi*, and he described this incident

as a complete turning point in his life. Later, as a 14 year old teenager, he had for a while lived together with two male sannyasins in the Himalayas. One day as he went to the nearby brook to fetch some drinking water, from a distance he eyed a young woman bathing in the brook. He hid behind some big boulders and watched her, there were no other people around and she had appeared from nowhere. She was completely naked and was the most beautiful woman he had ever seen. He watched her until she had finished her bath and gone away. When he returned to the two sannyasins with the drinking water, he had covered his abdomen on his otherwise naked body as he had got an erection from the sight of the beautiful, naked woman and was feeling shy. When the men asked him what had happened and he told them everything, they smiled lovingly and explained in the most natural way how it had come about and that it was nothing to feel shy about. He said that it was quite wonderful how these men had explained to him about humans and the mechanisms of sexuality.



The south face of Mt. Tron overlooking the village of Alvdal, with the river Folla in front. Actually the plains of the Alvdal valley is a meeting place for three rivers (*triveni*). From this side Mt. Tron is looking like a throne or 'trone' in Norwegian. Photo: BP 2013.



Mt. Tron seen from the west. We see the top to the left and the "Peace Plateau" near the centre of the picture. The top is at 1666 metres above sea level and the plateau at about 1300 metres. Photo: BP 2011.

Another incident happened sometime later, also when he was in his 14<sup>th</sup> year, when Paramananda had been staying for a few months with a large group of yogis in a great cave in one of the big mountain ranges of the Himalayas. This group comprised about 70 members, men and women and of various ages, all naked and living completely isolated from any other human society. The leader of the group was the same yogi who had later helped Paramananda at Moscow airport. Among them there were no couples – all were completely free – and if anyone felt anything sexual, he or she would immediately announce it to all the others and ask if there was anyone who had the same feeling, and there always would be. They would come together then and make love in the open, perhaps with some onlookers who would observe half meditating, sitting nearby. Their love would be harmonious like beautiful music, and not like in the West where, in Paramananda's opinion, lovemaking looked more like a wrestling match between the sexes. Their goal was always *samadhi* and liberation, so they made no bonds among them and also no children. After intercourse they each went to their own place, and the next time they had sexual intercourse they would have other partners. No one there was jealous of any other or quarrelled at any time. Paramananda said it was the most

perfect human society he had ever seen on this planet. They all had perfect health and had developed many *siddhis* or supernatural powers, and they were of the opinion that the tantra that was practiced in other places in India was not right but completely meaningless.

As soon as they met Paramananda (or 'Robin' at that time), they had, from the very sight of his naked body, understood that he was perfected in tantra from previous lives and that he therefore did not need to practice it in this life. Actually, he had corrected them in certain things, and acted as their teacher while he was there with them. Paramananda also told me that all of the great incarnations down through history, like the Buddha, Jesus, Shankaracharya and Chaitanya, had practiced tantric *sadhana* with a woman, but that, because of social considerations, this had been kept strictly secret and had never been known to the general public. Only in the life of Sri Ramakrishna was this properly known. As is well known he practiced all the 64 tantras with a *bhairavi* who came to him.

As I was asked to write a book on sexuality, tantra and *baul*, after these conversations with Paramananda I always made notes at night before going to bed. But oth-



*Mt. Tron is a solitary mountain which is a huge landmark in the region. Here seen from the village of Tynset to the south. The river Glomma in front. Photo BP 24.09.2012.*

erwise I never took any notes of either our private conversations or of those conversations where others were present. Ever since Asgeir, Glenn and I had come to him in Banagram in autumn 1984, he had clearly expressed his wish that we did not take notes, but that instead it was important that we should give full attention during our conversations and then keep what had been said in our memory. The living word was more important than the written, and would be living in us, develop, and work in quite another way than the written or read words. And this was certainly my experience with Paramananda through all the years with him. No written word can express the quality of the living vibration of the spoken word, or relate the feeling or atmosphere pertaining to the pronounced word, or in any way reproduce anything near that intense relation that exists between orator and audience when words are formulated. It is these living words, which contain all of this, that Paramananda wanted us to concentrate on wholeheartedly, and that become living seeds in us which grow and develop into a feeling and understanding beyond all words! Much of what Paramananda told me at that time I cannot instantly remember today, but I know perfectly well how it is stored in my subconscious and all the time moulds

my life. Because always I feel how the understanding of what he told me grows and works in me and influences my daily life and conduct. Most of what was personally related to me or otherwise were utterances which made strong impressions, I remember very well, and much of it can be retold almost literally just as he said it.

And here we are at the very core of something of the most prominent difference between East and West. In the West major importance is always laid on the written word and we always think that we can understand anything just by reading. One of the reasons why we give so much importance to the written word is because it is a physical record, concrete evidence, especially in connection to history. The Indian Vedas, for instance, have been dated by science to about 1500 years B.C., that is the Rig-Veda, which is regarded as the oldest of the four Vedas, only because the oldest writings of it originate from that time. And then it is taken for granted that it was also created at that time. But the Indians have always laid emphasis on the living word. In their tradition the Vedas are at least 50,000 years old, and even today they are talking about the time when the Vedas were *reduced* to writing. That the Vedas were recited and sung with

the right melody, intonation and rhythm was completely essential to the understanding of this wisdom. Writing was absolutely out of the question for thousands of years, and this fact has been completely neglected or omitted by the Western scientists in the field. Several times Paramananda told us about this fantastic science of sound which existed in ancient times and which now had long since been forgotten, but which would again rise to play a big role in the future.

Paramananda constantly opened up new horizons to me and made me realize and understand many things which earlier I would not have thought possible. He turned upside down almost every single one of my concepts about what spirituality and spiritual life were all about and explained their natural and logical connections, in a way that made life gradually more worth living. For example I had always understood, from the traditional, spiritual Indian literature, that Nirvana or *nirvikalpa samadhi* was the highest, final and ultimate thing to experience in this life. But Paramananda did not say so. He said that *nirvikalpa samadhi* is the experience of the static aspect of the Absolute, and that after that experience starts a new yoga – *purushottama* yoga, which is to see the divine in everything living, in the whole creation and all that exists – which leads to *ras* or the experience of both the static and the dynamic aspects of the Absolute simultaneously: **The static becomes the dynamic and the dynamic becomes the static – they are one and the same.** This is the actual Realization, Paramananda said, and only then is *prema* or Divine Love possible. The *dynamic aspect* of the Absolute is all Love and the *static aspect* of the Absolute is all Wisdom. **Wisdom + Love = Ras** (absolute ecstasy). This is the condition of the Natural Human (*Sahaja Manusha*) and the final result of *Baul-sadhana*.

**”... we are almost the same ...”**

Once Paramananda asked me about my attitude towards food. I replied that in all of my adult life, after moving into Shantibu, I had lived by a very simple philosophy regarding food: I would always follow the words of Jesus Christ that ‘it is not what comes in that makes you impure, but what comes out’. Therefore, at the starting point, I usually had no headache about what food to eat or not to eat. My natural preference was without doubt vegetarian, especially fruits, grains and nuts, but I lived by the ideal that I would eat anything that people served me, especially when invited to their homes, so as not to make any unnecessary problem for my hosts. Otherwise I tended to avoid red meat and old food, but liked very much all kinds of milk food and dairy products, even if

I had never drunk milk after I had been weaned from my mother’s breast-milk. During the seven years that I lived completely alone at Shantibu after the death of Einar Beer, I also could not afford to be squeamish, but had to eat whatever food was given to me to survive. When I told all of this to Paramananda he smiled broadly and said:

Bjørn, food is only for survival!

Another time he asked me about the meaning of my name ‘Bjørn’. In my intense search for identity during the 1980s no stone was left unturned, and thus my name, too, became a subject of deep study. In addition I had a special interest in etymology, which, it turned out, Paramananda shared. I therefore assumed that he would understand the whole causality if only I told him the end result, so I just answered briefly:

“It means ‘rishi.’” “Which rishi?” Paramananda quickly asked. This question took me by surprise, and as I understood where he wanted to lead me and I therefore felt a little shy, I looked down and, a bit embarrassed, I replied: “No, it means the whole star constellation of The Seven Rishis (the “Great Bear” or “Ursa Major” in astronomy).” “Oh”, was his only response, and that was the end of that conversation.

When he understood that I had studied astrology and was able to make horoscopes, he wanted me to draw up his natal chart according to the Western method. He gave me all the necessary data and I made his horoscope in the manner I had taught myself from books, and then afterwards gave a general interpretation of it. He was greatly satisfied and said that if I had been in India in this life I would have been a millionaire by now, as this is extremely popular in India and good astrologers quickly become millionaires.

One morning in October, as we met for breakfast and as the great annual festivals of Durga Puja, Laxmi Puja and Kali Puja were going on in Bengal, Paramananda smilingly told me, but with lowered voice, that he had been on a short trip to Banagram, just to have a look at life there – at all the people that had come for a visit due to the festivals. I at once understood that he had gone there by “astral travel”, but did not ask him anything about it. Another “nightly occupation” Paramananda used to do every night before sleeping, according to himself, was to review in his mind and memorize everything he had done or had happened to him during the day. He relived everything mentally and in that way he had an extraordinary memory always. Yet another special characteristic about Paramananda was that sometimes – as a rule when he was talking about very high spiritual matters which touched him in particular – he would suddenly

get clogged, stop talking and swallow, while his countenance beamed with bliss, before he would continue talking again. Sometimes he disclosed that when this happened his whole mouth would be filled with a liquid which he said came from the pineal gland in the brain and which tasted like honey. He called it *amrita* or divine nectar.

Paramananda and I spent the second half of January 1990 in Oslo and Moss. In Oslo we used to stay with my friend Harald who lived in Kirkeveien and was a lawyer at the UDI (The Norwegian Directorate of Immigration). He was the one who had met Paramananda at Oslo airport when he arrived by plane from Moscow and most amiably escorted him through all the hindrances. Already earlier in the autumn and early winter we had made preparations in Oslo for going on a long train journey in Europe, and visited lots of embassies to apply for visas for Paramananda. Actually, Paramananda's wish was to travel through all the countries of North Africa too, from Egypt in the east to Morocco in the west, but because of problems with visas we had to abandon this plan. Also a visa for France was not granted, but that was entirely due to a bureaucratic slip to which we inadvertently became victim. However, Paramananda managed to visit France some years later in the autumn of 1995. Otherwise we had no problems getting visas for the other countries that we decided to visit. We bought two Inter-Rail tickets for each of us. As the ticket lasted for one month we bought two each, since we planned to spend one month going down to Greece and stay there for about one month, and thereafter spend one month on the way back to Norway, going by very different routes there and back. Thus the whole journey was to take three months. In most of the countries we were to visit we had friends with whom we had agreed in advance we could stay. Otherwise, in places where we had no friends, we were to spend the night on trains to save on hotel expenses. We were travelling

on a very tight budget of money given to us by many friends, from both Norway and elsewhere in Europe.

At one time, when we stayed with Harald in Oslo for several consecutive days and visited embassies, I went to bed early one night because I felt tired and not quite well. At that time I used to get some rash on my skin, especially on my neck and head, which itched and felt uncomfortable. I was lying on a mattress on the floor in a small room, and shortly after I had gone to bed Paramananda suddenly appeared and crouched down on the floor beside me. He started to pat me very lovingly on my head and neck and shoulders, and expressed lots of sympathy with my physical tiredness and discomfort. It was a wonderful feeling and shortly afterwards I slept. The next morning when I woke up I discovered, to my great surprise and immense joy, that all my rash and skin irritation had completely disappeared. I hurried to the living room to tell Paramananda the good news. But there he sat scratching his own skin rash which had appeared on exactly the same places as I had had, while he smiled at me. At first I was so surprised that I could not exactly grasp what was going on, but then I realized that he had actually transferred my illness symptoms to his own body. Then I felt very embarrassed and asked him, "Why?"

"I wished to feel how you felt, Bjørn. It is tickling and feels good!", he replied.

Very typical of Paramananda to turn something negative to positive. Mostly by habit, or perhaps we rather believe that things have to be like this or that, but if we remain more neutral and really taste the feeling, perhaps it isn't that bad after all. Paramananda kept these symptoms the whole day, but the next day they were back again in their right place on my body, however, with not at all the same intensity as before.



The "Peace Plateau" as seen from from the top of Mt.Tron. There is a road going all the way from the village in the bottom of the valley up to the very top. It is the second highest road in North Europe. Photo: BP 2011.

In Moss we stayed with my parents at Tronvik on the southern end of Jeløy Island. One evening we went for a walk together towards Alby, Paramananda suddenly began to talk very intimately about our relationship:

Bjørn, you and I are very close, *we are almost the same*. There is only very little difference.

As usual I got quite stunned by such a ground-breaking statement from him, and what could I possibly reply to an utterance like that? I noted it silently and reflected on it later, but we never talked about it together. At another time, about four months earlier, I had also, to my great surprise and almost shock, witnessed that Paramananda made *pranam* to me (deep respectful greeting which one does to one's guru, or parents, or any other especially respectful person) which he otherwise never used to do to anyone, though of course everyone did that to him.

By the end of November my mother was diagnosed with cancer in her reproductive organs and asked Paramananda for advice. She was an ardent follower of alternative medicine and treatment, and before the operation she had already decided that she would not take either chemotherapy or radiation treatment. Paramananda recommended her to remove all damaged tissue by an operation, and then he would show her a few simple yoga exercises that she could do every morning and evening while in bed. On January 3<sup>rd</sup> 1990 she was operated on and the doctors already had an extensive programme ready for her including both chemotherapy and radiation treatment. They said it was absolutely necessary for her to follow this programme if she was to avoid the recurrence of cancer in the future. But my mother had already made up her mind and did not waver – to their utter dismay and almost damnation. They put massive pressure on her and even threatened her, but she did not allow herself to be influenced by them. Instead she received the yoga exercises from Paramananda and performed them very sincerely and conscientiously every morning and evening, just as he had told her. When she went to the hospital after one month for a check-up, and the doctors had already expressed their certainty of cancer recurrence in her body, to their great surprise and astonishment they didn't find a single cancer cell in her body. Actually her condition was so good that they even said that she would not have that kind of cancer again in the future. Unfortunately, her room-mate in the hospital, who suffered from exactly the same kind of cancer and underwent exactly the same operation at the same time as my mother, and who did not dare to oppose the doctors but followed their every word, died after only three months from the injuries caused by the severe treatment programme. My mother lived for another 12 years after that and never got cancer again.

## FOOTNOTES

1) We followed a French serial which was an utterly simple and minimalist theatrical performance of the Mahabharata in 6 episodes. Paramananda praised this presentation very much and was impressed by how well they had understood the contents, and of how they had focused only on the most essential. Otherwise he would watch almost anything and had great fun watching the incredible complications in the English comedy series "Allo, Allo"!

2) In my life as Anandacharya this interest in sex really had huge consequences, which to a great extent I have had to confront also in this life as Bjørn Pettersen – the well-known case of Anandacharya's paternity to Agnes-Cecilie Selboe and my dealings with it from about 1980 to 2004. Influenced as I was, by Einar Beer and the notes left by the two English ladies, Samvida and Miss Edwards, through most of the 1980s, when the conflict with Agnes was at its peak, I could not at all accept that she could be the daughter of Anandacharya, as she herself judged and most of the villagers of Alvdal took for granted. As Agnes displayed a nature and personality that was virtually the diametrical opposite of Anandacharya, it was impossible for me to accept her as daughter, but also because I knew that the circumstances around her coming into being were the result of a great conspiracy against him (see the chapter "The great spiritist conspiracy" (page 191) in my biography of him: Bjørn Pettersen: *Sri Ananda Acharya. A forgotten Son of Mother India. His own story. A biography and anthology*. Mt.Tron University of Peace 2019.

However, no one – apparently not even Anandacharya himself – knew exactly how it was that Agnes' mother, Edith Selboe, had become pregnant with Agnes, . But Paramananda was able to tell me. On a couple of occasions in Norway, when many people were gathered and the question had been raised, he said that Agnes was the result of an unsuccessful tantric exercise. But he explained how it had really happened only to me. As it was a tantric exercise, and especially as it happened at that time and in Norway, it was kept strictly secret, and none of the participants, who included Edith Selboe and three or four other young ladies together with Anandacharya, ever told or wrote about it later. In almost all tantric exercises involving sexual intercourse between man and woman, the man, as a general principle, is not to ejaculate, but to hold and keep back his semen. But in this specific exercise, Paramananda said, ejaculation was allowed. As Anandacharya in no way wanted to make any child, he had initially, and very carefully, consulted each of the participants about the stage of their menstrual cycle, to ensure that each was in her safe period in which pregnancy was not possible. And it was just here that Edith deliberately lied to him – to her own guru – because she had ovulated and was in her fertile period. So there is no doubt that Anandacharya was conned deliberately and subjected to a plot against him. And at the same time there is also no doubt that Agnes was his biological daughter. As Anandacharya could not believe that Edith would lie to him, and also that she, as it goes, had other children with other men, both before and after Anandacharya, the doubt about the paternity arose on their side, as is described in the chapter mentioned above.

As a matter of form it must be mentioned here that tantric *sadhana* or sexual search for truth is traditionally a fully accepted way of searching the truth in India. If it so happens that a sexual relation between a sadhu or sannyasin or monk of any kind and a woman is exposed, it will be well within what is traditionally accepted provided that the two of them have followed the rules of Tantra, the purpose has been to perform tantric *sadhana*, and, of course, that no one has been a victim of abuse. This is according to the spiritual tradition. Society at large, of course, always has difficulties understanding and therefore accepting these things.

But Paramananda gradually made me accept Agnes as a daughter of Anandacharya. Paramananda also, according to her own wish, initiated her. She and her husband participated in the very first Art of Life Course given by Paramananda at Savalen in December 1995. However, when I started to change my behaviour towards her radically and wanted to treat her very gently, he made it clear that there was no need to treat her with kid gloves: “She is a very crooked woman.” As it takes a whole book to introduce Swami Paramananda properly, and as there is no way to document his statements about the case or how he can know about all these things, it was out of the question to mention anything about this in my biography of Anandacharya. There it

was only important to show why the case evolved as it did and why Anandacharya never admitted paternity but remained silent about the case for the rest of his life. Only here now, in this autobiography, where the case appears in its natural context, is it possible to write the final chapter of this affiliation case.

At a certain point in time Agnes actually asked me, face to face, if it was I that had been Anandacharya. I remained completely silent and she never got any answer from me about that, but it shows that she had been thinking about the possibility.

## GLOSSARY (simplified)

**amrita** – immortality; divine nectar; ‘ambrosia.’

**ashram** – spiritual centre or community mainly for *brahmacharis* and *sannyasins*.

**baul** – philosophy with man at the centre, physically, emotionally and spiritually; practitioner of the *Baul* Philosophy; wandering, mystical truth-seeker and musician/singer in Bengal.

**baul sadhana** – *sadhana* with a partner of the opposite sex, mainly following tantric principles. See *baul*, *tantra*.

**bhairavi** – female tantric and Kali-worshiper.

**brahmacharya** – apprenticeship (period of training), or the first of four stages in a Hindu’s life; self-discipline, especially in relation to sexuality.

**Chaitanya** – name of one of the greatest divine incarnations and spiritual teachers in India, who lived in Bengal from 1485 to 1533.

**Durga Puja** – Bengali festival during autumn in which the goddess Durga (a form of Kali) is worshipped.

**guru** – ‘from darkness to light’; spiritual guide who dispels ignorance and confers wisdom.

**Kali Puja** – great Bengali festival in which Kali is worshipped and celebrated during the new moon in October/November.

**Lakshmi Puja** – festival during the full moon in October in which the goddess of good luck, Lakshmi, is worshipped and celebrated.

**nirvikalpa samadhi** – that form of *samadhi* which is without any object in mind and which therefore cannot be explained, in contrast to *savikalpa* and other forms of *samadhi*; also known as “opposite *samadhi*”, completely different from all other forms of *samadhi*. After complete *nirvikalpa samadhi* there is no more cause for rebirth. See *samadhi*.

**pranam** – respectful greeting, found in various forms and variations.

**prema** – divine love or ecstatic love; the highest and most intense form of love, which is only possible after *nirvikalpa samadhi*. See *nirvikalpa samadhi*.

**purushottama yoga** – the yoga that starts only after *nirvikalpa samadhi* or Self-Realization, which is to see the divine or God in all living beings, the whole Creation and everything that exists. See *nirvikalpa samadhi*.

**ras(a)** – ‘juice’, ‘essence’, ‘elixir’; the most intense and ecstatic form of pleasure or bliss in life.

**Rig-Veda** – the oldest and the first of the four Vedas of the Indian Sanskrit literature, all authored by the seven original rishis by *shruti* or revelation; ‘rhythmic wisdom’ (*Rig* = verse or rhythm, and *Veda* = wisdom), it is said that the Vedas originated from the breath of Brahma; the oldest known document in an Indo-European tongue. See *Veda*.

**rishi** – ‘seer’; Self-Realized sage; the highest level attained by humans through evolution, who manifests love and wisdom; (in plural) ‘the seven (original) rishis’ did not come through evolution, but by divine incarnation, and are the mind-born sons of *Brahma*, who were created for the protection of all living beings, including gods and men, and who are always living among the people on earth (through continuous rebirth) to fulfill this task.

**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.

**sahaja manusha** – natural human, with the right identity and without any confusion.

**samkalpa** – determination.

**sannyasin** – a dedicated truth-seeker who wears saffron coloured robes, 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.

**Shankaracharya** – the most famous of all Indian philosophers, he lived in the first half of the 8th century CE and consolidated the doctrine of Advaita Vedanta.

**samadhi** – ‘union’ (‘putting together’ or ‘bringing into harmony’); full absorption in meditation; the eighth and last step of Classical Yoga. See *nirvikalpa samadhi*.

**siddhi** – ‘perfection’; ‘the full achievement of something’; usually used in connection to success in yoga; “supernatural power” or ability.

**sisya** – disciple (or selected disciple).

**tantra** – ‘liberation through attraction’; spiritual system and method which fully accepts the human being as it is, and offers spiritual development from the human’s most basic level – its sexuality.

**Veda** – ‘knowledge’ or ‘Divine Wisdom’; denoting the oldest scriptures of the Hindus, consisting of four books – *Rig-Veda*, *Sama-Veda*, *Yajur-Veda* and *Atharva-Veda* – written in Sanskrit, and which have formed the basis for all later literature of India; traditionally transmitted orally by recitation of words, melody and rhythm, only very late in prehistoric time were they written down, i.e. reduced to text. See *Rig-Veda*, *Vedanta*.

**Vedanta** – ‘where the wisdom ends’; the philosophical part of the Vedas, which represents the very essence of the Vedas and of Indian thinking, which deals with the inquiry into the nature of the Absolute; the last of the six major philosophical systems of India.

**yoga** – ‘conjunction’; spiritual science that unites the individual with the universal in the human being; the second of the six main philosophical systems of India, established by Rishi Patanjali and called “Classical Yoga” or Asthanga Yoga, consisting of eight parts or steps – *Yama*, *Niyama*, *Asana*, *Pranayama*, *Pratyahara*, *Dharana*, *Dhyana*, *Samadhi*.

Continuation follows in the next number next week.