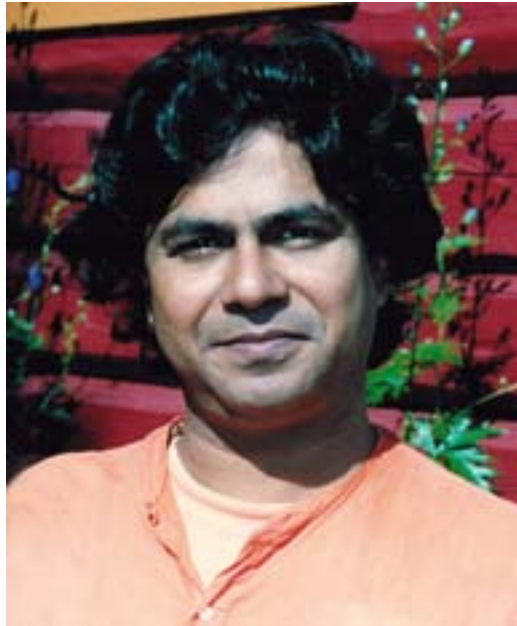




# The Mt. Tron Mail

SPECIAL EDITION No. 2

Week 27 \* Mt. Tron University of Peace Foundation \* 2021



*Swami Paramananda, Shantibu, Alvadal Norway 1993. Photo: BP.*

## IN SEARCH OF TRUTH

MY EXPERIENCES WITH  
SWAMI PARAMANANDA

AUTOBIOGRAPHY OF A YOGI IN THE WEST

BJØRN PETTERSEN

# © Copyright

Bjørn Pettersen

and

Mt.Tron University of Peace Foundation  
2560 Alvdal  
Norway

Bjørn Pettersen asserts his moral right to be identified as the author of this book.

All rights reserved.

No reproduction of this text, in full or part, on any kind of medium or in any media,  
especially in social media,  
without the prior written permission of the author or publisher.

This holds good also for translations into other languages.

However, writing and sharing reviews is encouraged,  
including on social media, sharing  
links pointing to the source:

[www.tronuni.org](http://www.tronuni.org)

## CONTENTS

### Prologue

### Induction

The Condor of Transformation  
The Adder's Message  
Ios in my Heart  
The Ashram in Rishikesh  
Cosmic Lotuses  
An Indian Yogi on Mt.Tron

### (1) Paramananda's Smile

Unexpected Visit from South India  
Letter from Swami Paramananda Giri  
Captivity in Rishikesh  
First Meeting with Paramananda  
Tripti Ma  
Five Days in Ranchi  
Mantra-Diksha  
Ramakrishna Darshan  
Problems in Alvdal

### (2) The Art of Meditation

Adaptation to Banagram  
Life in Paramananda Mission  
Mental Communication  
The Journey to South India  
Mahashivaratri and Balyogi Darshan  
Malaria and Sannyasa  
Omkaram  
Banagram and Kathmandu  
Malaria in Norway

### (3) Transcendence

Sadhana at Shantibu  
Hissing Kundalini  
Within Paramananda's Aura  
Guru Kripa  
Visit by Friends from Norway  
Asgeir's Passing Away  
Turiya at Shantibu  
"... how the Rishis breathe"  
Baul in the Himalayas

### (4) Life together with Paramananda

Arrival in Norway  
Paramananda's Genesis and Life History  
The Peace Plateau on Mt.Tron  
The Truth about Anandacharya's Rebirth  
Baul on Mt.Tron  
"... we are almost the same ..."  
Around Europe by Inter-Rail  
Journey to North Norway  
Lost Manuscript

### (5) The University of Peace at Mt.Tron

Pilgrimage to Banagram  
The Caves at Udayagiri  
Tripti Ma goes to Norway  
The Mt.Tron University of Peace Foundation  
Paramananda comes again to Norway  
Picnic on the Ganges  
Paramananda Visits Norway a Third Time  
Art of Life Course at Savalen  
Difficulties and Plots

### (6) Forever Paramananda

Last Appearance in Norway  
Messages and Predictions  
Paramananda Leaves His Physical Body  
Great Sorrow in Banagram  
Separation and Disintegration  
Paramananda's Last Lesson  
Essential Teaching  
Who is Paramananda?  
Paramananda's poem "I"

### Deduction

Reincarnation and Rishis  
East and West  
Science and Spirituality  
"Soul" and Mind  
Guru and Sishya (Teacher and Pupil)  
The Quest for Truth  
The Purpose of Life

### Epilogue



## INDUCTION (cont.)

### Ios in my Heart

At the crack of dawn, on June 28th 1977, I took leave of my parents and younger brother at Jeløya near Moss and took my place as a hitch-hiker on the highway outside the city gate, with a small backpack and 4,875 Norwegian kroner in my pocket (and about the same amount in the bank), and my thumb raised high up in the air. Beforehand I had either given away or sold all of my belongings so that nothing was left, and I had said a final farewell to all my friends and my family. I thought that I might never return. Together with my good friend Jørn, who was going for a holiday, we then hitch-hiked from Norway to Switzerland. Jørn was of rather short stature but had a very large heart with a mild nature and lots of humour, and was always great fun to be with.

In Ponte Tresa in the Italian part of Switzerland there was a school of yoga which was operated by the author of the yoga book I mentioned previously, and this was probably the very first school of its kind in Europe. We wanted to look into the possibility of learning yoga there, but when we finally found the place (we didn't have any accurate address beforehand) we didn't like what we saw and decided that this was not for us after all. A bit disappointed we decided to practice yoga by ourselves, we only needed to find a suitable place first. We therefore immediately continued our travel down the whole length of Italy and across the Adriatic Sea, and after a while we arrived in Greece. From Athens and Piraeus we took a ferry to the little island of Ios where eventually we settled down at a lonely beach with a little cave, some kilometers away from the village and all the tourists. Jørn went back to Norway after two weeks and I was left alone in nature.

The next five weeks at "Almiros" beach on the island of Ios in the Aegean Sea was one of the best times in all my life. There in the solitude, unclothed and among wild animals and birds, with only wild figs to eat and water from a well to drink, an old dream of mine came true. The dream I so often fantasized about in the classroom at the deadly boring school, while I would stare out of the window with an empty gaze: me alone in nature on a desolate island in the ocean! Here is a short extract from a letter to a friend in Norway that I wrote that time:

One of the first days alone at the "cave beach" I felt uncertain of what the future would bring. I felt disquiet and anxiety, yes, even a bit of fear, I felt that day. As usual I sat on my favourite stone at the entrance of the cave while thoughts flooded my head. In an instant

all the thoughts disappeared and without any outer cause I quickly turned my head to the right while my gaze fixed on a certain point in the sand beside me. Suddenly a butterfly came fluttering and landed exactly on the spot of my gaze, while at the same time a warm, huge wave from the sea washed all the way up to and over my toes. And synchronously I got a strong, solid and secure feeling of peace, assurance and joy which told me: "What are you afraid of? What is it that you fear? Don't you see that we all are with you and are helping you along the way?!" And my restless and fearful feelings disappeared instantly and showed no more.

It was there at the "cave beach" on Ios that I decided to travel further East to India. Initially, I had been thinking of travelling West to Spain, where I had been a couple of times before by Inter-Rail, and then trying to find a ship where I could work my way over the Atlantic Ocean to reach Mexico. Like many other protesting young people at the time I had also, naturally, read the mind-blowing books by the American anthropologist Carlos Castañeda, about the Yaqui Indian Don Juan from the Sonora Desert in Mexico. These books had also made a deep impression on me and I thought that it must be possible to find someone in Mexico who could help me. Besides, I had a great admiration in general for the life of "primitive" people and especially for the culture of the North American indigenous people.

However, every day on Ios I practiced yoga and meditation, which I had taught myself from the previously mentioned yoga book, and with the passing of time I only thought more and more of going to India. An enormous shooting star in the Eastern sky at night on July 19th, which eventually exploded in an astounding grand colourful firework display, was, for me, the final sign that I should travel eastwards and not westwards. And as I thought I did. On September 1st I got a ride with a private bus from Athens to Istanbul, and from there with various buses farther to Ankara, Erzurum, Tabriz, Teheran, Mashhad, Herat, Kandahar, Kabul, Peshawar, Islamabad, Lahore, Amritsar – i.e. through all of Turkey, Iran, Afghanistan and Pakistan, eventually to end up in Delhi in India. The journey from Istanbul started at night on September 5th, and apart from a few days of rest in Afghanistan, I travelled almost continuously until arrival in Delhi late at night on September 18th. A very tiring journey which I would not want to repeat, but which I would also not have liked to have gone without.

### The Ashram in Rishikesh

In Delhi I went to a tourist office and asked for an address list of ashrams in India, and I chose Sivananda Ashram in Rishikesh, mostly because of the nature and landscape as it appeared on the map of India. But when I arrived there and viewed the ashram from outside, again I didn't like what I saw and it became clear to me that this place was not for me. I therefore crossed the Ganges by boat to the other side and landed in the "ashram village" of Swargashram. There I got a room in a more open "tourist ashram" to have a base while I looked around for something more suitable.

After a couple of days of searching I found a small ashram situated a little away from the main road, inside the jungle, where a relatively young yogi - he was in his 40s - who was a master of Hatha-Yoga, reigned over his few disciples, who were all from the West. I did not immediately feel that he was my man, but I was so tired after the long journey and terribly confused after several meetings with ashrams and yogis who did anything other than impress me. Moreover, the meeting with India itself was indeed pretty tough with all its poverty and misery, and the swarm of people, noise, stench, garbage and pollution. It seemed to me as the perfect chaos. I had ended up in a totally different world from what I had been used

to - a world that I never could have imagined beforehand. Therefore I only felt glad when I was accepted in the small ashram, after first having undergone a three day trial. At least I had found a yogi with an attractive appearance, who seemed serious, and whose little ashram was situated in natural and beautiful surroundings, just according to my taste.

I remained in this ashram for 81 days - from September 27th to December 16th - but I never asked for initiation from Swamiji. Still, of course, I learned a lot, not only yoga, but most of all hard discipline. Every day was a trial to the utmost of one's capacity and limits, with countless confrontations in relation to deep-rooted "Western habits" and "bad" personal tendencies which had to be uprooted abruptly and brutally. Often I felt that I had been trapped inside a mad-house, and every night I cried myself to sleep, completely exhausted from a long and hard working day in which everything I had done had been wrong and thus subject to rude scolding and rebuke. Still I forced myself to stay because I thought that in some way or other it had to be good for me. And of course among all the negatives there were positive situations and experiences that to a certain extent felt like a counterbalance to much of the negativity. But when at last I left from there, on the day after my birthday, I felt an enormous relief and joy at finally being free again.



*The ashram in Rishikesh was hidden and a little isolated inside the jungle. The view towards the Ganges Valley and the Himalayan Foothills could not be bettered. Photo: BP 1983.*





## Cosmic Lotus

After the stay at the ashram in Rishikesh I only thought of finding a lonely place for myself to practice yoga and meditation, and had South India in mind. But random travelling in India soon became too much for me, so instead I made a desperate plan to go to Bangkok in Thailand to find a ship there which could carry me across the Pacific Ocean to America. I thought of signing on for the journey and be on the lookout all the time for a suitable Pacific island with lots of coconut and banana and other fruit trees. And then I thought of jumping off the ship and swimming to that island and staying there for the rest of my life. Therefore, rather soon, I ended up in Thailand, but due to many unforeseen difficulties, which I had to face there, I abandoned the plan, perhaps most of all because I had become indescribably tired of being on the move. So after nearly a month in Thailand where I stayed longest on an island in the south, and altogether seven months had passed since I left Norway, I headed home, flying from Bangkok to Copenhagen in Denmark and by train from there to Moss in Norway. In the dark of winter in the evening of January 27th 1978, exactly seven months since I left and three days before my mother's birthday, I showed up unannounced at the door of my childhood home, to my parents' and younger brother's immense surprise, clothed in a yellow Himalayan cowl and with lots of exotic gifts from the East in my Afghan camel sack.

For the next two or three months I lived in the home of my parents while practicing a fixed daily programme of yoga and meditation, which I had learned in the ashram in Rishikesh. One day at Easter when I was alone in the house, something extraordinary happened. It was Good

Friday and I had just finished practicing some breathing exercises and seated myself for meditation. As soon as I closed my eyes and focused my mind, suddenly I saw a stream of heavenly, beautiful, white lotuses in a fabulous sublime and ethereal light, which came along as on a line from the infinite space above. They appeared in an unending stream in a long, long arch for as far as I could see and melted into my "Third Eye" (ajñachakra). Every lotus was different from the others and wonderfully "heavenly" beautiful. I could not believe what was happening and thought that I should open my eyes to see if the mental image would disappear. Surely, this was only a mental dream picture, which would go away as soon as I opened my eyes and resumed the familiar sense impressions from the room where I sat. But when I opened my eyes and looked out at the room, to my immense amazement I could only ascertain that exactly the same thing went on with my eyes wide open! The same unending stream of individual white lotuses from the Universe that unfolded and melted into my Third Eye, continued as fantastically as before. I opened and closed my eyes again and again several times, but for the vision it made no difference! This was and remains an unusually strong experience.

Later I learned that this type of vision belongs to the third and highest degree of visions in which the object of the vision becomes completely alive to the observer, and three dimensionally real in this physical, "ordinary" world, so that the observer can interact physically with it if he likes (of course, what he sees is visible only to him and not to others around him, but the physical and the mental will be as one). It happened for instance in the life of Sri Ramakrishna, where he conversed and played with Mother Kali and also with the child Krishna (Gopala) in the same way as with ordinary people.



*The lotus is an amazingly beautiful flower with great symbolical importance in India. At the time I was extremely fascinated by lotuses, and purchased all the postcards with lotus motives I could get hold of. However, this one is from China in 2005. Photo: BP.*

## An Indian Yogi on Mt. Tron

One day, during several visits to Oslo at that time, to my great amazement I discovered some texts in an alternative book store, about an Indian yogi who had been living in Norway for 30 years during the first half of the twentieth century. His name was Swami Sri Ananda Acharya and he had, of all places, stayed on Mt. Tron in Alvdal. Together with him was a Norwegian by the name of Einar Beer, who was still living and publishing books from "Brahmakul Publishing". This discovery felt quite fantastic to me, and when I reflected on my own situation it became almost comic; because here I was having just undertaken a long journey all the way to India to learn yoga, when I could have gone only to nearby Alvdal instead! I bought a little book by Einar Beer, "Sunrays in a Dark Age", and one by Sri Ananda, "Samadhi Poems and Autumn Rains", and I decided that very soon I should make a trip to Alvdal. Even though Sri Ananda was a completely new figure to me, I had, on a couple of occasions a few years earlier, heard about Einar Beer - also referred to as "The Buddhist Monk on Mt. Tron" - and I thought that with him it would be possible to find that "Indian atmosphere", which I was then longing for and which I could not find anywhere else in Norway. So again I found my hitch-hiking thumb and went north up through Østerdalen to Alvdal.

On a nice spring day, April 22nd 1978, I met the 91 year old Einar Beer outdoors in the yard in front of his "Solbu" in the forest on the slopes of Mt. Tron, where he received me most hospitably. I came there with the hope that I should be able to stay there with him, but I was way too modest to ask him. However, I didn't need to worry, because very soon Mr. Beer came forth with his own wish for me, and thus asked me to stay there with him and help him in his work. And as there was nothing I wished for more, I stayed with him for the nearly four years until he left his body on February 19th 1982, only about a month after his 95th birthday. According to Einar Beer's last will, and as also my own wish, I continued the work at "Solbu" after his death.

A few months before the death of Einar Beer a young girl from Oslo had come to "Solbu" who we might call "Saswati" - that was the name she received in India one and a half years later. She also wished to stay at "Solbu" and participate in the work, and when we learnt that she had been practicing as a nurse, and Mr. Beer at that time sometimes suffered from illnesses and was kept bedridden, it was decided that she could move in to help with the daily care of Mr. Beer. However, after a while I found that she suffered from serious mental health problems, and soon she became more of a burden than a helping



*Swami Sri Ananda Acharya (1881-1945), who lived in Norway for more than 30 years - nearly 28 of them at Tronsvangen on the slopes of Mt. Tron in Alvdal. The photo is from 1928. Photographer unknown.*

hand. After the death of Einar Beer she didn't want to go back to her home as her father was also suffering from mental disorders, and without any other place to stay or any persons that could look after her, there was no other option for her than to continue staying at "Solbu". But the problems only increased, even though I tried my best to help her in her distress through an unending series of conversations. So, eventually, it became more than I could bear, and I felt completely exhausted and empty. In the innermost calmness of my being I finally made a prayer for help and that our problems must come to an end. Both of us thought and talked about the possibility of Saswati going to an ashram in India, where we assumed that she would receive the help that she needed and that surely her problems would be solved.

And this was the occasion that gave rise to a highly unexpected and surprising visit, which in turn would lead to the friendship of an extremely extraordinary person, who was going to change my life completely, namely Swami Paramananda.



*Sri Ananda at Geilo, Norway, 1915. Oil painting by Adele Fairholm.*

## GLOSSARY (simplified)

**ajñachakra** - the centre of mind; popularly called “The Third Eye”; the sixth centre of the astral body, corresponding to the pituitary gland of the endocrine orchestra of the physical body.

**ashram** – spiritual centre or community.

**Brahmakul** - ‘God’s School’; name of Anandacharya’s own publishing house in Alvdal, Norway.

**Paramananda** - ‘Full Bliss’ or ‘Absolute Joy’ or ‘Complete Ecstasy’.

**Kali** - the goddess Kali (also called ‘Mother Kali’), who is a form of Shakti (energy, dynamism), Shiva’s partner in mythology.

**Krishna** - the most famous and beloved of India’s divinities, protagonist in the Bhagavadgita or ‘The Song Divine’.

**Ramakrishna** - (1836-1886) the most well-known Indian saint and ‘God-incarnation’ in modern times, who lived in Bengal. His worship united all the Indian spiritual traditions together with all the major religions of the world.

**Saswati** - ‘full moon’ (female name form).

**Swami Sri Ananda Acharya** - (29.12.1881-8.5.1945) born in Bengal, India. The only complete biography about him is that written by Bjørn Pettersen: *Swami Sri Ananda Acharya. A forgotten Son of Mother India. His own story. A biography and anthology.* Mt.Tron University of Peace 2019 (ISBN 9788269032628); and by Amazon 2020 (ISBN 9788269032635).

**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.

**yogi** - one who masters yoga; practitioner of yoga.

Continuation follows in the next number next week.