

# The Cross and The Lotus Journal



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*Dedicated to the Realization of God and Service to Him in All Forms*



The Reverend Mother, Yogacharya M. Hamilton



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The cross and lotus symbolizes the unity between East and West. The lotus is the sign of illumined consciousness, the thousand petal lotus of the crown chakra. The cross is the symbol of the body surrendered to the will of God. Following the way of the cross results in the resurrection of illumined consciousness.

*The Cross and the Lotus, symbol of man.  
East and West blended, join hand in hand.  
Marching toward the infinite light and life divine.  
Lift up your eyes and see the star,  
descending from heaven where e'er you are.  
Be filled with the peace and ecstasy of God's almighty love.  
Om-Amen.*

The Reverend Yogacharya Mother Hamilton

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© 2005 The Cross and The Lotus Publishing is dedicated to the publication of materials that promote God Realization. Our spiritual lineage begins with Jesus Christ and Babaji and flows down to us through Lahiri Mahasaya, Swami Sri Yukteswar, Paramhansa Yogananda and Yogacharya Mother Hamilton.

The Reverend Yogacharya David Hickenbottom continues this lineage with the help and support of many sincere devotees. We are dedicated to realizing God and serving devotees of every race, color, creed and religion.

Mother Hamilton often said she was the product of two fully illumined Masters, her own Guru, Paramhansa Yogananda and Swami Ramdas. We therefore feature articles about Swami Ramdas and Anandashram. We bow to the feet of Saints and realized Masters of all religions.

My dear friends,

After four months of pilgrimage in India it has been wonderful to see many of you at the various Centers and at the Loon Lake Retreat in May. It seems to me now that wherever I “hang my hat” (or perhaps better yet, find my meditation asan!) is where my home is.

These four months were full of wonderful experiences. I want to thank all of you who have shown ongoing support for this work by your participation

in Services at your Center, your cards, letters and emails written and ongoing financial support. Truly this work by the Masters is for you and the upliftment of all the world, and I want to give you my heartfelt gratitude for your work and participation in it.

Why go on a pilgrimage to India? This is a wonderful question and has many dimensions to its answer. For one, India is the land where the Kriya seed was first planted by Babaji and continues to be blessed by him and our Guru-lineage. It is also a land where yogis, saints and rishis have thrived for millennia. Carved meditative figures have been found in the Indus river valley that date back to 3,000 B.C. Indian mathematicians were using the crucial placeholder of zero early on in recorded history and their wise men were dating cosmological concepts of time backwards and forwards in the hundreds of millions and billions of years, when European man was still living in caves. The science of yoga and the goal of realizing God were propounded in detail for many thousands of years and have held a vital place in the hearts and souls of India’s people as nowhere else.

India is a land of contrasts; every experience there is accentuated for the traveler. Pilgrimage follows the same pattern as one’s sadhana (spiritual path). The pilgrim starts with an idea—where to go to see a saint, temple or holy place. He or she sets out in travel and encounters many discomforts, obstacles and discouragements along the way; plenty of reasons to wonder why this journey was begun in the first place!



Just at the moment of complete exhaustion of all of one's own resources, some helping hand makes it possible to reach the final goal. Entering the holy precincts, confusion and madness may still challenge the devotee, the last obstacles. If these last obstacles are overcome then the resultant blessings that come wipe away all the past trials, changing the inner being of the aspirant, never to be the same again.

I feel those very changes made to the innermost part of my being as a result of this pilgrimage to India. The blessings that poured from Swami Satchidananda alone are too great to be articulated. It was a very moving scene when we left the Ashram. Due to the train schedule we left Anandashram at 2:00 a.m. It touched my heart to the core when I heard that Swamiji was sitting on his front porch waiting to say goodbye at that early time of day. His body, weakened by a stroke, needed rest, but there he was, with Swami Muktananda, and his attendants, all waiting to give farewell blessings and pronams.

Mansi and Lakshmi were also there; they had spent the whole night preparing three large containers of various delicacies, food for our journey north! Sivananda Das who had taken initiation from me, Lakshmi Mahadevi and others were also there! These were not souls who could sleep in the next day, but had full days behind them and full days ahead! What loving examples they have been to all of us. Truly, universal love and service is a motto that finds fulfillment in these great souls.

Onward we traveled, north to Babaji's Cave. Once again we sat in this mountainous enclosure where eternity stretches out in every direction—time merges into timelessness here, no beginning, no end—only an endless expanse of peace and stillness. Back at the ashram we also met a Y.S.S. Brahmachari, Brother Vasudevananda. He is a wonderful soul, full of divine life; he has a gift for music and devotional singing.

At the foot of Dronagiri Mountain we encountered a very dark force. During the service for Sri Yukteswar's Mahasamadhi Anniversary I sat next to someone performing tantric breathing (for the accumulation of powers). That marked the beginning of a battle with these powerfully dark forces. Asking the living presence of Sri Yukteswar the meaning of this, he said, "It was for this purpose that you have come here."

Soon after we were told that our house was to undergo some construction and we needed to move out. There was no suitable accommo-

dition available, so we were then prompted to continue our travels, making a circumambulating trip along the Ganges River—all without any planning on our part other than following the inner direction given. It is interesting that all the pictures from this exact time of encountering the darkness were inexplicably destroyed and the diary notes I had kept in those weeks were lost.

Any loss we have in life is always replaced with a greater gain if we have the courage to follow Divine Will and have the eyes to see the blessings. After leaving Dwarahat we were guided to the holy banks of the Ganges at Benares, Haridwar, Rishikesh and the prayags (joining of rivers) that form the Ganges itself further up in the Himalayas.

It was at Benares that we first experienced the healing currents of the Ganges. I have been next to, in and on the Ganges before—but never before have I been conscious of such cleansing power as I was this time.

There is a story from the ancient texts of India about the healing power of the Ganges. Shiva once got into an argument with Brahma. Shiva can be hot-tempered, and in this case he lost it. He cut off one of Brahma's ten heads in a rage. In a Lady Macbeth-like manner the head stuck to his hand, a reminder of his rash deed. He tried everything to get rid of the head stuck to his hand, but nothing would release it. Finally at Kashi (ancient name for Benares/Varanasi), he took a dip into the Ganges and Mother Ganges released the head from his hand! Thus Ganga Ma is known to purify one's whole being, as it is the river that flows from heaven itself.

When we arrived at Benares the physical and subtle bodies were strained from their battle with these dark forces; Carla was also very much a participant in this struggle. The Mother Ganges purified us of the after-affects and renewed our spirits at every step of the way. At Phool Chatti Ashram we tested the waters of a nearby river and compared it to the Ganges. The Ganges very clearly had an inner purifying affect that was absent in the otherwise pleasant bathing in the Channa River.

Onward we journeyed to Devprayag (the joining of the Alakananda and the Bhagarathi Rivers to form the Ganges), Rudraprayag and Karnaprayag; each considered places of holy pilgrimage. At each confluence we felt the wonderfully rejuvenating affects of these headwaters of the Ganges.

Finally we came full circle back to Dwarahat. Our experience here

was now very different. The darkness that made for challenging times from our first arrival was now absent. A feeling of cleanliness in the subtle air was palpable.

Our pilgrimage in India was now coming to a close. The many blessings and the challenges that came were all arranged for by our consummate Tour-Guide. In hindsight each step seemed to be carefully planned, even though we maneuvered our way only by taking the next step as we felt inwardly directed. Such is the magic of surrender to the all-knowing Divine Will!

I pray that you too are guided by the inscrutable will of the Maker of this universe, and that you too know the many blessings that give you the power to overcome all obstacles and realize your true goal in life, Self-Realization.

In Divine love and Blessings,

*David*



In Front of Babaji's Cave



Father, Mother, Friend, Beloved God,  
Unite our thoughts at a boundless altar  
Where Thine omnipresence may shine forth.  
Let us realize that Thou are the True Goal  
we are seeking.

Be not indifferent to us, though we be  
indifferent to Thee:  
Remember us, though we remember Thee not.  
Our loyalty to Thee may come and go,  
But ever art Thou the Unfaltering Friend.

Paramhansa Yogananda



Mother in India, 1957

## Unfoldment

**This article was written by Mother Hamilton and published in The Vision magazine May, 1958. Transcribed from a talk given by Mother on September 22, 1976.**

### Looking for a Miracle

Each soul whether he does so consciously or unconsciously looks for the coming of a miracle within his own life. His hope is eternal that one day God or luck or circumstance, whichever label he chooses to put upon his chosen deity, will reach forth and with a magic wand touch him upon the shoulder, thereby transforming him into the creature of his dreams and changing his whole existence. He does not realize that the manifestation of the miracle lies within his own grasp, nay within his own being.

### Faith

Now, "Faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen," said St. Paul. Faith then is the first ingredient necessary to bring forth the miracle. A strong unshakable faith which places its full attention upon its objective and never for one moment waivers in its purpose. The objective should, of course, be God alone. "Seek ye first the kingdom of heaven and all of these things shall be added unto you," Jesus admonished and gave men the key to the secret place of the most High when he said the kingdom of heaven is within.

The pattern begins to unfold as the veils of ignorance are removed from before our vision, enabling us to see more clearly. We now realize that the driving urge within each man to seek relief from want and suffering and to find perennial happiness is actually his subconscious memory of his lost paradise in the bliss of God he once enjoyed. We are aware too that through

the misuse of his own will he fell from that high estate. The urge to regain this bliss becomes paramount in his being. In fact, it is his one religion which he seeks to express in many and varied forms according to his past karma and his present state of spiritual consciousness.

### **Progress is One Step at a Time**

Man does not start in the first grade of school today and graduate from the university tomorrow. Rather, he progresses one step at a time. He studies the lessons, takes the tests and passes the examinations necessary to qualify him for the next grade. During this stage his attention is centered upon himself and his own effort of accomplishment. When he is graduated from elementary school he is ready for the university of higher knowledge. His vision becomes broader and more universal in character as he learns to relate his own existence with that of the rest of the world around him. Finally, he is ready to matriculate from college. The big day arrives when he receives the diploma which will proclaim to the world that he is a fully accredited student.

Having attained this prize, most students are content to sally forth and labor at that level, choosing the profession which is closest to their hearts. However, a few, recognizing the need for higher learning, persist in their endeavor to conquer greater heights and more distant lands. These attain their master's degree, having become specialists in their chosen field.

### **Spiritual Evolution**

Just so is man's spiritual evolution. In the dawn of his understanding he turns his face toward God and walks with stumbling footsteps along the path which is as yet dimly lighted. He is then in utter darkness having tried to satisfy his inherent need for peace and bliss through the medium of the senses and has found himself suspended like a marionette on a string between the dual forces of good and evil. In his extremity he cries out, "Oh, my God, have mercy upon me!" It is at this very instant that the grace of God descends upon him, awaking him from his dream of separation.

Eagerly he searches everywhere, seeking at first outside of himself the God whom he has at last acknowledged. His seeking follows the path and takes the form which best satisfies his need for the moment and he pursues it adamantly to the exclusion of all else until he has learned the lessons, taken the tests and passed the examination of that particular grade in life. Having qualified himself for the next step he moves upward, ever seeking the brighter light of understanding.

As the delicate tendrils of his faith grow stronger, he seeks to express himself through ever-widening horizons until one by one the sheaves of darkness disappear and he is ready to look into the mirror of his own soul. It is then that God in His infinite mercy takes human form and appears as the Guru, the Master, the Christ who leads the soul from darkness into the Light. Gently and carefully he nurtures the child on the path, directing him to seek the pearl of wisdom within the temple of the Living God. He teaches us that the venture which takes us on the journey of self knowledge and self mastery is the most fascinating adventure in the world because within man is a miniature universe with which it is his great privilege to become acquainted.

### **The Ship of Meditation**

Meditation is the ship which carries him on his journey to new and beautiful places. Concentration and willpower act as the rudder which steers the ship, and the devotee's flame of love, devotion and worship provides the fuel to propel his ship through the waters of delusion until his boat comes to rest on the shores of God's infinite wisdom and bliss.

### **Love of Guru**

As his love and attention become anchored in the Guru, his faith increases to the point where it becomes unspoken prayer which goes on building power until the thought of God takes hold of his consciousness, automatically forcing him to repeat His sacred name. With His name ever upon his lips, man is filled with the love and the bliss of His Presence. The ecstasy of his communion with Him creates the overpowering desire to surrender himself and everything he possesses to the one Beloved who is at once the cause and result of his being. Realizing at long last that he carries heaven within his own body temple, that within is all light, wisdom, love, beauty and perfection, he surrenders his life at the feet of God.

### **Cosmic Consciousness**

As gradually he sheds his human consciousness and replaces it with the cosmic consciousness of God he begins to manifest this perfection inwardly and outwardly until he is consumed in the flame of His light and love.

Who can describe the bliss felt through communion with God? One must experience it to know what it is like. And after one has had the experience still it remains indescribable, a secret covenant with the Infinite Beloved hidden in the inner sanctuary of the soul.

## The Incredible Sai Baba

[From the book, *The Incredible Sai Baba* by Arthur Osborne, 1957]

For years it was doubted whether Sai Baba was even literate; certainly nobody supposed that he knew Sanskrit. Then one day he gave an exposition which showed learning as well as the perspicacity and rough humour natural to him.

A devotee was massaging his legs and feet, chanting to himself the while in an undertone. Sai Baba asked him what he was muttering.

“A Sanskrit verse,” he replied, not suspecting that Sai Baba knew enough scripture to want a more precise answer. However, he asked what verse.

“A verse from the Gita.”

“Say it aloud.”

The devotee then recited in Sanskrit verse 34 of chapter IV:

‘Know that by means of prostration, enquiry and service the *Jnanis* (Enlightened) who have realized the Truth will teach you *Jnana* (Knowledge).’

“Do you understand this, Nana?” Baba asked him.

“Yes.”

“Then tell me meaning.”

Nana gave a free rendering in the vernacular but Sai Baba was not satisfied. “I don’t want a paraphrase; I want the strict grammatical meaning, with case, mood and tense.”

Nana gave a literal translation, wondering the while whether Baba knew anything of Sanskrit grammar. He soon found out.

“In *tatviddhi*, what does *tat* stand for?” Baba asked him.

“*Jnana* (knowledge).”

“What knowledge? Knowledge of what?”

“The knowledge referred to in the previous stanzas.”



Sai Baba (center), 1910

“What does *pranipat* mean?”

“Prostration.”

“And *pat*?”

“The same.”

“If they meant the same would Vyasa [the legendary author] have added two unnecessary syllables?”

“I don’t see any difference between them,” Nana admitted.

Baba left that for a while and passed on to the next point. “What does *prasna* mean?”

“Asking questions.”

“And *pariprasna*?”

“The same.”

“Then if they both mean the same was Vyasa off his head to use the longer?”

“I don’t see any difference.”

“Next point. What does *seva* mean?”

“Service, such as I am doing now in massaging your feet.”

“Nothing more?”

“I don’t see what more it can mean.”

“We’ll leave that too. Next point. Krishna tells Arjuna to get *Jnana* (Knowledge) from *Jnanis* (The Enlightened). Wasn’t Krishna himself a *Jnani*?”

“Yes.”

“Then why does he send Arjuna to others instead of giving him *Jnana* himself?”

“I don’t know.”

“Wasn’t Arjuna a *jiva* (being) and therefore an emanation of *Chaitanya* (Universal Consciousness)?”

“Yes.”

“Then how can Knowledge be given to what is already an emanation of Consciousness or Knowledge?”

Sai Baba interpreted the verse to mean that it is not *Jnana* (Knowledge) but *ajnana* (non-knowledge or ignorance) that the Guru gives.

Nana, now thoroughly bewildered over what had seemed to him a straightforward verse, asked Sai Baba to expound these points.

He explained. “The verse tells us how a disciple is to approach his Guru in order to attain Realization. He must completely surrender body,

mind, soul and possessions to the Guru. That is the prostration referred to. The enquiry must be a constant quest for Truth, not questions asked out of mere curiosity or for a wrong motive, such as to trap the Guru. The motive must be pure desire for spiritual progress and Realization. Then the service is not mere physical service such as massaging. For it to be effective there must be no idea that you are free to give or withhold service; you must feel that your body no longer belongs to you since you have surrendered it to the Guru and it exists only to do him service.”

Then followed a catechism on the Guru giving ignorance.

“Isn’t Brahma pure Knowledge or Being?”

“Yes.”

“And everything else non-Being or ignorance (non-Knowledge)?”

“Yes.”

“Don’t the scriptures declare that Brahma is beyond the range of speech or mind?”

“Yes”

“Then the speech of the Guru is not Brahma or Knowledge?”

“No.”

“Then you admit that what the Guru says is not Knowledge but ignorance?”

“It seems so.”

“Then the Guru’s instruction is simply a piece of ignorance used to remove the disciple’s ignorance, just as we use a thorn to remove another thorn from the foot, isn’t it?”

“I suppose so.”

“The disciple is a *jiva* (being) whose essential nature is Knowledge, isn’t he?”

“Yes.”

“Then there is obviously no need to give him Knowledge but simply to remove the veil of ignorance that hides the existent Knowledge. This, of course, is not to be done at one stroke, since the disciple is immersed in age-old ignorance and needs repeated instruction, perhaps through life after life. And what is the nature of this instruction through speech about what is beyond speech? Isn’t it like removing a cover? Ignorance conceals the pre-existent Knowledge just as water plants cover over the surface of a pond. Clear away the plants and you have the water. You

don't have to create it; it is there already. Or take another example—a cataract grows on the eye and prevents a man from seeing; remove the cataract and he sees. Ignorance is the cataract. The universe is the efflorescence of the indescribable Maya, which is ignorance; yet ignorance is needed to illuminate and dissolve this ignorance.

“Divine Knowledge is to be realized, not taught. Prostration, enquiry and service are the methods by which to obtain the Grace of the Guru.

“It is an illusion to suppose that phenomena are real. That is the screen of ignorance which hides Knowledge. Tear it off and Brahma or Knowledge will shine forth.

“Ignorance is the seed of *samsara* (birth and death). Put the medicine of the Guru's Grace on the eye and the screen of Maya lifts, leaving only *Jnana* (Knowledge). *Jnana* is not something to be attained, it is eternal and self-existent. On the other hand, ignorance has a cause and an end. The root of it is the idea that the devotee is a separate being from God. Remove this and what remains is *Jnana*.

“Now the question why Krishna referred Arjuna to other Gurus instead of giving him *Jnana* himself. Did Krishna consider other *Jnanis* separate from himself or their teaching different from his? No. So their teaching is his and there is no difference.”

Sai Baba then told Nana to bring the Bhagavad Gita and read a chapter before him each day and he would expound it. He did so—and no record was kept. A book whose vigour and profundity one can imagine from the above fragment simply evaporated and was never written down. Even this, however, is enough to show that when Sai Baba did talk theory it was the purest Advaita, the doctrine of Nonduality, that is the very essence of spiritual teaching.

Shirdi was some six miles from Kopergaon, the nearest railway station, and the only conveyance was a horse carriage. Some visitors to Sai Baba urgently needed to catch the night train in order in order to return to Bombay, but a terrific thunderstorm was raging. Sai Baba looked up and shouted: “Hey! Enough of that! Stop it now! My children have to go back.” And the storm stopped.

## MY TRIP TO INDIA

by Jenrri D. Hough



My dad and I went to India with our guru, David and his wife, Carla. I was so excited to go to Ramanashram. We had to fly over the Pacific Ocean. It was exciting how many movies there were, but it was a really long flight. At the ashram it was very nice but we didn't stay in the ashram. We lived across the street. It wasn't very nice, but there

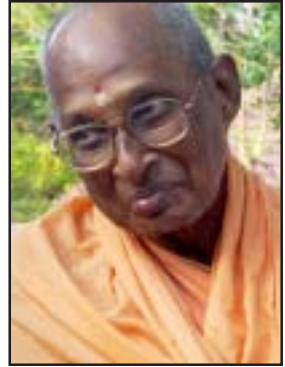
were a lot of monkeys! We explored the ashram during the day, the hall was big and people chanted in it everyday. It was about 8 men chanting for a long time. The lunchroom had hard floors. It was unique that we ate on banana leaves and sometimes woven leaves. By the tearoom, there were men and women with chisels taking out a cement floor. After, the women would carry it on their heads to throw it away. It was amazing, and the library had tons of books on religions. The next morning I woke up thinking I was still at home and astonished that I woke in India.



Later my dad and I got dressed and went to the St. Thomas Hill with David and Carla.<sup>1</sup> When we got there it was astounding how old everything was. It felt so ancient; like when we saw the caves they were over 1,000 years old, and a cross and a painting made by St. Thomas were over 2,000 years old. It was extraordinary that I touched something so ancient. The next day we went to the temples. Inside it was very crowded and the fumes burned traditionally from menthol made me sick. I did not like it very much. It was really crowded and too much smoke. We hiked up to several caves, including Papa's, and meditated in each one. It was inspiring and very powerful. It was a lot better than the temples because it was not crowded and it was peaceful. After a couple of days we met up with Jonni and went on a train ride to Anandashram.

## Anandashram

We arrived at Anandashram and had a nap because we woke up at 4:00 am on the train. When I awoke I read so much of Artemis Fowl, my favorite book. I did not like our rooms very much because they were small and away from everyone. So at night, David and Carla arrived from seeing Swami Vishwananda and Dad and I moved next to David and Carla. It was really nice because it was bigger and we lived next to everyone. It was January 13, 2005 and Swamiji came out for Darshan—it was magnificent! I felt so peaceful when I met him for the first time. In the morning, we hiked up the hill. The sunrise was a tremendous sight. It was like the fruit of Hanuman. He thought it was a giant ripe orange fruit. <sup>2</sup>



I discovered my way to make paint. I got a clean coconut shell and really powdery brick and put a little water in and made paint. I also liked chanting. David said he saw Hanuman when he chanted so I tried chanting too so I could see Hanuman. We went to the flower ceremony. That is when you chant and give a flower to Mataji and Papa for an offering. I carved in wood to make an incense holder. The next



day we hiked up the hill, it was so peaceful, like I could fly. My imagination was running off again. David and I had a spiritual talk. It was like I was glued to what he was saying. Then I understood what the Astral World was and the Ajna and what past lives had to do with God realization. The next day we went on a cruise with other people from the ashram. We went on the beach and played tag and raced a lot. I taught some gymnastics to some kids I met. I also brought my Italian friend, who is home schooled too and goes all over the place to visit. The last day, the 25th, I drew pictures for Swamiji. He gave me a good look in the eye, a good one. We woke at 4:00 am. And left for the train. I think I got what

I came to India for. I was to meet Swamiji before he passed on. I had really good experiences there. It was wonderful to be in India.

### Ragu's House

We took a train to Ragu's house. That's where we were going to stay until we left to the airport. The train was not as nice as the other because there weren't beds and the seats weren't as clean. I drew a lot of pictures and Hindi words. I also met a boy and he played my Game Boy for a while. Dad was falling asleep on the train and we both felt kind of sick. Later we arrived at Ragu's house. It was a nice, big house and the outside had sand and there are a lot of god statues everywhere. Vishnu, their son let me play on the computer, a racing game. Later we went on a boat tour. We saw a really nice hotel and some shops, one man was bribing dad to buy a chess set, a small one for 400 rupees. It was funny. We saw dolphins jumping, but at first my dad thought they were sharks. After the tour Dad and Ragu and I went all over town to handicraft stores to find gifts for everyone. It is cool that you can find brass carvings. Also the shopkeeper followed you around to help out with things you might be looking for in the store. The next day we went to the airport to go to Singapore. On Singapore Air there are a lot of movies when you fly over the Pacific Ocean. On the plane I started to miss Anandashram—like the food, and all the people there, especially Swamiji. I felt like I could live there for a long time. In my journal I wrote about every day I spent in India. It was lovely.




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1 Jenrri (age 12) has written here about his visit to one of the St. Thomas sites in and around Chennai, which actually took place before he reached Tiruvannamali where Ramanashram is located.

2 Jenrri is referring to story in the Ramayana where Hanuman mistook the sun for an orange.

## Pope John Paul II

(May 18, 1920–April 2, 2005)

[From: *Life Commemorative Magazine, A Tribute* (pp. 33-34), 2005]

...longhaired, insurrectionist, aesthete  
...but it is inadequate to categorize the young man who would become John Paul II as merely a bohemian. The term can imply casualness, even a lassitude or a certain indolence. It summons up images of cafe life or saloon life. Wartime demands stronger stuff than bohemianism.

...Wojtyla needed employment to avoid deportation to a German forced-labor camp. He was a quarryman from 1940 to 1941, then a worker in a caustic soda chemical plant in '41 and '42. Later in life, he looked back warmly on his coworkers in both places. "The managers of the quarry, who were Poles, tried to spare us students from the heaviest work. In my case, they made me the assistant to the rock-blaster: his name was Franciszek Labus. I remember him because he would occasionally say things like: 'Karol, you should be a priest. You have a good voice and will sing well; then you'll be all set . . .'" He said this in all simplicity, expressing a view then widely held in society about how priests lived. These words of the old work man have stuck in my memory."

Karol's father had urged it, Archbishop Sapienha had urged it, this workman now urged it. . . .and also that curious little man, the tailor in Krakow, the one who led Wojtyla to the writings of the sainted Carmelite mystics Teresa of Avila and John of the Cross. Jan Tyranowski was the man's name. He met Wojtyla at a weekly church discussion group in February 1940. Tyranowski quickly became his mentor in spiritual matters; he became the most influential person in the young man's life when on February 18, 1941, the senior Karol Wojtyla died of a heart attack, leaving his son without family. Tyranowski spent hours consoling his distraught friend, talking about life, about God. (In 1949 Father Wojtyla would remember the late Tyranowski as an "apostle . . . someone really saintly.")



After meeting Tyranowski, Wojtyla became particularly enthralled by the writings of John of the Cross. He would later write, in a dissertation, that the 16th century Spaniard had shown prayer to be “a mystical experience” leading to an “inner union with God.” At the same time that Karol Wojtyla was determining that the theater was not his true vocation, he was determining as well that he should become a contemplative friar. He petitioned Sapieha not once but thrice on this matter, and three times he was denied permission to enter a monastery. The archbishop had been impressed by Lolek Wojtyla’s presence, his ability to communicate the word of God,

his ability to reach and help others. Sapieha didn’t want this powerful individual leading a monk’s life, cloistered away. Sapieha felt God had devised a different plan for Wojtyla.



Now that Wojtyla was striding toward God, he would one day perceive the plan. Or so Sapieha hoped.

Certainly Wojtyla did not capitulate to Sapieha in pursuing the priesthood. He chose the road willingly. Later in life he told his friend and biographer, Tad Szulec, “After my father’s death . . . I gradually became aware of my true path. I was working at a plant and devoting myself, as far as the terrors of the occupation allowed, to my taste for literature and drama. My priestly vocation took shape in the midst of all that, like an inner fact of unquestionable and absolute clarity. The following year, in the autumn, I knew that I was called.”

In October 1942, Sapieha organized a secret seminary, employing a few surviving faculty members from still-shuttered Jagiellonian University. Wojtyla was one of ten men chosen to take classes in the school’s first year. For two years, lectures were given at various spots throughout Krakow, but in 1944 the seminarians fled further underground when

Sapieha decided he had to hide his students within the Krakow archdiocesan center for the duration of the war.

Before Wojtyla entered his sequester on February 29, he had the ironic experience of having his life saved by a German officer. While walking home from work, he was struck by a truck. He hit his head on the sidewalk and lay unconscious by the side of the road. A German command car stopped, and the officer saw to it that Wojtyla was hastened to a hospital, where he was found to have a brain concussion. He recovered, joined Sapieha and the others inside the walls and progressed toward priesthood.

Father Wojtyla [later Pope John Paul II] never travelled without his breviary; no day went by without intense sessions of prayer, he prayed upon waking, he prayed rhythmically while walking, he prayed after meals and before bed. As he prayed he found himself mystically transformed, lifted toward God: “We begin with the impression that it’s our initiative, but it’s always God’s initiative within us.” He believed God always listened, and that prayer could affect events on earth as well as in the hereafter.



Jesus on a Lotus, at St. Thomas Basilica, Chennai, India

# The Chela Who Tried To Get Away

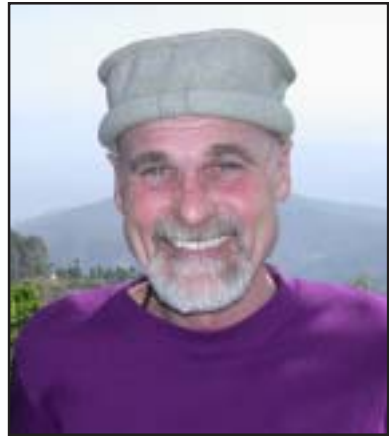
by Rob Ivie

As I look back over my life, the single greatest regret is that, years ago, I left the Pacific Northwest and severed my intimate ties and spiritual training with the Reverend Mother Yogacharya Hamilton.

Shortly after returning from my first trip to India, I awoke one morning, and rose immediately, stretching my arms upward, to shout a loud, desperate, wholehearted prayer into the ethers: "If there's Anybody out there, please send someone to teach me!" Through a di-

vinely guided chain of events, as an undeniable response to my soul call, Mother was the one that God led me to. The year before, I had read *Autobiography of a Yogi* by Paramhansa Yogananda. I was introduced to this awesome masterpiece, my all-time favorite book, through a dear friend, Jim Kinnard. Unexpectedly he appears a couple of days later at my door, evidently inspired at the time of my prayer to hitchhike all the way from Montana to my cabin on Pine Lake in Issaquah. As it turned out, his nephew in Seattle, being one of Mother's small circle of students at the time, took Jim to see her. "You've got to meet this incredible lady who's a direct disciple of Yogananda; she knew everything about me!" he reported with great excitement. After placing her address in my hands, Jim was back on the road, mission accomplished. Unannounced I arrived the following Wednesday evening at the exact time that the weekly discourse and meditation were scheduled to begin! Several hours later, after everyone else had gone, this remarkable woman in her late sixties and I were seated cross-legged on the floor. She gazed deeply into my eyes and proclaimed: "Rob, I knew you were coming!"

Some weeks later, I was making, yet another, one of my hour-long pilgrimages to her home. However, on that particular evening, I happened to be in a very troubled state of mind and was harboring such thoughts as, "She's just an old lady who has read a lot of spiritual books and memorized the teachings." I almost turned back on several occasions, but finally de-



cided to check it out for one last time. As I entered her apartment, a deep peace began to envelop me and still the chaos and confusion running rampant in my mind. Mother appeared from a back room where she had been meditating for the last hour, as was her custom before each of these gatherings, and sat in an armchair with her gaze turned upwards, fixed at the third eye in the forehead. She then proceeded to speak directly from Spirit. One by one she specifically addressed each of the half-dozen or so doubts that had assaulted me so brutally during my drive over there, but in such a manner that it was relevant and useful for everyone else present. I was transported word by word into an expanding state of awareness and the resultant bliss. My body kept growing lighter and lighter, until it felt like I was floating in space. Then Mother's gaze returned once again to the world of outer form. As she continued to talk at length, she kept making eye contact with every last person in the room, with the sole exception of myself even though I was seated directly in front of her. Finally when her teachings had flowed to an end, she looked at me for the first time that evening, and said with a smile: "Well, Rob, I hope that answers all your questions!"

During my stay in India I had contracted amoebic dysentery. Some time later I was forced to stop in Afghanistan due to my weakened condition, while traveling overland back to Europe and finally resort to a course of antibiotics specifically designed to knock out the pernicious disease. However, for months thereafter, I was plagued with recurrent bouts of the dreadful symptoms—acute inflammation and severe griping pains in my digestive tract, and watery diarrhea several times a day. But stool tests, once I was back in the States, failed to reveal any parasites. So I pretty much resolved myself to the fact that I had some mysterious and possibly incurable ailment. My parents and I were about to depart for a long weekend at our cabin in the San Juan Islands when another bout started to come on. I decided not to say anything, and to simply grin and bear it. Then, to my great surprise, I suddenly felt fine, and continued to do so throughout our entire outing. As soon as we returned home I called Mother, and the first thing she said was, "By any chance, do you have amoebic dysentery?" I had never ever mentioned it to her. "Why, yes, Mother, how did you know?" Then she replied, "Three days ago I came down with all the symptoms but now they're finally gone. And, Rob, as I was tuning in, you kept coming to mind." She told me that God had used her as an instrument to take on my disease long enough for me to be permanently healed. And

so it came to pass! Since then I've read a number of accounts about masters who could also transmute negative Karma through various means and, thus, lighten the loads of their disciples.

Ah, the grace that flows through a true guru! But the greatest miracle, by far, was how we were lifted up in the power of Mother's presence—beyond the body and mind—into Spirit time and time again! She often used to say, "Through total forgetfulness of self comes total remembrance of God." One cannot overly stress the importance of this direct experience of spiritual transmission that passes down through an enlightened lineage. It becomes indelibly inscribed upon your consciousness, and empowers you with not only tremendous inspiration, but also the strength and courage necessary, for treading this path that leads to Self-realization.



I remember, all too well, how Mother made the following very public announcements, on two different occasions, before everyone present at her Sunday service:

"Rob doesn't like my poetry and, quite frankly, I don't like his either."

And

"Rob, we don't smoke anything on the spiritual path!"

I can only chuckle knowingly now as I write down these words, how absolutely perfect! My negativity at the time and its false perceptions, along with this addictive nature of mine got nailed to the wall for all to plainly see. She could sure tweak your ego, and rattle its cage, when God wanted her to! As Master used to say, "You must not only meditate, but also learn to behave. To have spiritual consciousness is to be able to do those things that are in your highest interest." I've realized over the years that true love sometimes has to be tough and wield a big stick. But back then I didn't know that, and carried a lot of pain as I kept struggling with my issues of self-esteem. And with the blind arrogance of youth, I couldn't help but judge her, and continued to doubt the state of her spiritual attainment, in spite of all the experiences I've just described! That ignorance knows no limits is all one can really say.

Mother was, in fact, a mystic who spoke the highest truth from her own realization. No one has touched me so deeply on a soul level, or taught me so much about the path of meditation. She was an emanation of the Divine

Mother overflowing with pure love and spiritual power, yet at the same time so down to earth and human, the embodiment of absolute humility itself—complete and total surrender to God. One of her favorite sayings was, “I teach balance in all things.” She was not only my guru, but my dear friend as well. We would go out for dinner on occasion, or to the movies. And once I was served the most delectable vegetarian meal that she’d prepared with her very own loving hands; there was even mango ice cream for dessert. Among my most cherished memories of Mother were the evenings that she invited me to her home, and then spoke for hours about God while gazing right through me into the very core of my being. How her eyes would sparkle! Each time I would stagger back home, every cell of my body permeated with divine bliss, like a man drunk on Spirit.

The last time Mother and I were alone together was at a Chinese restaurant. I had been her close disciple for over three and a half years. Soon thereafter I departed for India, and graduate studies in Eastern philosophy and religion but, as fate would have it, became a Buddhist monk instead. We were seated on the floor at a low table in our own private enclosure. After a delightful meal she asked, “Rob, what do you see right now?” It was a blinding white luminosity emanating from her form to eclipse the rice-paper walls all around us! Then she proclaimed, “That’s what I see in you, too.” Verily, the guru is the mirror of one’s soul! The great sage, Shankaracharya, once wrote: “Life is fragile and unstable like a drop of water on a lotus leaf. The company of a divine personage, even for a moment, can save and redeem us.” Mother was born on Christmas Day and passed away in Mahasamadhi over a decade ago. Her astrological charts were filled with the most extraordinary signs and spiritual configurations. How fortunate we are to have known such a one as she!

As a consequence of my Tibetan Buddhist training in Mahamudra which is to meditate directly without form on the true nature of Mind, I’ve been able to stand back completely, at times, and witness my sense of ego objectively as a separate entity. Because it arises due to conditions, namely ignorance, and passes away in the pure awareness of transcendental wisdom, it is impermanent and, thus, void of self, according to the Buddha’s teachings. In other words, the ego is unreal because it has no independent nature of its own, or “self” if you will, that is ever-present and unchanging. The pure awareness of enlightened Mind is often described in the sutras as being like clear, open, limitless space. These are the only two “dharma,” or phenomena, that are unconditioned and, thus, real because they do not

change. However, when ignorance is superimposed on pure awareness, like clouds against an empty sky, then the direct experience of Reality is polarized into subject and object, pleasure and pain, good and bad, and so on. A sense of separation, or ego, arises within, and the world of duality is then perceived without. As the third Patriarch of Zen so beautifully put it: “The Great Way is not difficult for those who have no preferences, But make the slightest distinction, and heaven and earth are set infinitely apart.” Or, according to a Japanese Zen master: “Before Enlightenment, there was the temple bell and me. After Enlightenment there was only the ringing.” The clear discrimination of this most fundamental of polarities, and the root cause of suffering—the witness, as subject, and the ego, as object—can be a steppingstone, or portal, to the highest, non-dual, mystical state of consciousness. In Mahamudra, this is called the realization of One Taste, the union of Great Bliss and Emptiness, at the very heart of the Buddha’s teachings. This is where it’s at, or where the ego isn’t! The experience is that of letting go of everything you are not, a total release into “no thing,” or Emptiness, as you embrace the spontaneously-arising Great Bliss in the timeless flow of pure awareness. Sounds good! And thank you, Mother, for my first “pointing-out instructions” as my lama, Lopon Tchechu Rimpoche, would call them. May all become enlightened!

I’ve led a most interesting and unusual life, indeed, although it hasn’t always been easy. Like an actor on a stage, I played my various roles—commercial salmon fisherman; English teacher in Japan; chef at a natural foods café; staff member of a meditation retreat center on Maui; doctor of naturopathic medicine, and real estate agent selling timeshares at a five-star resort in picturesque Sedona Arizona. I’ve moved from place to place in America, and traveled or lived in more than fifty countries. I’ve been in an on-and-off, long-term relationship with a woman who’s still a mystery to me. I feel so badly that she had to suffer so. Iswari will soon, as it appears, be residing at her beloved guru’s ashram outside of Bangalore. I’m so glad for her. This life is but a fleeting dream like a fading star at dawn, and a bubble in a stream. Mother, your words were never lost on me. I can still remember many of them verbatim. However, I should have listened a wee bit more attentively when you warned me once, “Rob, you have a strong tendency to vacillate!” I’ve been a vagabond, a restless soul in quest of his one true passion, the meaning of existence. Where did I come from? Who am I? And where am I going? I no longer have any desire, whatsoever, to wander any more. So finally I make my stand, to

find the bliss where it has always been, right here deep down inside of me.

Shortly after my arrival in India, this being my fourth pilgrimage to this ancient and most hallowed of lands, I was inexplicably drawn to Anandashram in the southern state of



Kerala. There I met David, Mother's spiritual successor, who so kindly shared a number of heart-moving stories about our guru, and all that had transpired since she and I had parted ways so long ago. David also described the many changes he'd been through, and some of his innermost experiences and revelations. I realized, in the very depths of my soul, that those times back when I'd sat at Mother's blessed feet had been the most inspired years of my life. And that nothing has filled me with as great a bliss as the practice of Kriya Yoga that she taught, as passed down to her by the Master, Paramhansa Yogananda, though an unbroken enlightened lineage, all the way back to the Great Avatara Babaji!

I awoke one morning, a few months ago, with pure devotion radiating like the sun from the center of my heart chakra. I had fallen asleep the night before while repeating over and over again, "Mother, am I your disciple?" Long ago she once told me: "The crux of your problem is with your father." I did not ask her why. Now I know it was rejection. He was a good man, of lofty moral character, with a powerful intellect and will, and extremely successful in the world. But he was also emotionally undemonstrative, and could be so cold, and judgmental in his silence. I have finally learned that the validation of who you are can only be found within! The realization dawned that, at times, I had felt rejected by my guru, too, as strange as that might seem. It was only the wounds I bore. She was the love of my life. No one has shown me Spirit as she has done. She loves me now, and always has. Oh how knowing that heals my soul! Life is so sweet when the nectar of divine love is flowing to and through me. Oh, my God, set me free! And I know that I've always wanted to be just like her—an enlightened being guiding others on the path to liberation. Mother, you are my very heart. Accept me as your chela and devotee! I vow to be a yogi, to practice Kriya Yoga night and day, and to get down to "the real work to

be done,” my own God-realization! There were so many things I should have asked, and ways I could have served her, that slipped past me unawares. But in the end, it’s what I do with the teachings that she gave, and the love she nurtured in my heart. And when this dream is finally done, we will meet again for God is one! Well, Mother, your chela, who tried to get away, is back and right on track, riding the Moksha Express bound for the Infinite and Eternal already and always here and now...

I’ve practiced Tibetan Buddhism over the last twenty-five years. It’s true that my lama’s initiation into Mahamudra and each of his empowerments were like thunderbolts passing through me! And I made some absolutely phenomenal connections with the Kagyu lineage when I traveled through Tibet. Mahamudra, and Phowa which is the art of conscious dying, have been invaluable gifts that I still practice wholeheartedly.

However, in retrospect, the tangible blessings I received from the Kriya Yoga Masters, back when that lineage had my full devotion even though for a relatively much shorter span of time, were far greater, indeed. They have always been more than willing to stay in contact although, with this ever-restless mind of mine, I’m not always that easy to get through to! And now, that is where my soul allegiance lies, and those teachings are again my primary sadhana.

Once I was running a very high fever and, at the same time, whenever I closed my eyes, and gazed upward, radiant light would flood my inner vision. Finally it was a Saturday night, and I offered a spontaneous prayer for healing, as I wanted so much to attend Mother’s Sunday service. Then I heard a voice, as plain as day, inside my head say, “Don’t worry, in the morning you’ll be perfectly normal!” —as I happened to catch the gaze of Yoganandaji from a picture that hung upon the wall. When I woke up, I felt great and my thermometer reading was exactly dead on the little red triangle—indicating 98.6!

Another time, during a solitary retreat, Master appeared to me in, what seemed to be, a lucid dream. We sat facing one another in the full-lotus posture, and he proceeded to do one full round of Kriya Yoga, which takes over an hour, counting off each deep yogic breath completed on a mala of 108 large rudrakshya beads that was around his waist. Not a word was spoken. Instead, he communicated with me telepathically via the spiritual eye and gave me very explicit instructions as to all the subtle nuances of the practice. Then he was gone. However, the next night he appeared again just long enough to say, “Last night was not a dream!”



Yogi Rob's "Cave" in the Himalayas

To the West of my hermitage I can see the very tip of the Badrinath peaks, beyond which lies the abode of Babaji where he attained enlightenment at the age of sixteen. His teachers were said to be two of the Mahasiddhas (Great Adepts) of southern India who had reached the state of immortality. As incredulous as it may seem, Paramhansa Yogananda claims Babaji has overcome death itself and remains in an ever-youthful body to assist in the evolution of mankind. All I know is that one, being the most strikingly profound, of all of my treasured spiritual experiences testifies to that possibility. I have shared this with only a handful of people throughout the years but feel inspired to do so now. One night I was sitting before the altar in our meditation room on Maui. All of a sudden radiant pinpoints of light began to manifest in a corner of the room and slowly took the life-size form of Babaji! Whether it was a light-body or his actual physical form I do not know even to this day! He stood with his right hand raised in silent blessing for some time, and then slowly disappeared once again dissolving back into light. Without saying a word, I looked over at Iswari's awe-stricken face, and asked her to describe what she had just seen. It was absolutely identical with my own experience. Wow!

In conclusion, there seems to be no barrier known as death when you are dealing with the omniscience and omnipresence of fully realized beings. How liberating it is to know that time and space are no obstacle, and their divine guidance is always there whenever I truly need it. Give me a buzz, Mother! Hi, Master! Jai Satgurudeva! -December 2003

## Loon Lake Retreat

by Yogacharya David Hickenbottom

Upon returning from India we met for our Spring Retreat at Loon Lake. Loon Lake is a beautiful setting for our time together; hills, trees, a lake and some blue skies all combined to help us all feel as if the city and its clamor had been left far behind.



We focused on Master's Lessons as our special area of concentration. We tensed and relaxed in various postures to the Energization Exercises, practiced holding *the cup filled with the oil of realization* while in stillness and in activity, and meditated on the experience of feeling God's Will activating the body, mind and will.

These practices all came from Master's lessons. Indeed, we have a rich source of wisdom, practical techniques, poetry and stories in our Param-Guru's words.

How wonderful to get together at the Loon Lake Retreat with sincere souls, questing for self-improvement and Self-Realization. Indeed, there is no better company to keep!



Stephanie & Tonia

More Loon Lake Pictures



Geraldine & David



Honor & Peg



Bob



Jerry

## The Cross and The Lotus Journal



David with our new little one, Alexander, and his mother, Andrea Cihelka. Alexander is the grandson of George & Christine Baldigara and Paul & Celina Cihelka.



Jonni, Carla & Corliss—Mother's Mahasamadhi, Anandashram

### Calendar of Events

June	19	Father's Day
	20	Summer Solstice (9:47 p.m. PDT)
July	1	Canada Day
	4	Independence Day
	21	Guru Purnima
	25	Babaji's Remembrance Day
August	10	Papa's Mahasamadhi Day
Sept.	22	Fall Equinox (3:21 p.m. PST)
	26	Lahiri Mahasaya's Mahasamadhi Day
	30	Lahiri Mahasaya's Jayanthi Day

Journal Editors: Larry & Cate Koler

As a Soul you are like a fish swimming in a sea, a sea of Bliss. But so oftentimes you don't know it. Awaken to the real nature of this universe. It is a joyful expression of God's all-mighty, all-intelligent, everywhere-found Presence! And, you are that!

Yogacharya David Hickenbottom

Change yourself and you have done your part in changing the world. Every individual must change his own life if he wants to live in a peaceful world. The world cannot become peaceful unless and until you yourself begin to work toward peace. It is only by removing hate from our hearts that we can live a Christlike life.

*Paramhansa Yogananda*

Know that an omnipotent Power which can grant you independent happiness, strength and peace ever seeks revelation in you. Throw open the doors of your soul so that this Power may flood your being with pure ecstasy—may permeate your intellect, mind, senses and body with an inexplicable joy. Permit this Divine Power within you to entirely transform your life to one of light, wisdom and bliss.

Swami Ramdas



Nalini (center), preparing flower offerings and garlands for daily puja.