

### III. The Swami Prabhavananda Era: The Formative Years (1930-1949)\*



*Swami Prabhavananda*

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#### 1. Vedanta Society Activities in the 1930's

The second quarter of the twentieth century marked a dynamic period of impressive expansion, not only for Vedanta in Southern California, but in many other regions of the country. A great deal of credit must be given to Swami Shivananda, the President, and to Swami Saradananda, the Secretary, of the Ramakrishna Math and Mission. The latter had

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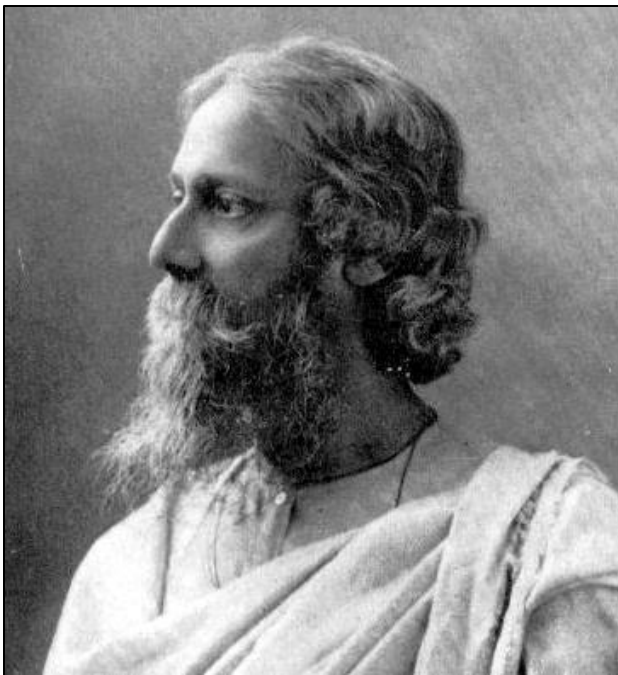
\* Assistance provided by Chapter Editor Swami Yogeshananda

previously taught in the U.S. during the years 1896-1898. Sometime in the mid-1920s Swami Prakashananda had asked Belur Math to send fifty able-bodied sannyasins to the U.S. if they could be spared. His idea was to have Vedanta swamis in every state in the country.<sup>1</sup> The Math was not able to do this, but it did provide a strong base of support for the American movement.

The first wave to come was the five disciples of Sri Ramakrishna between 1893 and 1903. They were followed by a second wave of five swamis who came between 1903 and 1906. The third wave began in 1923 when the Math sent ten high-powered and well-trained swamis. This was during Shivananda's administration, 1922-1934. The swamis were: Raghavananda 1923-1927, Prabhavananda 1923-1976, Dayananda 1926-1931, Akhilananda 1926-1962, Madhavananda 1927-1929, Gneswarananda 1927-1937, Vividishananda 1929-1980, Devatmananda 1930-1954, Ashokananda 1931-1969, and Nikhilananda 1931-1973. Many were disciples of Brahmananda, as was Swami Vijayananda, who established a center in Buenos Aires, Argentina in 1932 that continues to this day. They dominated the scene for decades. Five remained in the U.S. for thirty-six or more years.

Some of these swamis had been monastics for less than ten years. All but Raghavananda, who was in charge of the Philadelphia satellite center, were appointed head of a Vedanta Society within three years of their arrival. In 1922 there were three Indian swamis located in three Vedanta Centers: New York (Bodhananda), Boston (Paramananda) and San Francisco (Prakashananda). During a period of intense growth, these powerful and charismatic leaders, together with the following swamis, founded the following new centers that are still in existence: Portland, OR (1925, Prabhavananda), Providence, RI (1928, Akhilananda), Hollywood, CA (1929, Prabhavananda), Chicago, IL (1930, Gneswarananda), New York, NY: Eastside (1933, Nikhilananda), St. Louis, MO (1938, Satprakashananda), and Seattle, WA (1938, Vividishananda).<sup>2</sup>

A new trend developed. An existing Society would expand and create a new branch center and/or retreat. Branches of a primary center were less risky than attempting to set up an independent center; the permanent Society had the financial resources to support a branch through its early years. These dynamic swamis acquired: Scappoose, OR Retreat (1936, Devatmananda), Lake Tahoe, CA (1937, Ashokananda), Berkeley, CA (1939, Ashokananda), Boston, MA (1941, Akhilananda), Santa Barbara, CA (1944, Prabhavananda), Marshfield, MA Retreat (1946, Akhilananda; later sold), Olema, CA (1946, Ashokananda), Thousand Island Park, NY (1947, Nikhilananda), Kansas City, MO (1947, Satprakashananda), Sacramento, CA (1949, Ashokananda), Trabuco Canyon, CA (1949, Prabhavananda), Honolulu, HI (1954, Vividishananda), South Pasadena (1955, Prabhavananda), Arlington, WA Retreat (1975, Vividishananda), and Vancouver, BC (1978, Vividishananda). At the same time, Paramananda added La Crescenta, CA (1923), Cohasset, MA (1929), and Dacca, India (1931), but those are no longer part of the Ramakrishna Order.<sup>3</sup> According to national statistics and in spite of the loss of Swami Paramananda's organization, between 1916 and 1951, the estimated number of American Vedanta Society members increased over four-and-a-half fold.<sup>4</sup>



*Rabindranath Tagore*

With the approval of Swami Shivananda and Belur Math, Swami Prabhavananda and Sister Lalita came to Hollywood in December of 1929. The population of the City of Los Angeles had increased twelve-fold since Swamiji had been there thirty years earlier. Prabhavananda lived in the home of Carrie Wyckoff (affectionately known as Sister Lalita), and considered himself to be her son. Nearly thirty years before, as previously described, she had received a powerful spiritual transmission from Swamiji.

In April, only a few months before Swami Prabhavananda moved to Hollywood in December 1929 and into Sister Lalita's home, the famed Nobel Prize-winning poet Rabindranath Tagore (1861-1941) made a short visit to Los Angeles. The front page of the *Los Angeles Times* covering his arrival spoke of him as the "Sage of Bengal." Rufus von KleinSmid (1875-1964), President of the University of Southern California, had invited him to hold a six-week class on "the literature, philosophy, and spiritual progress of Hindu civilization." He wanted "to

arrange an opportunity for Angelinos to hear the celebrated oriental.” Von KleinSmid met Tagore at the depot when he arrived, and soon again when he departed. Shortly after his arrival, because of poor health, he had to leave the U.S. and return to India. However, the following year he was received by United States President Herbert Hoover and the British Ambassador Sir Ronald Lindsay. Tagore described the meeting as a “delightful one and one that will live in my memory.”<sup>5</sup>

Earlier, on October 6, 1916 Rabindranath Tagore had spoken at the Little Theatre in Montecito, a suburb outside Santa Barbara, California. At the time of WWI, his subject was a plea for a world vision and a critique of nationalism, which he defined as “organized selfishness.”

Rabindranath Tagore and a few members of his family had been present on May 2, 1883 when Sri Ramakrishna visited the temple of the Brahmo Samaj in Nandanbagan. Sri Ramakrishna attended the worship service and later ate dinner there. Years later Tagore composed the following verse:

To the Paramahansa Ramakrishna Deva. Diverse courses of worship from varied springs of fulfillment have mingled in your meditation. The manifold revelation of the joy of the Infinite has given form to a shrine of unity in your life. Where from far and near arrive salutations to which I join mine own.

For half a century, Swami Prabhavananda would become the dominant influence in Southern California. Under his dynamic leadership, the Vedanta Society of Southern California became the largest in the Western world, with a temple and monastic community in Hollywood, a temple and convent in Santa Barbara, and a monastery in Trabuco Canyon.

The very first night that Swami Prabhavananda stayed in Sister Lalita’s house in Hollywood, he had a spiritual dream of Holy Mother coming up the old steps toward the house from the southwest lawn of the Green House. The swami described the dream:

I was in front, and there was a big crowd behind me. I told them to wait until Holy Mother comes into the room, but somebody before me went and prostrated before Holy Mother, and I thought I also will do it now. And so I prostrated before her, and said ‘Jai Ma’ and I woke up before she entered the house.

Sister Lalita’s residence, which was renamed the Vivekananda Home, is located in a residential area of the Hollywood foothills, only three blocks above the famous intersection of Hollywood Boulevard and Vine Street. It was dedicated on Sri Ramakrishna’s Birthday Anniversary in 1930, and the Vedanta Society of Southern California was formed about the same time.<sup>6</sup>

To make his presence known, Swami Prabhavananda advertised in the *Los Angeles Times* newspaper from February to December 1930, and he gave free lectures in the Ball Room of the Garden Court Apartments located at 7021 W. Hollywood Boulevard. The large hall was often crowded to capacity. The swami recalled that “rent for the hall was \$7.50 and the collection would be \$10.” His first engagement there was on February 23, 1930, at which time he began a series of Tuesday, Thursday, and Sunday free lectures on “Vedanta Philosophy and Yoga or Applied Psychology.” His guest speakers at the Garden Court included professor Takahasi, a distinguished Japanese Buddhist on May 4, 1930, and Swami Dayananda from San Francisco on July 27, 1930. The VSSC Bulletins database lists his first address at the Vivekananda Home, on May 2, 1930, “Meditation and the Study of Patanjali’s Yoga Aphorisms,” but he may have lectured there at an earlier date.

A branch center was formed in Alhambra, and the swami offered a well-attended weekday class on the *Bhagavad Gita*. The President of the Psychology Section of the Ebell Club, one of the largest women’s clubs in the country, was a devoted student of Vedanta. She invited the swami to speak before their organization, and each month he lectured at the Friday Evening Club. Prabhavananda discontinued these lectures because the audience’s interest was of a political rather than a religious nature, but since the number of people coming to the Vivekananda Home remained small, he gave lectures throughout the county. The *Los Angeles Times* also lists the following locations for his advertised public lectures: 258 E. Greeley, Tujunga (July 7-October 6, 1930); 1363 (or 1383) N. Lake Street, Pasadena (July 9-16, 1930); and at 118 W. Las Tunas, San Gabriel (December 3-17, 1930). He also spoke at the central downtown Music Center near Tenth Street.<sup>7</sup>

Swami Prabhavananda soon realized that his rented hall audiences were usually not filled with sincere spiritual seekers, so after 1930, he discontinued most public advertising. He now held most of his lectures in the living room of Sister Lalita’s Vivekananda Home in Hollywood or before small groups of Vedantists in various parts of the county.

The house was surrounded by a beautiful garden, fringed with acacia and California pepper trees. At the Vivekananda Home, there was a feeling of friendliness and intimacy and a serene spiritual atmosphere not found in a rented hall shared by other speakers. He offered Tuesday and Thursday evening classes at 8 p.m. and a Sunday morning lecture at 11 a.m. In addition, he held conferences, meditations, and discussions with his followers on an individual basis. He requested that each student confer privately with him at least once a month so that he could properly guide him or her on each one's spiritual path. In 1931, he began initiating devotees. He said, "Before Vijayananda left India, Mahapurush Maharaj [Swami Shivananda] told him what mantras to give initiates. When Vijayananda came to America, he told me what Mahapurush Maharaj had said to him and confirmed what I was giving."<sup>8</sup>

Swami Prabhavananda was one of three guest speakers on January 18, 1931 at the Ananda Ashrama celebration for the birthday of Swami Vivekananda, at which Paramananda spoke of his personal reminiscences of Vivekananda. Another guest speaker was Swami Dhirananda, a popular independent Indian religious teacher in Los Angeles from 1925 to 1932. Dhirananda later wrote the introduction to Sister Shivani's *Swami Abhedananda in America* (1947), under the name B. K. Bagchi.

On July 6, 1931 Swami Prabhavananda went to San Francisco. There is a picture of him with Swami Vividishananda (San Francisco), Dayananda (San Francisco), Akhilananda (Providence) and Ashokananda (San Francisco) taken at Golden Gate Park. He met some of his brother swamis and old friends, such as Thomas and Edith Allan, the devoted followers of Swami Vivekananda when he came to the Bay Area in 1900.



Swami Vividishananda



Swami Devatmananda

centenary

Swami Devatmananda (1899/1900-1958) arrived in Hollywood from the New York Center, where he had been since 1930, to help officiate at the January 31, 1932 Swami Vivekananda Puja.

In February 1932 Swami Prabhavananda went north to Portland to revive and reorganize his former center, from which Swami Vividishananda had been forced to withdraw in 1930 because of ill health. The first week there, Swami Prabhavananda presented three lectures and three classes. It was most gratifying to Swami Prabhavananda to see almost one hundred percent of his former students and friends return and show such enthusiasm for the center's reviving. He remained there for over three weeks, from February 4 to 27, to make sure that a suitable home was located and that everything was in working order. The new residence had a spacious auditorium, together with an office, library, and meditation room.

Following two years of training in New York under Swami Bodhananda, Swami Devatmananda was placed in charge of the Portland organization. He had received sannyas from Swami Shivananda after having been a monastic for only two years, 1922-1924. He arrived in Portland on February 11, after lecturing at the Hindu Temple in San Francisco. Devatmananda served very successfully in Portland for over twenty years, from 1932 to 1954, before he returned to India due to prolonged poor health. He lived only four more years.<sup>9</sup>

When the severe worldwide depression hit, things at the Hollywood Center moved slowly. Ella Corbin (Sister Amiya) tells us, “The growth was slow and painful. Seekers after truth were few and far between. On many occasions Swami would stand and lecture for the full hour before a mere handful of people scattered among the empty seats.” This was in contrast to San Francisco, Portland, Tacoma, and St. Louis, where Prabhavananda had been an immensely popular religious organizer.

Because of the depression, the three hundred dollars a month annuity from William Mead’s estate was reduced to one hundred fifty dollars, and by 1932 the monthly checks stopped coming. They were financially dependent on the contributions they received from devotees and from the people who attended the lectures. Swami and Sister Lalita could not afford cream for their coffee. For some time, supper consisted of popcorn and milk. During one six-month period, an African American maid named Ruby brought them food. Then she vanished, never to be seen again.<sup>10</sup>

More than once, at the last minute, someone would unexpectedly come up with the money to pay the property taxes. Swami Prabhavananda relates:

Another time we had to pay taxes on a Monday. We owed \$150.00. On Sunday, Aparna [Elizabeth Tierney]—we didn’t know her very well then—put a \$50.00 check in the collection basket. Monday morning I picked up Tantine [Josephine MacLeod] at the railway station in Glendale. The first thing she said when she came to the center was, “Give me a pen!” She wrote a check for \$100.00.

Again, in the late ‘30s, George Fitts, the future Swami Krishnananda, had an interview with Swami and placed some money in his hand. Without counting it, the swami put the currency in his pocket. After the interview, Vireshwar (B. Folling, the treasurer and Saradaprana’s father) told Prabhavananda that they did not have enough money to pay the taxes that were due. Swami took the bills out of his pocket and there was five hundred dollars, much more than needed.<sup>11</sup>

On the positive side, Pravrajika Varadaprana wrote that such a small group of devotees meant that, “the atmosphere at the center was intimate and cozy. The devotees were like an extended family who could come at any time during the day to have a chat with Swami in the living room.”

Swami Prabhavananda always maintained exceptional rapport with his fellow swamis from India. Encouragement came from his supporters, who served as guest speakers, such as Swamis Dayananda (San Francisco, July 1930), Devatmananda (New York, January 1932), Akhilananda (Providence, 1932), Gnaneswarananda (Chicago, November 1934, July 1937) and Vividishananda (Denver, July 1937). Swamis Akhilananda (Providence), Ashokananda (San Francisco), Devatmananda (Portland), Satprakashananda (Providence), and Vividishananda (Denver) addressed the dedication ceremony of the new Vedanta Temple on July 7, 1938.

Swami Prabhavananda also undertook other engagements, which were advertised in the *Los Angeles Times*, such as presenting a series of lectures in the South Hall of the Trinity Building at 519 W. Ninth Street (March 17-22, 1932); the Friday Morning Club, Studio A, 940 S. Figueroa Street (April 5, 1932); and the following year, three successive evenings October 17-19 on “The Vedic Wisdom of India” before the Woman’s Club of Hollywood at 7078 Hollywood Boulevard. For two years, he conducted bi-weekly classes before a small group of devotees in Long Beach and Glendale. He discontinued the classes when more devotees from these outlying areas became interested enough to drive to Hollywood to see him. Every other Sunday in 1933 he drove to San Diego to offer a public lecture at eight in the evening and then to hold a yoga class on Monday evening.<sup>12</sup>

By that time Swami Prabhavananda’s reputation was well established in the Ramakrishna Order. He was described in the Vedanta Society of Chicago’s publication, *Hinduism Comes to America* (1933):

Swami Prabhavananda is not only a profound scholar and spiritual leader, but he is a true friend, an uplifting companion, and an inspiring benefactor. His personality has won for him friends from all walks of life. He is an eloquent

speaker, and knows the art of making philosophy as attractive as romance. Wherever he goes he radiates a sense of joy and peace. His comparatively long experience of teaching in the United States has given him a wonderful insight into the spiritual needs of American students.<sup>13</sup>

Sister Lalita's sister Alice Mead Hansbrough (Shanti, 1864-1955), and her daughter Dorothy (b. 1895/96) lived in the house next door to the Vivekananda Home in 1932 and 1933 at 6310 W. Franklin Circle (later named Vedanta Terrace).<sup>14</sup> Many years before, Swami Vivekananda had lived for weeks with Alice Hansbrough, her daughter, and others in South Pasadena. She was with Swamiji in Northern California, where in 1900 she served as his personal attendant, secretary, and housekeeper. Alice Hansbrough also worked closely with Swamis Turiyananda, Trigunatita, and Abhedananda when they lectured in the Southland, and with Swami Sachchidananda II at the Vedanta Home in Los Angeles between 1905 and 1910. Years later, she provided an invaluable service by informing us about Swamiji's stay in California. Marie Louise Burke cited Alice Hansbrough's "Reminiscences" nearly fifty times in writing the California chapters of *Swami Vivekananda in the West*. Dorothy Hansbrough, her daughter, sat on Swamiji's lap and received a blessing from him when she was only four years old. Interestingly, Carrie Mead Wyckoff [Sister Lalita] and her son and Alice Hansbrough and her daughter lived in either the Green House building, which now serves as a bookshop or in the White House, where the puja kitchen is now located. They all lived at 309 Monterey Road, South Pasadena when Swamiji resided there, and they all associated intimately with him.

Ella Corbin, Amiya (b. 1901 or 1902), an Englishwoman, learned of Vedanta when she met Swami Ashokananda in 1932 at the San Francisco Center. She moved to Los Angeles to live with her sister Joy and attended meetings at the Vivekananda Home. When the depression came, her sister could not afford to keep her at home. She was desperate for a place to live. After Dorothy Hansbrough, Alice Hansbrough's daughter, married Paul Cohn and left home, Ella Corbin planned to move in with Dorothy's mother at 6310 Franklin Circle (Vedanta Terrace). Shanti (Alice Hansbrough) asked Swami Prabhavananda if Ella Corbin could stay with him for a month at the Vivekananda Home while she attended her daughter's wedding, but in one month's time, Paul Cohn agreed to take Mother Shanti in permanently when they moved to San Francisco. Consequently, in 1933 Ella Corbin remained with Swami and Sister Lalita.

Ella made her living as a seamstress, and at Lalita's house, she efficiently took care of housekeeping chores. She was also a marvelous cook. In time, she received the Sanskrit name Amiya. She became a valuable asset when she started earning good money teaching English pronunciation and grammar to European stage actresses. During the depression years she helped support the household and that is one reason Swami had "been always grateful to Amiya."<sup>15</sup>

On one occasion Sister Amiya remarked, "Swami, I don't think Sister [Lalita] is very spiritual, do you?" Irritated, Swami told her to always walk in back of Sister Lalita, never in front of her. She admitted, "For days I shuddered under the shock of the blow I got in return!" Though it proved to be hardship for the fast-moving Amiya to walk behind Sister, she implicitly followed her guru's instructions, since she adored Swami. Eventually, Swami told her he had forgotten all about it, and she returned to her more relaxed way of living.<sup>16</sup>

According to Amiya, one day Swami was driving their automobile at maximum speed:

A sudden emergency arose, the brakes were slammed on, the car skidded on the soft gravel shoulder, and then careened crazily across the road, rocking on two wheels, until it came to the most amazing halt on the other side, facing the way we had come.... while the swami, from the moment of skidding, had taken his hands off the wheel, tucked his feet up on the seat, and silently repeated the name of the Lord. And I have absolutely no doubt that it was this very act of handing over the controls that saved us.... He lived and moved and had his being in God. His trust was complete.<sup>17</sup>

She continues:

In 1933, out of various offerings, and by dint of the most stringent economy, the front part of the [Vivekananda] Home was extended by the addition of two rooms, the smaller of which was dedicated as a shrine room to house the sacred relics recently received from India.... From that time onward the daily worship was performed. The form used at first was an abridgement of the complete ritual which is now in practice.

The new shrine room was designed in December 1933 by a devotee who was an architect. Regular worship was performed before the lovely shrine, creating a sublime atmosphere. Initiated disciples kept vigil constantly for two days and nights when the shrine room was inaugurated.<sup>18</sup>

Some time between 1930 and 1934, the Society grew to nineteen members. Its Articles of Incorporation were signed on April 18, 1934. At that time the Vedanta Society of Southern California (hereafter referred to as VSSC), was officially established under the laws of the State of California as a nonprofit religious corporation “to promote the study of the philosophy and religion of Vedanta” and “to promote harmony between Eastern and Western thought, and recognition of the truth in all the great religions of the world.” A Board of Trustees composed of both monastics and laity was created to guide the financial aspects of the Society. They met monthly to act on business and policy matters. Once a year its members elected the officers of the board. The authority and method of management were clearly stated in the articles and by-laws. Soon after, on May 11, 1934, Sister Lalita deeded her house and lots to the VSSC. At the time, expenditures were approximately \$2,400 a year.<sup>19</sup>

Describing the living room where Swami Prabhavananda conducted his classes, a devotee named Aparna (Elizabeth Tierney) wrote in December of 1934:

Here is that feeling of friendliness and intimacy, that nearness of student to teacher, that freedom, love and informality, which gives to the student a feeling of unity to the teaching itself. Here we feel that Great Truth which is so simply but forcefully taught. The inspiration of spiritual grace is transmitted to all true devotees.... For the swami reaches all. His philosophical and intellectual knowledge challenge the most profound, his simplicity and humility win the hearts of all, while his love, unselfishness, and sympathy transmit the knowledge that he is indeed a true friend.<sup>20</sup>

A luncheon engagement in March of 1935 held at Lucca’s Restaurant was arranged for Swami Prabhavananda, Josephine MacLeod (Tantine), Ida Ansell (Ujjvala), Sister Lalita and Sister Amiya. Tantine, with her delightful personality, entertained everyone with stories about Swamiji and her own personal experiences. After the luncheon, Ujjvala and Tantine drove out to Rancho Los Amigos near Los Angeles to visit Lydia Bell who lived there. She was delighted to see them and they had a nice talk. “Tantine said she would go miles to see anyone who had known Swamiji.” Lydia Bell had given lectures at the Home of Truth in San Francisco, and Ujjvala was one of her devoted students. She had lunched with Swami Vivekananda in April 1900 and then been Swamiji’s hostess at Camp Taylor for two weeks, May 2-15, 1900. She had attended the Shanti Ashrama with Swami Turiyananda August 3-18, 1900, and had been given the Sanskrit name Chetana. She had then moved to Pawnee, Nebraska.<sup>21</sup>

In contrast to the early years in Hollywood, by 1935 Swami’s Sunday Services were given before larger audiences, and he initiated a new line of work that was keenly appreciated by the parents of the center. He held classes every other Sunday for children, teaching the principles of practical living through simple stories and inspiring biographies.

### Swami Prabhavananda’s Visit to India

After an absence of twelve years, Prabhavananda sailed for India for nine months, accompanied by Sister Lalita.<sup>22</sup> Before their departure, on August 13, 1935, Percy Houston the Vice-President of the Society read the following address on behalf of the members of the Society:

Concerning Swami Prabhavananda, likewise, we must unburden our hearts. He has been these many years our constant inspiration. From the depths of the brooding East, mother of religions, he has brought us words of highest truth. From his lips we have understood as we could never have understood from the pages of books alone. In him we recognize the guru of immemorial tradition, the teacher, the master, the indispensable medium through which the hard-won secrets of divine wisdom are transmitted from generation to generation. From his lips we hear the precept; in his pure life we see the precept embodied. Words and works in him are one. The man as he lives among us is therefore proof and illustration of the doctrine he inculcates. Our debt to him is great—greater than we can ever repay; and because of him our debt to India is likewise great, in that she has sent him to us, one of her noblest sons. Because of him we understand India better, love her more deeply.<sup>23</sup>

Swami Prabhavananda's reply was:

Words seem inadequate to express the gratitude and thankfulness for all the love and kindness I have received at your hands. I came to America a stranger in a strange land; but never for a moment did you and your people make me feel that I was a stranger. You accepted me as a brother of your own. I have also adopted your country as my mother country, and I have learnt to love my adopted mother as much as I love my own Mother India.... I am glad I am going to India, but I will be glad again to be back, for you have become very dear to my heart.<sup>24</sup>

Swami and Sister Lalita left Los Angeles on August 26, 1935. They went to Vishnupur, Swami's hometown, where Sister Lalita made friends with the local people. She received a written message, "A Tribute of Love" from the young men of Bankura and friends in Vishnupur dated November 17, 1935.

A Sri Ramakrishna Centenary Meeting was held in Calcutta on December 7, 1935 at Albert Hall under the presidentship of Sarat Chandra Bose (1889-1950, brother of the renowned Subhas Chandra Bose). The *Prabuddha Bharata* tells us, "There was a big gathering at Albert Hall on Monday the 16th December at 6 p.m. when a public reception was accorded to Srimath Swami Prabhavananda of the Ramakrishna Mission in America by the citizens of Calcutta." Prabhavananda thanked the audience for the great appreciation which they showed to him for the attempts which he had made in the West in preaching the divine message of God there, and then he followed with a speech. The "Citizens of Calcutta" presented Swami with a written "Address of Welcome." Among other things the "Address" mentions that Swami Prabhavananda's "purity of life and strength of character, as well as your spirit of service and capacity for work, had already marked you years ago for success in wider fields.... Your unflagging zeal and untiring energy in ministering to the spiritual needs of the children of the Lord in a far-off land."

Back in the United States in 1936, Miss Margaret Wilson, the eldest daughter of former President of the United States Woodrow Wilson and a student of Swami Nikhilananda, wrote a letter to President Franklin D. Roosevelt. She suggested that on the Centenary of the Indian saint Ramakrishna Paramahansa's birthday, he address a message to India. Roosevelt liked the idea and wrote to his press secretary, Stephen Early, "Take this up with the State Department. Because he was a very great saint, this would have a very great effect all through the East." Unfortunately, the State Department rejected the idea because it might lead to problems with the British, and some Americans would not want an American President celebrating the birthday of a Hindu saint.<sup>25</sup>

While in India and Ceylon (Sri Lanka), Swami Prabhavananda gave many lectures in Bengali as well as in English. Indian newspaper accounts write of his public addresses before large and appreciative gatherings at the Ramakrishna Ashram in Mylapore (March 16) and Mysore (March 23), Bangalore National High School (March 19), Pudukottah Town Hall (March 28), and at the Ramakrishna Mission headquarters in Wellawatte, Ceylon (April 4). Carrie Wyckoff [Sister Lalita] also spoke briefly at these meetings. They left for the U. S. on April 8, 1936. According to a March 16, 1936 newspaper report of a speech Swami delivered in Madras, "For the women of America he had nothing but praise. They were noble and gentle and had a cultural background....they rendered service to others with keen interest. The spirit of democracy has been well-developed among them."<sup>26</sup> The *Prabuddha Bharata* featured photographs of Swami Prabhavananda and fourteen other swamis in America.



Sister Lalita and Swami Prabhavananda in 1937

The Centenary celebrations commenced with the birthday of Sri Ramakrishna on February 24, 1936 and continued for over a year, until a week after Ramakrishna's next birthday on March 21, 1937. The inaugural function was attended by close to two hundred thousand people. Prabhavananda "gave a broadcast talk on the worldwide Sri Ramakrishna Centenary Movement." Attendees included Swamis Abhedananda, Akhandananda, Vijnanananda, Shuddhananda, Virajananda, Dayananda, Madhavananda, Paramananda, and Pavitrananda, and dignitaries such as Rabindranath Tagore, J. C. Bose, S. Radhakrishnan, Sarojini Naidu, Benoy Sarkar, Brajendranath Seal, Romain Rolland, Jean Herbert, Josephine MacLeod, flying



ace Colonel Charles Lindbergh (a guest of Lt. Colonel Francis Younghusband), Miss Ina May Riebe from Los Angeles, and Sister Amala from La Crescenta.<sup>27</sup>



Swami Akhandananda



Swami Vijnanananda

We are indebted to Pravrajika Anandaprana for relating what Swami Prabhavananda told her about his meeting with two of Sri Ramakrishna's monastic disciples on this trip, Swamis Akhandananda, President of the Ramakrishna Order (1934-1937) and Vijnanananda. Swami went to visit Swami Akhandananda (1866-1937) in his ashrama at Sargachi:

After I entered the gate, I passed through a long road to meet him in the house when suddenly firecrackers went off on both sides of the road.... I prostrated before him and asked, "Maharaj, what is all this business of firecrackers?" He answered, "Why, my nephew comes after so many years to visit me from such a long distance as America! Should I not welcome him?" Then he held my hand and wanted me to sit on the empty chair.... Then I sat down at his feet and began to massage them. Once I asked him if he would come to America. And like a little boy, he became excited and said, yes, he would come with me if I would take him.... Trustees and other swamis intervened and would not let him come.

In retrospect, Swami said, "Swami Akhandananda spoke so dramatically and fluently—charming. It was a joy to hear him talk."<sup>28</sup>

Swami prostrated before Swami Vijnanananda (1868-1938), the future President of the Ramakrishna Order (1937-1938):

As I prostrated before him, he inquired, "Who is this form of Narayana?" Though I was wearing gerrua robes, I had long hair.... I told Vijnan Maharaj that, "I hoped to see my aged mother in Vishnupur and wished to visit Jayrambati and Kamarpukur on the way." At once he said, "I have never seen those places. Will you take me with you?" I replied, "Certainly, Maharaj, it will be a great blessing for me.

When we arrived at the railway station in Vishnupur [November 1935], about three hundred schoolboys came to the station to receive us, and the girls showered flowers on us. In Vishnupur, Swami Vijnanananda initiated several devotees in the shrine room of our ancestral home.... Going to Kamarpukur and Jayrambati with a disciple of Sri Ramakrishna was a wonderful pilgrimage indeed. In both places, Swami Vijnanananda was absorbed in meditation, with eyes closed.... After we returned to Vishnupur, Swami Vijnanananda remarked, "Isn't Sister Lalita wonderful! We traveled in the same car for so many hours, and she never said a word. How quiet!"... I feel that I got this blessed opportunity to live in Swami

Vijnanananda's holy company for about two weeks as a result of the long-standing wish of Maharaj that I should be under Vijnan Maharaj's protection.<sup>29</sup>

Swami Vijnanananda gave Prabhavananda a gift of a 1935 book he had translated into English, *Srimad Valmikiya Ramayanam*. It is in the VSSC archives with the handwritten inscription, "Presented to Swami Prabhavanandaji Maharaj, Hollywood U.S.A. with my best love and good wishes, Swami Bijyanananda [Vijnanananda] - Ramakrishna Math Allahabad UP, 14 January 36."<sup>30</sup>

Between November 1935 and March 1936, Swami had many wonderful experiences during his pilgrimage to Vrindavan, Allahabad, Benares, Saranath (where the Buddha gave his first sermon), Puri, Madras, and other holy places in India. He said of Vrindavan: "The whole atmosphere is surcharged with a sweet feeling of love. It affected me for a little while like an intoxicating drink." He recalled:

As we approached the station before Vrindavan, the holy mantra seized my heart and lips, and in spite of myself I chanted it continuously for three days and three nights—all the time we were in Vrindavan. I could not sleep a wink. And I experienced a sweetness and joy in uttering the mantra as I had never experienced before. Then, on our return journey, as we reached that station where I began to chant, the holy name left me as suddenly as it had come to me.<sup>31</sup>

Swami Prabhavananda asked to have a shrine carved of wood made. When it was completed, he kept it in his room at the Belur Math.

Swami said that he thinks every day of Swamis Akhandananda and Vijnanananda touching the teakwood shrine he showed them in India before bringing it to Hollywood in 1936. He said the two direct disciples stood touching the roof of the shrine, each for an hour.... Swami Akhandananda came first, and I told him that I am going to take this shrine to Hollywood. So he kept his hand there, and stood there for an hour. I asked him to sit down, but he would not sit. I had to stand and talk to him. Then after he was gone for a little while, Swami Vijnanananda came. He also stayed for an hour with his hand on the shrine.

The shrine was so heavy that it was shipped to the U.S. by freight mail.<sup>32</sup>

In reminiscing about Swami Prabhavananda, Pravrajika Varadaprana said:

Swami Prabhavananda used to say that when he first came to teach Vedanta in this country, he felt that it was his work, and it did not grow. Later, when he sincerely felt that it was the Lord's work and Maharaj's work, it began to grow and everything opened up. He often said that "the Lord does his own work; He brings His own people and those who are instrumental in spreading the message."

He often said, "This house belongs to Maharaj [Swami Brahmananda]. Maharaj is watching over it, over all of you. I can do nothing on my own. I am only a servant." He told Swami Yogeshananda and others, "I shall try only to be the instrument or rather the witness to His work. Maharaj taught me 'The Lord does his own preaching. Be the witness.' I try to be that."<sup>33</sup>

### Swami Prabhavananda Returns to Southern California

Swami returned from India with added inspiration. He became well-known as a speaker in the area and consequently, the Green House living room could not accommodate the congregation. Pravrajika Anandaprana relates:

Shortly before the temple was built, Swami Prabhavananda had a second experience of Holy Mother. He was then staying in a room off the Green House living room, in the northwest corner of the building. Swami told us, I had a real vision of Holy Mother. I hadn't been thinking of her at all. I said to her, "Mother, it is your grace." She was in the standing posture, like in the picture on my desk [S-4]. Solid power was emanating from her. She was looking at me graciously. The emotions with this vision were indescribable—joy, bliss! When the spell broke, I found myself sitting on my bed with tears of joy streaming down my face. The strange thing was that I had no particular reverence for Holy Mother. Her grace is unconditional.<sup>34</sup>

Sister Lalita received ten thousand dollars in life insurance money after her son Ralph passed away in December of 1925. By 1938, eight thousand dollars remained from the original sum. She offered it as a means to build a Vedanta temple. In 1928 she had designated the money for a Portland Vedanta Society to purchase land near Lake Oswego, Oregon, but the deal fell through. John (Jack) Surbridge, one of Swami's devotees who worked without fee, was selected to be the contractor for the temple. Monaco was the name of the architect. Unfortunately, Surbridge was overly optimistic, thinking he could build the temple for \$8,000, but the money was used up before it was completed. Prabhavananda refused to mortgage the property.

Sudhira (Helen Hall, d. 1987) lived at the Vedanta Society at the time, and worked as a nurse for the Viennese physician J. M. Kolisch (Shivaram). She told Dr. Kolisch, who had only been coming to the center for about a month, about the predicament with the temple project. The very day that Swami thought of having the unfinished temple boarded up until more funds were received, Dr. Kolisch supplied twenty-five hundred dollars to finish it. Kolisch engaged a competent landscaper for the garden, and he bought the chandeliers for the temple. He also lectured in it and in the early 1940s, served as President of the Society. In the 1940s and 1950s, Dr. Kolisch treated and prescribed special diets for the monks and nuns.

In addition to Dr. Kolisch's money, a wife of a City Councilman wrote a five thousand dollar check for the temple project. When her husband found out, he phoned Swami and spoke very rudely. Swami told him, "I'll give you back the check, but don't be abusive in your language to me. And then he calmed down, and he came the next morning and I gave him back the check. Then he said, 'Now let me know what you need.'"

The City Councilman ended up writing a twenty-five hundred dollar check for the pews. Swami said, "He became my best friend. In fact, at one time he wrote that he had read about Christ, but [now] he saw a living Christ. He had such regard for me."<sup>35</sup>

Original information on the construction of the temple only states that the architect's name was Monaco. During the 1930s, the only architect with that name in Los Angeles was Armand Monaco. He was one of the assistant architects for the William Mead Homes built in Los Angeles in 1942. William Mead, then deceased, was the brother of Mrs. Carrie Mead Wyckoff [Sister Lalita]. So there is a good chance that the same Armand Monaco was the architect of the Vedanta Temple in 1938. At present there is a company named Monaco Development that develops luxury real estate and works with architects in Hollywood. Its address is 8687 Melrose Avenue, Los Angeles, California 90069.

Assuming it is the same Armand Monaco, it is interesting to note the following online information:

Armand was a young boy when his parents emigrated from Italy in 1907 along with four other siblings, settling in Chicago. After graduation from Northwestern University, he served as Principal Designer in the Chicago architectural office of Jarvis Hunt. His name first appears in Los Angeles in 1921 when he worked as a designer in the offices of Robert D. Farquhar and Myron Hunt. In the same year he formed a partnership with William Bordeaux, which lasted until 1926. Monaco & Bordeaux designed several Italianate-style residences for wealthy clients during their partnership, including a home for actress Betty Blythe in Los Feliz and the Villa Monaco in Silver Lake, both in 1921. That is where Armand lived until 1965.

After the partnership dissolved, Monaco continued to work, designing the original French Hospital in Chinatown (now the Pacific Alliance Medical Center) in 1927 and the Haggerty House in Palos Verdes Estates (now the Neighborhood Church, 415 Paseo Del Mar) in 1928. His last project was the design for St. Peters Italian Catholic Church located at 1039 N. Broadway in 1947 (the design is similar to the Haggerty House built 20 years earlier). He died in Los Angeles on August 13, 1989.<sup>36</sup>

Swami Prabhavananda realized that the temple building would be a big boon for the growth of the Society. It was constructed in Sister Lalita's garden area on the south side next to her house. It was described in the *Voice of India*:

The structure of white stucco is architecturally a pleasing adaptation of Moorish-Indian, its domes and finials causing it to stand out sharply from its residential environment as Oriental. The largest and central of its three domes is an imitation of the dome of the Hindu temple at Benares. A spacious and well-designed approach extending from the street some sixty feet to its door adds much to its attractiveness.... On its sidewalls are moderately sized pictures of Buddha, Christ, Sri Ramakrishna, Holy Mother, Swami Vivekananda, and Swami Brahmananda. These pictures, tastefully framed,

the white walls and ceiling, the leaded clear-glass windows, and three crystal chandeliers combine to give an impression at once simple and elegant. Behind the speaker's platform, in the center, is the shrine-room, within which are pictures or other representations of Buddha, Christ, Sri Ramakrishna and Holy Mother. To the left of the shrine-room, as one looks from the auditorium, is the organ and library room, to the right, a study.<sup>37</sup>

Some people think that the temple resembles a simplified miniature version of the famous Taj Mahal in India.

Originally, William Mead had zoned the empty lot for commercial purposes, thinking that Sister Lalita might want to build a bungalow to rent. Consequently, when they went to the City government office to get a permit to build, they were surprised by the lack of restrictions. It was the only section of the residential neighborhood that was zoned for a public building.<sup>38</sup>

On the auspicious occasion of the seventy-fifth anniversary of Swami Vivekananda's birth on January 22, 1938, they laid the granite cornerstone for the new temple. Swamis Prabhavananda and Paramananda performed the ceremony, which included prayers, invocations, and the chanting of Vedic hymns. They offered the sacred dust of Vrindavan, Sri Krishna's birthplace, and of Kamarpukur, the birthplace of Sri Ramakrishna, both of which Prabhavananda had brought from India. Describing the ideal for which the temple stands, Prabhavananda began by saying:

As we lay the foundation stone for the Temple to be here erected, we invoke the blessings of that Being who is One without a second, who is called by many names and worshiped in many forms. We invoke the blessings of our great master, Sri Ramakrishna. May he be always with us, and may he guide us towards our supreme goal—the attainment of illumination. May the Temple built on these grounds, together with all other temples and churches, be forever a source of inspiration to humanity, enabling them to find the purer shrine within their deepest selves. It will be the ideal of those who are associated with this Temple to find and realize God and to help others to do so. From its pulpit will be taught and preached the wisdom enshrined in the Vedas, the Upanishads, and other ancient scriptures; Buddha's gospel of peace through self-effacement; Christ's gospel of the purity and the perfection of mankind; Mahomet's gospel of self-surrender and servitude to God; Chaitanya's gospel of love and the joy of God in man; and Ramakrishna's gospel of the unity and harmony of religions. May Sri Ramakrishna help us to realize our ideal!

Dedication of the new temple occurred on the *Ratha Yatra* day of July 7, 1938, followed three days later by a public celebration, which was attended by over three hundred people. Present for the event were five brother-swamis: Akhilananda (Providence), Ashokananda (San Francisco), Devatmananda (Portland), Satprakashananda (Providence), and Vividishananda (Denver). On this occasion aratrika, the ceremony of waving the Light was performed, a hymn to Sri Ramakrishna was chanted, and the swamis, each in turn, spoke on the subject of Vedanta. A dedication ode composed by Frederick Manchester was read, and Percy Houston, Vice-President of the Society, read a brief speech.<sup>39</sup>

A number of attempts were made by the swamis to establish a Vedanta journal in the United States. The Vedanta Society of San Francisco brought out the *Pacific Vedantin* (1902); Abhedananda in New York, the *Vedanta Monthly Bulletin* (later *Vedanta Magazine*, 1905-1909); Trigunatita in San Francisco, the monthly *Voice of Freedom* (April 1909-March 1916); Paramananda in Boston, *The Message of the East* (1912-1964); and Bodhananda in New York, the *Vedanta Darpana* (1931-1933). Swami Trigunatita initiated a new magazine for the many devotees who could not attend his lectures. His goal was to harmoniously blend the thoughts of the East and the West through the magazine.<sup>40</sup> In January 1938, Swamis Prabhavananda and Ashokananda (San Francisco) initiated the jointly published magazine, *Voice of India* (later called *Vedanta and the West*). It was a joint venture for three years, but in January 1941, it was turned over solely to the Southern California Center and was re-named. It contained articles dealing with all aspects of spiritual life. Contributions were made by monastics, eminent writers, philosophers, scientists, and lay members of the Society. It produced a rich discourse of practical and theoretical Vedantic articles, which later formed the basis of seven books of anthology.

The constitution of the Vedanta Society of Los Angeles was amended at the annual March 30, 1939 meeting. Among other things, the resident swami was given the power to veto the decisions of the Board of Trustees. The veto could be overridden by a seven-eighths vote of the membership of the Society.<sup>41</sup>

About the same time, a bank President told Swami that he guaranteed him ninety thousand dollars a year if he could use his psychic powers to tell him which stocks would go up and which ones would go down. Swami informed him “You have come to the wrong man.”<sup>42</sup> Also, Swami Prabhavananda with the editorial advice of Dr. P. H. Houston, Professor of English at Occidental College, published the book *Vedic Religion and Philosophy* (1938) and he became actively involved with writers like Percy Houston, Frederick Manchester, Gerald Heard, Aldous Huxley and Christopher Isherwood. [See Chapter IV.]

## 2. Vedanta Society Activities in the 1940s

In the 1940s VSSC membership increased from about 37 in 1940 to 85 in 1945, and to 209 in 1950. Swami Prabhavananda loved the atmosphere in the Hollywood Temple shrine and said, “The Lord is very much present there.” Originally, a short form of the daily worship was performed. On January 1, 1940, the birth anniversary of Sri Sarada Devi, Prabhavananda (affectionately known as Swami P) introduced a complete ten-item worship (*daśopacarana*) and vesper service. He was the first swami in the West to do so. It is performed mid-day by a pujari [one who performs the ritualistic worship; pujari is male, pujarini, female] and takes about an hour to perform. It is thought to create an atmosphere that devotees feel when they visit the temple.<sup>43</sup>

According to Pravrajika Varadaprana, in 1939 Swami Prabhavananda, with his strong devotional nature, initiated an annual nocturnal Kali Puja. The following year Swami Nikhilananda introduced it at the New York Center. At first, Prabhavananda was not sure how Westerners would react to Indian ritual. Swamis who come to the U.S. always face the question of how to balance Western practice with traditional Indian practices in an environment that is predominantly Western. The response to the Kali Puja was positive and proved to be an important event in the history of Western Vedanta. It represented a lasting trend to incorporate some Indian forms of ritual and ceremonies into the life of some of the centers.<sup>44</sup>

Originally, a framed picture of Mother Kali at Dakshineswar was used for the puja. Swami Prabhavananda said:

Maharaj came to my room in Hollywood in a spiritual vision. He said, “Do the Kali Puja.” I answered, “But there are not many days left, and it would not be possible to get an image from Calcutta.” Then I remembered Khunki is in Santa Barbara. She can do the image. He said, “Yes,” I said. “I didn’t want the boys and the girls to be together.” But without saying anything Maharaj turned his thumbs down together, indicating to bring them together for the occasion. Then Maharaj went away. When I asked Khunki if she could do the image, she said, “Yes.”

A new policy began when the nun Khunki made a special image of the Divine Mother Kali to be worshiped during the puja on October 31, 1948. Sarada acted as the *tantradharini* (a female who assists the worshiper by reading instructions during the performance of a puja; a male is called a *tantradharak*), impressively chanting Sanskrit verses. From then on, a new image of Mother Kali has been made each year to be worshiped during the puja.<sup>45</sup>

In addition, special pujas were held for Mother Durga, Holy Mother, Swamis Vivekananda and Brahmananda, Lord Shiva, and Sri Ramakrishna. On Christmas day there is a special worship of Jesus Christ. A monthly twenty-four-hour vigil, broken down into one-hour segments, was added in Hollywood. In the inner shrine the devotees were to continuously chant “Jai Sri Ramakrishna.” Every two-weeks there was a Ram Nam, which is a group musical ceremony accompanied by drums, cymbals, and a harmonium, in which beautiful songs like, “Ramakrishna Charana Saroje” (in an Indian and English language) written by Debendranath Mazumdar a contemporary devotee of Ramakrishna, were sung.

In February of 1940 Swami Prabhavananda, Swami Vijayananda (Buenos Aires), and Percy Houston (Occidental College) were guest speakers at a Conference on World Religions in Riverside, California. It was sponsored by the Unitarian-Universalist organization. The author Gemma D’Auria (1892-1980) wrote:

When Swami Prabhavananda finished there was a moment of silence followed by a prolonged applause. There was no doubt of the surprise and appreciation of the people. Here was something real, something that was simple and true—not a mere house of cards built with many words.

On the second day of the conference, Swami spoke on “Oriental Universalism.”

As Swami Prabhavananda finished, one could easily sense that again he had made the same deep impression on the audience. In fact he was the light of the entire conference.... It was surprising, and should be the cause for much hope, that with very few exceptions all those present were so entirely in accord with the swami.

A couple of the ministers considered meditation to be a form of self-indulgent withdrawal from the work of the world. The swami asked them:

How can we be sure our work will be done wisely?... Only when we have transcended our egos and have become merely channels through which God can work will our actions cease to muddle the affairs of the world. And we can become such channels only after we have attained God through meditation.<sup>46</sup>

At the second anniversary of the dedication of the Hollywood Vedanta Temple held on July 21, 1940, Swami Prabhavananda asked his congregation the following:

Have I succeeded in awakening the desire for illumination in even a handful of you? Are even a few amongst you earnestly making the attempt? If so, then I feel that my mission is successful; for this I know, if you earnestly desire, if you devotedly struggle, success will be yours, and in your attainment lies the success of my efforts.

Mrs. Maud Piggott, who was at the gathering, added:

Here we have a swami, not only with deep sympathy and love for us all, but with a real insight into our Western approach—an insight that takes no count of creed, but just points the way to God from whatever standpoint appeals to our nature; coupled with a profound wisdom born of study and meditation. For he teaches, as did the head of his mission, Sri Ramakrishna, that all roads lead to the same Goal if followed with love of truth and complete sincerity.<sup>47</sup>

The following year, at the third anniversary of the dedication of the temple, Prabhavananda said in part:

To review the work of the past, however, is a difficult task, for the success of a spiritual mission cannot be judged by any external measure. Its success is to be known by the growth in character, and by the devotion to the Ideal its individual members have achieved. The justification for the existence of this Temple and the work here therefore lies with its members, and I shall feel that my efforts are successful only if I have been instrumental in inspiring even a few amongst you to live the life of the spirit.<sup>48</sup>

Two Memorial Services attended by Swamis Akhilananda from Providence, Nikhilananda from New York, and Yatiswarananda were performed for Swami Paramananda in Boston. His body was transported to the Ananda Ashrama in La Crescenta. Six days after he passed away, on June 27, 1940, the brothers of the ashrama carried his body with loving care to the temple. The members of the community followed with lighted incense and flowers. Swamis Prabhavananda and Ashokananda attended the Memorial Service for Paramananda at the Ananda Ashrama, and performed a simple Indian rite. This consisted of lighting a fire and laying upon it fruit and flowers symbolic of the closing of life.<sup>49</sup>

Swami Yatiswarananda (1889-1966), a disciple of Swami Brahmananda, left India in 1933 to teach in Wiesbaden, Germany, Switzerland, Paris, France, Holland, Sweden, Norway and England. He left Europe because of World War II. For a month-long period during March and April 1941, he delivered a series of ten scheduled lectures at the Hollywood Center. He returned again to give further addresses in October 1941, before moving on to found the Philadelphia Center in 1942. It continued until 1949. He contributed to *Vedanta and the West* (1938-1942), and in 1946-1947 and 1949, he returned to Hollywood. Yatiswarananda was not interested in attracting large crowds, but preferred to focus on a few sincere souls who aspired for the higher life. He gave sound practical advice, such as, "If you do not think of yourself as a man, you will not think of girls as women," and "One's mind cannot always be on the spiritual or mystical plane, so it is better that when it falls, it falls to the intellectual rather than the physical plane." Later in life he became a Vice-President of the Ramakrishna Math and Mission.<sup>50</sup>

On one occasion, a stranger turned up at the small office of the Hollywood Center and walked off with about fifty dollars' worth of religious books. Swami did not say anything. In a few days, a check for five hundred dollars showed up.

When the man returned to the Society, Sudhira (Helen Hall) thought he was crazy because he said Swami Vivekananda had sent him. He meant Swami Nikhilananda from New York. He introduced himself as Prince Andrea Boncampagni-Ludovici from Italy. Swami spoke with him and found him to be a very cultured man, and became his guest in Princeton, New Jersey at a later time.

The prince gave Swami Prabhavananda a photograph of the Jesus Shroud of Turin, one of the first twenty-five prints made of the shroud. It was framed and now hangs in the main room of the Hollywood Temple. In addition, Prince Boncampagni-Ludovici made a gift of fifteen thousand dollars, which he specified should be invested in land and not put into the stock market. Consequently, in 1941 a ten-acre orange grove was purchased near Whittier. This investment produced an income as high as eight thousand dollars a year, and for fourteen years it helped support the Vedanta Society. When it was sold, the proceeds were used to pay for a large portion of the new Santa Barbara Temple.<sup>51</sup>

In late May of 1942, Swami Prabhavananda traveled north for the dedication of the new home of the Ramakrishna Vedanta Center of Seattle, Washington at 2716 Broadway Avenue North. Also in attendance were Ashokananda (San Francisco), Swami Devatmananda (Portland), and the resident Swami Vividishananda (Seattle). Prabhavananda conducted the ritual with the assistance of Swami Devatmananda, and delivered a message.<sup>52</sup>

At one time Swami Vividishananda was discouraged by the small attendance at his lectures. "Then one day Maharaj [Swami Brahmananda] appeared, as in a dream. His body expanded to become all-pervasive." Vividishananda then realized that his work was the Lord's work, and his success or lack of it was ultimately His Will.

In the 1940s other Indian religious teachers had congregations in the Southland. Paramahansa Yogananda (1893-1952) opened a new and successful center at 4860 Sunset Boulevard in Hollywood, which was dedicated August 30, 1942. Swami Prabhavananda knew Yogananda during his college days in Calcutta. The Bengali Swami Yogananda came to the U.S. in 1920, began lecturing in Los Angeles, where he was very popular, and in January 1925 he established the Mount Washington Center. In 1927 he was officially received by the President of the United States, Calvin Coolidge, who had read a great deal about him. He became the well-known Paramahansa Yogananda, founder of the Self-Realization Fellowship, which was established in 1935. His organization and the Vedanta Society are the only two Indian religious movements of any size that have endured from the pre-World War II period.

The world-famous horticulturist and plant breeder Luther Burbank (1849-1926) met Yogananda in December of 1924 and wrote in a letter:

I have examined the Yogoda system of Swami Yogananda and in my opinion, it is ideal for training and harmonizing man's physical, mental, and spiritual natures.... I am glad to have this opportunity of heartily joining with the Swami in his appeal for international schools on the art of living, which if established will come as near to bringing the millennium as anything with which I am acquainted.<sup>53</sup>

This may be the first endorsement of yoga by a prominent Western scientist. Swami Nisreyasananda offered a mixed review of Yogananda's popular *Autobiography of a Yogi* in the *Vedanta Kesari* (1952). His *Whispers From Eternity* received a favorable report from the Prabuddha Bharata (1959).<sup>54</sup>

Early in 1943 the VSSC purchased the building to the southwest of the temple at 1942 Ivar (later Vedanta Place). Bought to accommodate monastics, it was dedicated on February 6, 1943 with a homa fire and given the name "Brahmananda Cottage." It served as living quarters for a small group of young men, including George Fitts (later Swami Krishnananda) and Christopher Isherwood. Today this building is the home of the Vedanta Press and the lending library.<sup>55</sup>

Swami Prabhavananda told an amusing story. In September 1944 during the Second World War:

Two F.B.I. men came to me and showed me their badges. I said "Gentlemen, what can I do for you?" "We want to find out if you speak against England and the British rule in India." I said, "Yes I do, I want the British to be kicked out of India." Then they laughed and said, "We kicked them out from here." Then I asked, "Why have you come here?" They asked me this question: "We wanted to find out if you get money from Germany or Japan to do this propaganda?" I replied "Well gentlemen, do you think they are fools that they would give me money for something I would do freely?"

And they were quite satisfied, and they gave me their names and phone number, that if any time I'm in trouble, to call them up.<sup>56</sup>

Before the war ended, Swami Prabhavananda gradually became better known in Western intellectual circles. He participated as a panel speaker at the November 1944 National Institute of Religious and Contemporary Civilization conference held on the UCLA campus. The event attracted noted scholars from all sections of the country. Fellow speakers included the Harvard philosopher, William Hocking (who heard Swami Vivekananda speak at the Parliament of Religions); the 1927 Nobel Prize winning physicist, Arthur Compton; Theodor Adorno, author of the celebrated book *The Authoritarian Personality*; and many other professors.<sup>57</sup> The oldest VSSC "Monthly Bulletin" lists Swami Prabhavananda's speaking on "Reincarnation and Immortality" on February 6, 1945.<sup>58</sup>

### The Postwar Period

In 1947 the Vedanta Press in Hollywood was established for the purpose of publishing modern translations and commentaries of selected Indian scriptures. Ben Tomkins, its editor, announced that their first two publications would be the *Crest Jewel of Discrimination*, translated from the original Sanskrit by Swami Prabhavananda and Christopher Isherwood, and Prabhavananda's *The Wisdom of God*, drawn from the *Bhagavatam*. Books of the Vedanta Press were distributed to the trade by Somerset Books of New York City.<sup>59</sup>

For six months, from December 1947 until May 1948, Swami Ghanananda (1898-1969), whom Prabhavananda greatly revered, conducted forty scheduled lectures and weekly classes in Hollywood. His classes focused on the *Bhagavad Gita* and on various aspects of the Vedantic philosophy, beliefs, and values. The swami went on to found the centre in London, which he directed until his passing in 1969, and where he enjoyed a great deal of success. Inspired by his association with the Southern California publication *Vedanta and the West*, in 1951 he initiated the magazine *Vedanta for East and West*. Its name has since been changed to *Vedanta*. Ghanananda worked as the editorial adviser with Geoffrey Parrinder on *Swami Vivekananda in East and West* (1968).<sup>60</sup>

In April 1948 the two-story White House located at 6310 Franklin Circle (later Vedanta Terrace), east of the Vivekananda Home, was purchased by the Society for fifteen thousand dollars. At the time, Franklin Circle extended from Franklin Avenue to Vine Street. It encompassed the present 1900 block of Ivar Avenue and Vedanta Terrace. This house offered a larger kitchen and a dining room and guest rooms. (Before its purchase, the dining room was in the Green House.) Assistant ministers lived in the two upstairs rooms of the new house, and a separate apartment on the east side was refurbished for Swami's private living quarters. Today, the White House serves as the puja kitchen, dining room, Sunday school, and male guest rooms upstairs. The acquisition of the house made it possible to convert a large portion of the Vivekananda Home from living quarters into a bookshop and office.

By 1949, the seating capacity in the temple could no longer accommodate the increasing attendance at lectures and weekly classes, so wings were added to the north and south side in March 1949.<sup>61</sup>

Later in the year, Swami paid a visit to the San Francisco Center. An old-time devotee, Edythe (Edith) Allan, relates:

We had a very lovely visit from Swami Prabhavananda on the Wednesday morning of the week he was here. He came about 11 a.m. and when he was coming up the stairs I called out "Om Namō Narayana Swami." When he got up to the top he took both of my hands and said "Narayana Narayana." Then he just hugged Tom [my husband] and Tom hugged him. We were all so happy. Swami brought so much cheer and happiness with him. It was wonderful. And we talked and talked together and Swami kept saying, "This is just like old times" and we were so happy, so free and easy. He was here almost an hour when Mrs. Falconer came for him. When he was leaving he called out up the stairs, "We shall meet again." We sincerely hope so.<sup>62</sup>

When visiting Arizona during the winter of 1949, some devotees took Swami Prabhavananda to Taliesin West in Scottsdale. There, he met Frank Lloyd Wright (1869-1959). He was considered by many to be the greatest architect the United States had ever produced, receiving awards and honors from organizations in the U.S., England, Wales, Italy, and Japan.<sup>63</sup> Christopher Isherwood describes the meeting:



Prabhavananda was greatly impressed. “Mr. Wright,” he said, “you are not an architect, you are a philosopher.” And he added that, at Taliesin, you felt yourself, “not in a house but protected by Nature.”... Needless to say, Wright was enchanted.

According to a 1947 Josephine MacLeod report, Wright’s wife was a devotee of Swami Vivekananda and will soon meet Swami Prabhavananda. Mr. Wright was very favorably impressed by Tantine whom he liked very much. He appeared in 1956 or 1957 at the Santa Barbara Temple, and commented that he thought well of the building’s interior.<sup>64</sup>

In 1949, Sister Lalita passed away. A friend of hers Sister Amiya observed that:



*Sister Lalita*

[In her eighties, gentle-voiced Carrie Wyckoff] went to the shrine room every morning and evening for meditation. Sometimes, before seating herself, she would remain prostrate before the shrine for a long time. One day Swami questioned her about this practice; her explanation was that at times she had to wait longer for the Light, which always came whenever she bowed down before the Lord. In her humility she attributed every delay to her own unworthiness.

Sister Lalita lived an active life. She was an avid gardener, loved Dhruva, her old collie, and she championed Indian independence and nationalism.

Swami Prabhavananda planned to take Sister Lalita and some monastics with him to India from October 1949 until May 1950. They bought Sister’s luggage for the trip, but she contracted pneumonia in Santa Barbara. Pravrajika Prabhaprana wrote, “We found her gentle, obedient and cooperative, and never a complaint escaped from her lips. Towards the end, we felt that she was detaching herself and withdrawing into another world.”

Another nun remarked, “You could feel, during those last days, that Swamiji was with her” and another mentioned, “Looking into her face, such a feeling of joy came over me.” A few days before she passed away, Swami Prabhavananda gave her Ganges water and she repeated after him the names of Ramakrishna, Holy Mother, Swamiji, Maharaj (Swami Brahmananda), and Turiyananda. She departed from this life in Santa Barbara, on the 23rd of July 1949 at the age of ninety.<sup>65</sup>

Many years before, in August of 1935, when Sister Lalita had gone to India with Swami, Percy Houston, read the following address on behalf of the members of the Society:

She has become for us the symbol of what Vedanta may do for Western women. Under its benign influence, her life has been a fitting ideal towards which other women may strive, and in her egolessness, her humility, her sweet simplicity, and her love, she has been a shining example for all.

Frederick Manchester composed a poem, “Sister Lalita<sup>66</sup> in honor of her.

Sister Amiya also wrote:

Sister Lalita ended the quiet work she had been called upon to do. The proof of her successful labor is evident to all, for without her selfless devotion to Swami and his work, much that he had accomplished would not have been possible. For twenty years Sister’s heart, as well as her home, stood open to all.... Now, the self-effacement and the purity of devotion and remarkable humility of this gentle, saintly lady have come to serve as an example to those who follow her.

Pravrajika Varadaprana added:

Those of us who joined the household during the 1940s were inspired by Sister Lalita’s saintly character. We found Sister to be completely self-effacing, gentle and affectionate, with radiant serenity. We remember how she would occasionally come quietly into the kitchen when we were cooking, and ask if it would be all right if she took a piece of fruit! You would never have known from her behavior that this had been her own house.

Pravrajika Anandaprana indicated:

[Sister Lalita] loved to talk about him [Swamiji] and would do so with great animation. Whenever she spoke of him, she tried to convey what a unique God-man he was. And both she and Shanti [her sister Alice Hansbrough] always gave the impression that Swamiji was a living presence to them.

Pravrajika Prabhaprana recalled:

Sister loved to reminisce about her days with Swamiji. She gave us the details of Swamiji's preferences in food. He liked our American breakfast.... Many years later, in remembrance of him, Sister would offer him this breakfast in the Hollywood shrine on his birthday. During the offering, Swamiji's favorite Upanishad, the *Katha*, was read. The ritual has become a tradition in our center.

Consequently, breakfast is served as an annual event on the morning of the Swami Vivekananda Puja.

Another devotee mentioned:

When she served the breakfast, there was a wonderful atmosphere in the shrine. One could feel the great devotion behind her actions. As far as she was concerned, Swamiji was really there. She didn't serve the breakfast as a ritual. She served Swamiji. He was there. Others felt it too.<sup>67</sup>



Josephine (Tantine) MacLeod

That same year Josephine (Tantine) MacLeod (1858-1949) who lived at the Vedanta Society in Hollywood passed away. Beginning in January of 1895, Josephine MacLeod the sister of Betty Leggett and the sister-in-law of Frank Leggett of New York and Ridgely Manor, had the rare distinction of attending Swami Vivekananda's classes in New York, Ridgely Manor (in both 1896 and 1899), Camp Percy NH, Paris (1895), London, India (1898), and California (1900). She had the good fortune to meet Holy Mother and Gopaler-Ma in India (1898). Among her many accomplishments were making financial contributions to the Belur Math during the early days, having a guest house built for Western visitors at the Belur Math, being the municipal commissioner for West Bengal and the head of the anti-malaria board involved in irrigation work in 1924, inspiring Nobel Prize winning author Romain Rolland to write biographies of Sri Ramakrishna and Swamiji in 1927-1928, motivating Jean Herbert to translate Swamiji's four yogas and *Inspired Talks* into French in 1935, greatly aiding in the formation of the Paris Vedanta Society in 1937, and encouraging Maud Stumm to write her reminiscences of Swami Vivekananda. In addition, shortly before she passed away, she told of her experiences of Swamiji, which appeared in *Reminiscences of Swami Vivekananda* (1961). Two full-length books have been written about her life adventures, one by Pravrajika Prabuddhaprana in 1990 and the other by Linda Prugh in 1999.<sup>68</sup>

Tantine visited the Vedanta Society of Hollywood in March 1935 and nearly every year after beginning in 1939. Swami Prabhavananda requested her to speak in his stead on Sunday, June 18, 1939. Her talk was on "Reminiscences of Swamiji." In a March 15, 1948 letter to Alberta Sturges (1877-1951), the Countess of Sandwich,

Tantine wrote, "Dear Swami Prabhavananda—the greatest Saint I know." The following March 3, 1949 Tantine wrote, "My dearest Prabhavananda, I am very well - & have been urging you to come and see me here because I have a real affection & reverence for you & want you to help me spiritually - Affectionately Tantine."

On a trip east in the late 1940s, Prasanna the grandniece of Tantine lunched with Frances Leggett in New York and was told that they were considering putting her in a rest home, since she could no longer take care of herself. Prasanna returned to California and related this news to Prabhavananda. He responded, "We can't let that happen. She's done too much for Swamiji and India. Bring her out here."

Since Tantine had great rapport with and respect for Prabhavananda, she agreed to board the train to Los Angeles. When she arrived in May, she told the swami, "I've come home to die." She moved into the Vedanta Society with Sister Lalita, Ujjvala Ansell, and the monastics, and Prabhavananda showed her great respect. She stayed in the Green House, which is now the bookshop and office.

During her stay in Hollywood, Tantine wanted to eat lobster thermidore on a daily basis. Pamela Whitmarsh Gores, the niece of Katherine Whitmarsh (Prasanna) wrote, "At the end of her life she [Tantine] confused Swami Prabhavananda with Vivekananda. When I mentioned that they were two different people, she said, 'Not really,' and was delighted to be in the company of both."

Tantine passed away at the Vedanta Society in Hollywood in October 1949 at the age of ninety. Fifty years earlier, on October 9, 1899, she had left Swamiji at Ridgely Manor and traveled to Los Angeles to organize classes for him.<sup>69</sup>

After she breathed her last, the *Vedanta Kesari* wrote:

Her great love for Swamiji cannot be described in words. She lived, moved and had her being in Swamiji, as it were, always talking—and that with unabating enthusiasm—of her Master. And how much vigor and strength were in those talks! Anyone who even casually listened to her words, would catch through them a glimpse of the Fire that was Swami Vivekananda.<sup>70</sup>

In 1949, Swami Prabhavananda found it necessary to travel to India to discuss with the trustees of the Ramakrishna Order the need to establish a women's convent in India. Also, due to the expansion of the Vedanta Society to Santa Barbara in 1945 and to Trabuco in 1949, he planned to search for a swami to become his assistant. During his period of absence, Swami Aseshananda (1899-1996), who had recently become an assistant to Swami Akhilananda in Boston and Providence, was called on to take charge of the Society. Gerald Heard also gave many lectures. On October 11, 1949, Prabhavananda departed from the U.S. with four of his monastic disciples for a nine-month pilgrimage to India.

He was accompanied by three Santa Barbara nuns, Brahmacharinis Sarada (later Pravrajika Saradaprana), Varada (later Pravrajika Varadaprana), Prabha (later Pravrajika Prabhaprana), and Brahmachari Krishna (later Swami Krishnananda). The swami had first left India in 1923, and returned after a twelve-year absence. While he was gone, Swami Rudrananda from the Vedanta Society in Fiji visited the VSSC and other American Centers. After leaving Hollywood, Rudrananda wrote a letter to Aseshananda dated November 16, 1949 stating, "Glory to Swami Prabhavananda Maharaj, who has done wonderful service with his hard work and great tapasya."<sup>71</sup>

The following life-long devotees who lived in Los Angeles after 1925 had significant personal relationships with Holy Mother or a monastic disciple of Sri Ramakrishna:

With Holy Mother: Swami Aseshananda, Swami Prabhavananda, Josephine MacLeod, and Sister Devamata of the Ananda Ashrama in La Crescenta.

With Swami Vivekananda: Ida Ansell, Shanti (Alice Mead Hansbrough), Dorothy Hansbrough, Josephine MacLeod, Sister Lalita (Carrie Mead Wyckoff), and Ralph Wyckoff, all of whom lived on Franklin Circle (now Vedanta Terrace); Swami Paramananda, Sister Devamata, Thomas and Edith Allan and Cara French, who lived at the Ananda Ashrama in La Crescenta for many months; and Bernhard R. Baumgardt, Lydia Bell, Will Levington Comfort, Herschel Parker, Ralph Waldo Trine, and Mrs. Wilhelm who lived in Los Angeles.

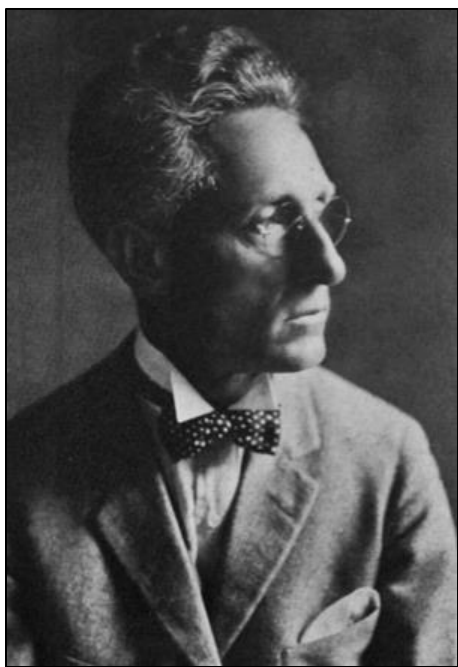
With Swami Abhedananda: Swami Prabhavananda, Sister Bhavani, Thomas and Kalidas LePage, Dorothy Mercer, Herschel Parker, Sister Shivani, Mrs. Wilhelm, and a non-member of the Vedanta Society, professor Basu Kumar Bagchi (formerly Swami Dhirananda not of our order).

With a monastic disciple of Sri Ramakrishna: Dorothy Mercer, Tony Nicholas, Gertrude Topham, and many people listed above (Swami Trigunatita). Many of these life-long devotees also knew Swami Turiyananda and/or Abhedananda. Harriet McKindley lived in San Diego and Prasanna (Katherine Whitmarsh) in Santa Barbara (Swami Vivekananda). Swamis residing at Southern California Vedanta Centers and providing multiple lectures who were initiated by Holy Mother or a monastic disciple of Sri Ramakrishna include Swami Aseshananda, Ghanananda, Prabhavananda, Ritajananda, Swahananda, and Vandanananda (Hollywood-Trabuco); and Akhilananda and Paramananda (La Crescenta).

### 3. Santa Barbara Convent

According to the VSSC publication *Vedanta in Southern California* 1960, Spencer Kellogg Jr. (1876-1944), a retired Buffalo, New York businessman:

had been actively interested in the work that Gerald Heard and his followers were doing in Trabuco Canyon and provided them with the funds for one of the original Trabuco College buildings. It was during his stay there that he conceived the idea of his retreat on Ladera Lane, the Spanish word “ladera” referring appropriately to the ladder to heaven.<sup>72</sup>



*Spencer Kellogg Jr.*

When Swami Nikhilananda, the head of the Ramakrishna-Vivekananda Center in New York, was Kellogg’s guest in Santa Barbara in 1941, he left a picture of Sri Ramakrishna that is still there today. Prabhaprana reported in her reminiscences: “The meditation building was very austere. It was his private shrine and he had it very austere. It had a beautiful wood floor and a stone pillar that looked like a lingam, with a statue of Ramakrishna (commissioned of an Italian sculptor Mr. Kellogg knew who lived in Hollywood) sitting on it. And that was it. It was lovely, and for his meditation it was just fine. But when we took it over, we had to do a little bit more because we began worship there. So we had to have an altar.... Its two brass candlesticks were taken for the temple when it was built.”<sup>73</sup>

Swami Prabhavananda first met Spencer Kellogg in 1941, when he went to the latter’s home in Montecito to pick up Nikhilananda. Subsequently, Spencer made an appointment to have an interview with Prabhavananda in Hollywood. Prabhavananda later initiated him, but only after he had received permission from Nikhilananda, who had met him first.

Some time later Spencer who had a bad heart, offered his beautiful country estate, which he named Ananda Bhavan (Sanskrit for Home of Peace) and “the Divine Mother’s place” to the Vedanta Society. Because of the potential tax burden on the Society, Prabhavananda turned down his offer.<sup>74</sup> Sister Amiya Corbin tells us:

When Mr. Kellogg offered to lend his home for the summer vacation in 1944, Swami gladly accepted. One day while taking his walk, Swami came upon Mr. Kellogg sweeping up the leaves under the eucalyptus trees around the little temple he had built on the property. As he drew near he heard Mr. Kellogg talking to himself, saying, “I must give this place to Swami. And now I will also provide an endowment which will maintain it.” Deeply touched, Swami went up to Mr. Kellogg who until then had been unaware of his presence, and taking his hand said, “All right. Mr. Kellogg. We accept your offer.” Legal plans for the transference of the property followed, so that in the spring of 1945, shortly after the unexpected sudden death of Mr. Kellogg in December of 1944, the Society came into possession of the property with its several buildings and twelve acres of land near Santa Barbara.<sup>75</sup>

According to Pravrajika Prabuddhaprana:

When the money finally came in, Swami said, “We’re rich!” He was so excited! They’d been so hard up. Things had been just nip and tuck. I remember Vireshwar (Bjorn Folling, the treasurer then, Sarada’s father) that when Mother and I gave our dues when we joined – she gave \$15 a month and I gave \$25, so that was \$40 – he said, “You don’t know how that helped us!” Who would have imagined it was that close that \$40 a month made such a difference. Vireshwar mentioned it years later, so that shows you how close to the mark they were.<sup>76</sup>

This beautiful property lies ninety miles northwest of Hollywood in Montecito, a suburb of Santa Barbara. It is within the Los Padres National Forest and combines serene beauty, a sweeping view of the Pacific Ocean to the south, and the scenic Santa Ynez mountain range behind it. The property included a two-bedroom ranch style house, two rooms attached to a garage, a small chapel in the midst of a eucalyptus grove where Spencer liked to meditate, and an art studio.<sup>77</sup>

The following year (George Fitts, to become Swami Krishnananda) donated funds to the Society that enabled them to buy the adjacent eighteen-acres of property that extended to the top of the Ladera Lane hill where it joins Bella Vista Drive to wind around the Montecito foothills and end up above the city. This purchase, which cost four hundred dollars an acre, expanded the Santa Barbara Convent property. Swami Prabhavananda said that a woman devotee whom he had named Shanta gave him the money to purchase the land that is now the temple parking lot.<sup>78</sup> Years later, in 1957 or 1958, Ruth Falconer (Hari Mati), a longtime devotee from the '40s from San Francisco, donated a twelve-acre parcel of land, which lies west of the convent grounds, at 2719 Bella Vista Drive, on which Gerda (Ambika) Zinn built her house and garden. The Santa Barbara property now totaled 42 acres.<sup>79</sup>

The garage was soon converted into two more bedrooms. A group of monks and a retired contractor went to Santa Barbara during 1946-1947 to build four bedrooms onto the existing art studio.<sup>80</sup> Three rooms were added in the 1980s.

Spencer Kellogg Jr. had been Vice-President of the Buffalo, New York based Spencer Kellogg & Sons Company until 1928. The company his father had founded became a leader in the linseed oil industry with a number of flaxseed, soybean, copra and castor bean crushing plants in the United States, the Philippine Islands, and in China. In 1961 it was listed on the stock exchange, but it was bought by Textron, Inc.

For six years Spencer served as the director of the Buffalo Fine Arts Academy and the President of the Guild of Allied Arts. His imaginative religious oil paintings were exhibited at the Santa Barbara Museum of Art, and in 1944, he published a volume of poetry.<sup>81</sup>

On October 10 of 1944, the same year Mr. Kellogg gave the property to the VSSC, Jiddu Krishnamurti (1895-1986), founder of the Krishnamurti Foundation in Ojai and England and the English bohemian poet Iris Tree (1897-1968) attended a class given by Swami Prabhavananda at Kellogg's home in Montecito (the Ananda Bhavan). The Swami had been speaking there since at least August of that year. Christopher Isherwood relates:

The meeting today was a huge success. Krishnamurti sat quietly and modestly at the back of the class. And when Swami was through, he came over and they greeted each other with the deepest respect, bowing again and again with folded palms. And then they had a long chat, becoming very gay and Indian, and laughing like schoolboys.

The Krishnamurti Foundation was formed (1929-1986) with schools in Ojai, California, Hampshire, England, and five in India. Over his lifetime Krishnamurti addressed audiences in many countries, writing over forty books. His admirers include authors like Aldous Huxley and George Bernard Shaw, actress Greta Garbo and physicist David Bohm. Krishnamurti emphasized that an inner spiritual transformation is experienced through a wordless awareness of the present moment. The goal, he proclaimed, is a radical breakthrough to deeper levels of consciousness, which obliterates the superficialities of the ego state. This leads to an integrated personality, a feeling of freedom, pure love, and selfless compassion. His teachings focus on an immediate psychological experience, and not on diverse metaphysical and cosmological theories.<sup>82</sup>

At first the convent property was used as a retreat for couples, some of them staying for months on end, and then for some months, monks and nuns rotated, each spending a month.

In 1946, the trustees of Belur Math gave Swami permission to establish a monastery and a convent, and to grant brahmacharya vows on both men and women who had lived the monastic life as probationers for a minimum of five years. The following year, 1947, the retreat officially became the Sarada Convent (in honor of the Holy Mother, Sarada Devi), and that same year, on September 22, brahmacharya was given to Amiya (Ella Corbin), Krishna (George Fitts) and Sarada in the studio, which is now the dormitory building. Swami had pressed the Ramakrishna Order to include women both in the West and in India. It was the first time that women had been given vows. Further, they were given locally, and not in India. It was also the first time a convent in any part of the world had received official sanction from the Ramakrishna Order of India. In a letter addressed to Belur Math Prabhavananda wrote:

Both these institutions will aim at God-realization through the unfoldment of the inner life, following a course of spiritual discipline, self-sacrifice, and performance of household duties on lines set forth in the rules of the Belur Math framed by Swami Vivekananda.

A month later all the women from the Hollywood Center except Amiya (a total of eight women) moved up to establish this first convent in the Ramakrishna Order: Varada (Varadaprana), Prabha (Prabhaprana), Sarada (Saradaprana), Yogini (Yogaprana), Maria DeGuarda, Jnanada, Sarala (Khunki), and Maitreyi. In 1948 two of them were needed in Hollywood to help Amiya, so Yogaprana and Satyaprana went back. Amiya married the Count of Sandwich just five years later, and by 1952, and into 1954, there were only Sarada, Varada, and Prabha in Santa Barbara remaining to do all the work – with Shuddha and others coming later.

Pravrajika Varadaprana later wrote:

One thing that the Swami used to insist upon among the nuns was modesty in dress and behavior. If one of the nuns talked or laughed too loudly, she was sure to receive a rebuke. Swami would cite the example of the Holy Mother who was the personification of modesty.<sup>83</sup>

When Varadaprana had first attended the lectures of Swami Prabhavananda, she heard him say, “God can be realized in this very life.” Before that, she had thought that only a few rare saints could experience God-realization. He also said:

We may not always be able to live up to the highest ideal, but never lower the ideal.... Spiritual life is to forget yourself and to make God the center of your heart.... It is easy to give up externals, but very difficult to overcome the sense of “I” and “mine.”... Real renunciation comes when there is an intense love for God, and everything else falls away.... The past is dead. One should never think about the pre-monastic days.<sup>84</sup>

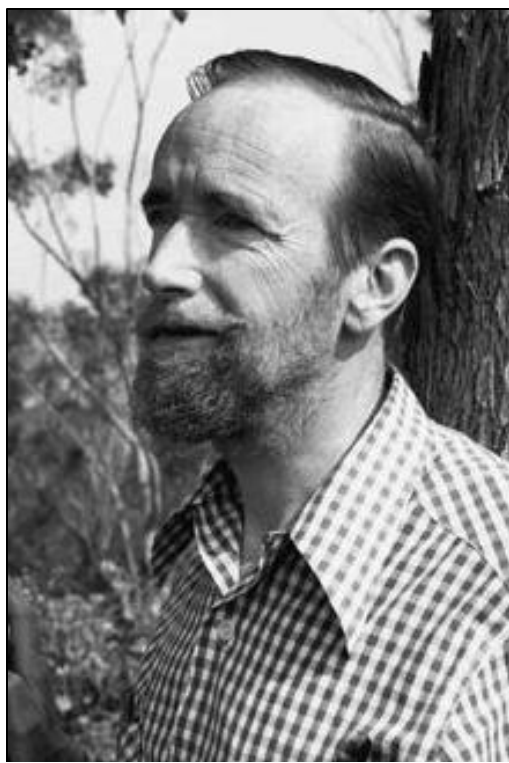
In Santa Barbara the nuns had the freedom to manage their own internal affairs, but Swami Prabhavananda visited the convent to offer guidance. Convent life included daily meditation three times a day, vesper services, scriptural study, shrine,

and household, and garden duties. A new altar was made for the shrine. The day began at 6:00 a.m. with the mangalarati ceremony of chanting and the waving of lights. At noon, an hour-long ten-item worship with the offering of food, water, incense, flowers, sandal paste and other items was performed daily by the pujarini [a female who performs the ritual worship]. In the evening, the pujarini performed an arati (vesper) service.<sup>85</sup>

Swami Yogeshananda suggests that Prabhavananda “experienced in the company of the nuns that flow of conversation, laughter and verbal play which offered the contrast he would not get in the seriousness and somnolence of the silent, spread-out [Trabuco] monastery.”

#### 4. Trabuco College and Monastery

In July, 1941 Gerald Heard co-hosted a month-long seminar at La Verne Baptist College about twenty miles east of Los Angeles. The twenty-five seminar attendees meditated three times a day in the basement of the college girls’ dormitory and twice a day met for discussion in the dormitory lounge. The group included several distinguished members of Heard’s social-intellectual inner circle, including: Eugene Exman (1900-1975), Felix Greene (1909-1985), Congregationalist Minister Allan Hunter, and Christopher Isherwood. At these meetings, and again in 1942, Heard recommended the establishment of “a center or college for those wishing to dedicate themselves to a training for the life of the spirit.” The American Friends Service Committee, a Quaker social action organization, agreed to “give [such a center] their friendly support, and



Gerald Heard

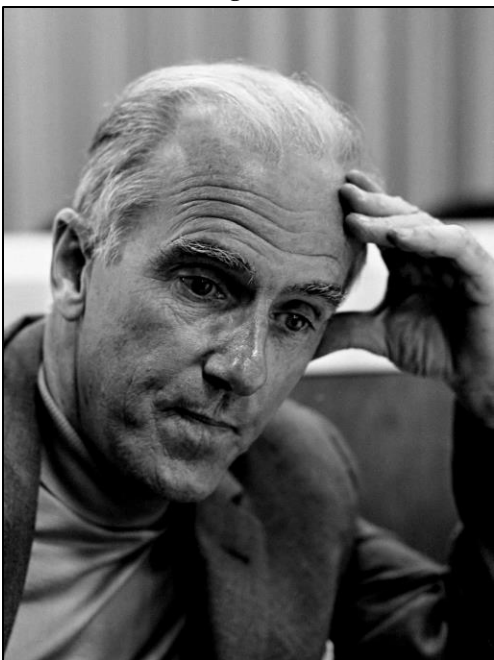
would, without exercising any controlling functions, consider it as an experiment in which they were closely interested.” This “friendly support” would include “send[ing] to the center anybody they felt required the special training that the place was designed to give.”<sup>86</sup>

As a consequence, Gerald Heard founded the 291-acre Trabuco College religious community, about sixty miles south of Los Angeles and about twenty miles inland from Laguna Beach. Rancho Trabuco, comprising 11,520 acres (equal to 6 miles by 3 miles), had originally been granted to Santiago Arguello in 1841 by the Mexican Governor Alvarado. Jay Michael Barrie had been well-acquainted with Heard since 1944 and was the literary executor of Gerald Heard’s estate, later replaced by his son John Roger Barrie. He mentions, “In 1941 Heard put the larger part of his personal financial resources from his inheritance into building and endowing Trabuco College.” In a letter to the VSSC John Roger Barrie, the founder of The Gerald Heard Official Website (<http://www.geraldheard.com>) and Explorations in Contemporary Spirituality (<http://www.johnrogerbarrie.com>), stated that, “Mr. Heard contributed \$100,000 of his own money—primarily from his inheritance from his father and from Sir Horace Plunkett—to fund Trabuco.”

According to the Trabuco Ranch Budget of Expenditures of April 11, 1942, the Trustees authorized expenditures of \$123,000, which left a cash balance of an additional \$17,000, totaling \$140,000. About \$42,000 was allocated for land purchase and \$60,000 for building construction.<sup>87</sup> Spencer Kellogg, who bequeathed the Santa Barbara property to the Vedanta Society, provided the funds for one of the Trabuco College buildings.

“A long-cherished dream of Heard’s had been to establish a place where the study of comparative religion, together with research into and practice of the techniques of meditation and prayer as taught by the major religions of the world, might be carried on.” It was to be a community of non-sectarian mystics. His study and practice of Vedanta helped supply him with a philosophical and meditative frame of reference.<sup>88</sup>

A Pasadena architect named Garrett Van Pelt was employed to aid in the project. Van Pelt (1879-1972) was the principal architect of the Pacific Asia Museum in Pasadena. Trabuco College in the Santa Ana Mountains consisted of a large Mediterranean-style building complete with large red bricks for the walls, white stucco with tile roofs, arched doorways, heavy beams and a bell tower. It included a dining hall, a large kitchen, an extensive library, and bedroom wings built around a patio. Additional buildings provided more bedrooms, garage, and workshop. The dome-shaped shrine building, situated about two hundred feet from the main building, is circular, with a recessed lower area. According to the architectural design, there were fifteen private rooms that could each accommodate two guests.<sup>89</sup>



Felix Greene

Optimistically, Heard wrote to the writer E. M. Forster (1879-1970), author of *A Passage to India* (1924), in April 1942, “I still believe a new syncretism of Vedanta, Buddhism and some elements of Christianity in Western religion will take place to recreate that sanction without which no ethics can endure in a changing world.”<sup>90</sup>

An important figure in the Trabuco College venture was the dynamic Felix Greene (1909-1985), Christopher Isherwood’s cousin on his mother’s side. After Heard purchased the Trabuco property in 1941, Felix was a key factor in its planning and construction. Isherwood tells us that Felix Greene:

was a very remarkable man, with a real genius for organization.... He didn’t merely give orders, he pitched in and fixed things himself.... Felix Greene had worked all winter, with his superhuman energy.... Trabuco was three-quarters his creation, physically.... The snug little anonymous retreat for four or five people, “Focus,” had been swallowed up by “Trabuco College,” which was capable of holding fifty.

According to Dr. William H. Forthman, an acquaintance of Gerald Heard since 1939 who after graduating from high school in 1944 went to live at Trabuco College:

Felix Greene was a charming person with great executive skills. Without his hard driving, Trabuco College could not have been built during the early war year of 1942. As it was, a number of changes were needed because of wartime shortages. It

is true that Felix successfully pushed to expand Gerald's considerably more modest plans (to Gerald's later regret), but Felix was a "key figure" only in the purchase of the land and the construction of the buildings and the expansion of the size of Trabuco, but not in an intellectual or spiritual sense.

Before coming to Trabuco, Felix Greene, who had been a senior official for the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) in London between 1932 and 1940, became head of the New York Office. He worked there with the Quaker Friends Service Committee in Philadelphia before moving on to Trabuco College, where he remained for three years, 1942-1945. Afterward, he became a freelance radio and television commentator, writer, filmmaker, and lecturer on international affairs. In March of 1953, Felix made a return visit to Trabuco. Swami Aseshananda showed him and his friends around the property. All in all, Felix was quite pleased with the general appearance of the place and the garden, much of which he had originally planted.

Greene made sixteen visits to China, for periods as long as six months. In time he established an international reputation for being the leading Western defender of Communist China. A Gallup Poll of that period indicated that the public considered China to be a far more dangerous enemy than even the Soviet Union. His publications include *Awakened China: The Country Americans Don't Know* (1961), *A Curtain of Ignorance: How the American Public Has Been Misinformed about China* (1964), *Viet Nam! Viet Nam!* (1966), and *The Enemy: Notes on Imperialism and Revolution* (1970). In 1960 he obtained a film interview with Premier Chou En-lai, the first such interview ever granted by a Chinese leader, as well as other interviews in 1963 and 1972. With his wife as the sound recorder, his full-length documentary *China!* (1963), won first prize in the Melbourne International Film Festival, and in 1968 the documentary *Inside North Vietnam* (1967) received a British Film Academy nomination.

Felix Greene's major contribution was his effort to create understanding between the people of America and the Communist Far East. He wanted to provide the West with a more realistic and positive view of modern-day China than what was being portrayed at that time. Critics asserted that while he successfully portrayed dynamic aspects of the New China unknown to Americans, his polemic writings were one-sided and lacked objectivity.<sup>91</sup>



Eugene Exman

Eugene Exman (1900-1975) attended the month-long La Verne Baptist College seminars in 1941 and 1942, and he also assisted Heard in the planning of Trabuco College. He was a Trustee of the Trabuco Ranch Trust from its beginning until 1945. Years later, on March 21, 1954, he returned to the Trabuco Monastery and signed the guest book. At that time he heard a lecture given by Swami Aseshananda, and enjoyed becoming reacquainted with what he knew of Trabuco College.<sup>92</sup> In addition, he was supposedly initiated into an Eastern religion.<sup>93</sup>

Exman was in the publishing business and was regarded as one of the foremost influences on religious book publishing in the U.S. He was connected to the publishing house of Harper & Brothers (which became Harper & Row Publishers, Inc. in 1962 and HarperCollins in 1990) in New York City as the manager of the religious book Department (1928-1965), Director (1944-1965), and Vice-President (1955-1965). It was Harper & Brothers, largely through the influence of Exman, that played a leading role in making Ramakrishna-Vedanta books known to the general public between 1946 and 1959.

The following are some of the books they published: many books of Gerald Heard (1937-1955); Aldous Huxley, *The Perennial Philosophy* (1945); Swami Akhilananda, *Hindu Psychology* (1946) and *Mental Health and Hindu Psychology* (1951); Swami Nikhilananda, *Ramakrishna Prophet of New India* abridged from the *Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna* (1948), a four volume translation

of the Upanishads (1949-1959), and *Hinduism: Its Meaning for the Liberation of the Spirit* (1958); Swami Virajananda, *Toward the Goal Supreme* (1950); Swami Prabhavananda and C. Isherwood, *The Song of God: Bhagavad Gita* (1951), and *How to Know God: the Yoga Aphorisms of Patanjali* (1953); and Christopher Isherwood, *Vedanta for Modern Man* (1951). Being published by



Harper & Brothers meant a nationwide circulation in bookshops and libraries and more prestigious book reviews. In addition, Exman co-authored nonfiction works such as *The World of Albert Schweitzer* (1955) and the *House of Harper* (1967).<sup>94</sup>

One of the reasons for Heard's optimism about Trabuco College is that it had a first-class Board of Trustees. In addition to Greene and Exman, there was Reverend Albert Edward Day (1884-1973), leader of the First Methodist Church in Pasadena 1937-1945. Known for his religious writings, in 1940 he was chosen as one of the six leading preachers in America by the Christian Century poll, and one of the ten most influential Methodists by the *Christian Advocate* poll of 1947. Another Board member was the Quaker poet Lucille M. Nixon (1908-1963), who had an elementary school named in her honor. There was, as well, Reverend Allan A. Hunter (1893-1982), a Canadian by birth, who headed the Mount Hollywood Congregational Church in Los Angeles, authored a dozen books, and published two articles in *Vedanta in the West* (1943). And there was Denver Lindley (1904-1982), who translated books by Thomas Mann, Erich Maria Remarque, and Andre Maurois, and edited writings by Nobel Prize-winning authors.<sup>95</sup>

Trabuco College was based on non-sectarian religious principles and practices spanning the period from 1942 until 1947. The spiritual community directed by Gerald Heard was composed of one to two dozen revolving resident students. They were committed to the study of comparative religion, accompanied by the practice of three daily meditations and prayer. They performed numerous maintenance chores, worked in the garden, cooked and ate vegetarian meals, studied, and attended regular lectures on religious life. Although it was coeducational, the College was modeled after the Western monasticism founded by the Italian St. Benedict (c. 480-543). At Trabuco College, Huxley delivered lectures to the resident students and worked on his upcoming book *The Perennial Philosophy* [See Chapter IV for more details]. Literary guests at the College included eminent writers like W. Y. Evans-Wentz (1878-1965), the translator and editor of *The Tibetan Book of the Dead* (1927); Huston Smith (b. 1919), the author of *The World's Religion* (1958), and the poet Ezra Pound (1885-1972).

There were other notable religious figures – the Buddhist Sister Dhammadinna, a nun from Ceylon, Jiddu Krishnamurti (1895-1986); and the award-winning poet laureate for the state of Oregon, William E. Stafford (1914-1993). Unfortunately, when the war came to a close, several unfavorable events clouded its future. Felix Greene fell in love with Elena Lindeman, who also lived at Trabuco College, and in 1945 they left and were married. In time, the well-being of the College began to wane, primarily due to a scarcity of dedicated followers. When Heard realized that things were not going as well as he originally expected, he left the noble Trabuco College experiment and, in 1947, it was finally discontinued. In the following two years, from 1947 to 1949, the facility was made available for several less important occasional projects.<sup>96</sup>

During the Trabuco College years, Heard wrote several religious books on Christian and non-Christian prayer. Most noticeable is *Training for the Life of the Spirit* (1942), which bears some similarities to the Alcoholics Anonymous' *Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions* (1953). Bill Wilson, the co-founder of Alcoholics Anonymous (AA), paid a visit to Trabuco College. Heard's biographer, Alison Falby mentions:

The AA steps which echo Heard's include turning one's will and life over to God or a "Higher Power;" finding a sponsor or spiritual adviser—in this case, one who has already reached an upper level of recovery; hav[ing] God remove ... defects of character; and practicing prayer and meditation.<sup>97</sup>

Sister Amiya of the Vedanta Society wrote:

Absorbed in his own activities, it was not until the spring of 1949 that Mr. Heard learned of Swami Prabhavananda's pressing need of a monastery, and approached him with his most generous offer of the entire establishment at Trabuco. Because of his keen interest in the Vedanta work, Mr. Heard persuaded the Trustees to make a deed of a gift of the Trabuco property to the Vedanta Society, with the understanding that it be used as a monastery.<sup>98</sup>

He now felt that the Trabuco property of land and buildings should belong to an organization that could make better use of it. Trabuco College had incurred some financial debts, which the Vedanta Society willingly assumed. Estimates of the debt and necessary repairs range from \$10-15,000. Pravrajika Saradaprana said that the nuns were offered a choice between living in Santa Barbara or Trabuco, and chose the former. Isherwood noted, "Gerald kept repeating that his personal affection for

Prabhavananda remained unchanged.” The fact that he made this generous and lasting contribution to the VSSC shows he had a wonderful and deep underlying commitment to his guru, Swami Prabhavananda.<sup>99</sup>

The dedication of the Trabuco property was held on September 7, 1949, and it became the Ramakrishna Monastery. The three key speakers for the event were Swami Prabhavananda, Gerald Heard, and Ernest C. Brown, President of the Vedanta Society of Northern California, who had known and studied under Swamis Vivekananda and Trigunatita. There was singing and chanting in the shrine room with the sisters of the Society. During the dedication ceremonies, Prabhavananda outlined its aims:

The goal is to be a man of God, whether you are a Hindu, Christian, Jew or Moslem.... My prayer is that we may hold before us the idea of true renunciation in this monastery.... The world needs enlightened men.

But acquiring the new property was a real challenge. The *Santa Ana Register* of October 1, 1950 pointed out:

They have not had an opportunity, having had the property for only two months, to develop its potentialities. Due to the shortage of water, which is seemingly universal in Orange County, the acreage surrounding the one-time college is not productive at present. The youthful group of students, however, have taken it upon themselves to prepare enough of the land that they may raise a vegetable garden during the coming year and plans are afoot to develop more of the property.

At the outset, Swami Ashokananda of the Vedanta Society in San Francisco made this insightful remark:

He has not only got a brand new monastery, it is furnished down to the last dot on the “i” and cross on the “t.” That is his karma. For the swami things just drop from the heavens, so to speak.<sup>100</sup>

As an example of the growing awareness of Vedanta in Southern California by local communities, the *Los Angeles Times* published a fifteen-inch long article on the dedication of the Ramakrishna Monastery at Trabuco. An overview of the Society was provided, together with a photo taken in the library of Swami Prabhavananda, the future Swamis Krishnananda and Anamananda (Kenneth Critchfield), and five other monastics.<sup>101</sup>

Swami Vidyatmananda relates this interesting story:

In 1949 when Gerald Heard’s Trabuco College was turned over to the Vedanta Society and became the center’s monastery, an altar was erected in the up to then bare meditation hall and daily worship instituted. Naturally special vessels for the altar, in which to serve food offerings, had to be procured—several plates and bowls and a goblet or two. Swami Prabhavananda told one of the brahmacharis to purchase what was necessary. This brahmachari went about his assignment seriously. He noticed that one of the stores in nearby Santa Ana was having a sale on tableware. He went there and purchased the necessary items at greatly reduced prices. When the brahmachari brought these purchases back to Trabuco, explaining with satisfaction, “I got the whole setup for next to nothing.” Swami Prabhavananda responded, “What do you mean, economizing on the Lord! We give him the best, the best.”<sup>102</sup>

No single monk was placed in charge of the Trabuco Monastery. The idea was for each person to work as an integrated member of a unit, with a common goal in mind. Self-assertiveness and ego were to be controlled. Expert help was to be consulted if necessary, but the ultimate objective was for the monastery to be as independent of outside assistance as possible.

In time, Swami Areshananda was stationed at Trabuco Monastery so that Swami Prabhavananda could tighten things up and create more structured rules based on the traditional monastic virtues of poverty, chastity, and obedience. Candidates for monastic vows had to be under thirty-six, high school graduates, show spiritual tendencies, and receive the approval of the presiding Swami. It was observed by Pravrajika Varadaprana:

In training the monastic community, the Swami [Prabhavananda] set the example by meditating regularly in the temple three times a day, which he expected others to follow. He inspired us with talks about spiritual ideals and his reminiscences of the Holy Mother and the direct disciples. He often said that “group living” is our greatest austerity, and

the greatest teacher as well; it rubs off the rough edges and makes us more humble. He urged us to love one another and to see the best in everyone.<sup>103</sup>

## 5. Swami Paramananda After 1930

In the 1930s, many eminent guests were attracted to the Ananda Ashrama in La Crescenta. They include the Scottish born



*Swami Paramananda*

Reverend William Norman Guthrie (1868-1944), the Episcopalian rector of St. Mark's-in-the-Bouwerie Church in New York from 1911 until 1937 who paid a visit to the centre in the autumn of 1930. Looking back some years, we find that Swami Saradananda chanted for Reverend Guthrie and his wife at the Greenacre Conference in Maine during the summer of 1896. Reverend Guthrie published a short tribute to Swamiji's friend Lewis Janes (1844-1901) a year after his passing. Swami Paramananda addressed Guthrie's Episcopal congregation in New York on more than one occasion in 1915, 1919-1920, and 1922. At one time in February 1919 at the centre, he shared the platform with the young poet Kahlil Gibran. In a January 1920 letter Dr. Guthrie revealed:

Many in the audience could not leave for half an hour or more, talking in groups and expressing their joy at the rare quality of the occasion, and hoping that at some early opportunity the thrilling experienced might be renewed. Hopes were expressed that Swami Paramananda might open up a branch work at St. Mark's.

After Paramananda's spoke at St. Mark's, Dr. Guthrie stressed, "The audience was too spellbound to applaud.... It was an afternoon that will not be forgotten by the participants; and it raises the hope that after the Swami returns from California he may be able to hold some regular weeknight meetings at Old St. Mark's, where he has already so many friends."

The Swami again addressed the congregation on February 26, 1922 at the Episcopal Church on "Sri Ramakrishna, Prophet of Universal Tolerance." Reverend Guthrie articulated that in Swami Paramananda's presentation there was, "No mystification ever. No pretense. No conscious assumption. No effort to convert, overbear, or even persuade. Merely spontaneous outpouring of poetic yearning, sympathy, joy, purely rational and aesthetic in appeal, without controversy or awareness of possible opposition." Guthrie offered a large house overlooking St. Mark's churchyard, where Paramananda could establish a Vedanta Centre in conjunction with St. Mark's. The Swami felt with this addition, his activities would be too diffused, and observed that Swami Bodhananda already had a center in New York.

James Bissett Pratt (1875-1944) a Professor of Philosophy and Comparative Religion at Williams College in Williamstown, Massachusetts 1905-1943, stayed over at the Ananda Ashrama in La Crescenta when he was en route to becoming a visiting Professor at Rabindranath Tagore's school in Santiniketan, India in 1931-1932. He was also the President of the American Theological Society in 1934. Pratt made his first trip to India in 1913-1914 and in his "Traveler's Record" titled *India and Its Faiths* 1915, he earnestly affirmed:

Ramakrishna was a man in whom the Indian type of spirituality expressed itself to an unusual degree. Brought up as a servitor in a temple of Kali, he became possessed while still a boy with extreme devotion to the Great Mother, and with a longing for perfect purity and for an immediate realization of the Divine. Early in life he turned sannyasi and for a period of years put himself through trying ordeals with the aim of overcoming every weakness of the flesh and all attachment to this world. In order to understand better the nature of the Divine—not by theological discourses, but through immediate experience—he joined in the worship of the various Hindus sects....

Ramakrishna seems to have been a man of remarkable personal magnetisms. Though with no knowledge of the English language nor of European culture, and with no wide reading in Indian literature, he made a deep impression upon the

many hundreds who came to talk with him. And he seems to have left on nearly all who knew him the conviction that here was a man who had communed face to face with God....

The culture of the soul has been, and is still, the one great ideal of India. Conquest, government, moneymaking, pleasure, the things that have occupied the chief attention in the West, have been for India of very secondary importance.

Harriet Ware (1877-1962) composed several songs using the lyrics of Edwin Markham and others. During her sojourn at the Ananda Ashrama in the winter of 1933, she was inspired to write the words and music for a new song entitled "From India." She previously composed the music for "Hindu Slumber Song" with words by Sarojini Naidu in 1909.

Ralph Waldo Trine's (1866-1958) *In Tune With the Infinite* (1897) sold over two million copies and was the first genuine New Thought bestseller. He and his wife made their way to the ashrama in the 1937-1939 period. Henry Ford (1863-1947) credited this book with some of the success he later achieved. On a couple of occasions at the ashrama, Trine spoke of some incidents relating to his acquaintanceship with Swami Vivekananda, whom he praised. Trine and his wife lived in the Hollywood Hills. Marie Louise Burke concluded that Trine wrote the following statement that appeared in the Boston Evening Transcript (July 28, 1894):

Friday an extra lecture will be given by Swami Vivekananda of India, who is spending a few weeks at Greenacre. He is deeply interested in this unitary work which has been inaugurated, and each morning may be seen, attired in his flowing red robes and yellow turban, sitting cross-legged on the ground near a wide-spreading pine, and surrounded by a group of eager listeners, men and women, to whom he pours out freely his treasures of knowledge and experience. It is a rich opportunity to us who are privileged to enjoy it, and our only regret is that so many hungry souls are missing it.

In Boston, Swami Paramananda's guests included C. F. Andrews (1871-1940), Mahatma Gandhi's main supporter in South Africa in 1929-1930; Kalidas Nag (1892-1966) a scholarly writer on Ram Mohan Roy, Rabindranath Tagore, Mahatma Gandhi and others; and in 1933 Leopold Stokowski (1882-1977) of the Philadelphia Orchestra (1933) and Edwin Markham (1852-1940) the "Dean of American Poets." Around 1939 Paramananda also initiated a new ecumenical trend, by inviting Pastors from the Episcopalian, Unitarian, Liberal Catholic, New Thought, Quaker, and other faiths to public events at his centres.

Swami Paramananda (1884-1940) passed away unexpectedly in his mid-fifties on June 21, 1940. In "Memoriam" it was appropriately stated in the *Prabuddha Bharata*:

He was the author of several books in English, both in prose and verse, which have a wide circulation especially in America. He was a pleasing personality and an impressive speaker. He traveled widely in America and Europe and had a large circle of friends and devotees. In the intervals of his long period of preaching Vedanta in the West, he paid several visits to India. He inspired many men and women with the noble ideals of renunciation and service both here and abroad, one of the tangible results of which was the establishment of the Ananda Ashrama at Dacca. His death is a great loss to the order.

The Nobel Prize winning poet and author Rabindranath Tagore "recalled the hospitality which Swami Paramananda had, on one occasion, extended to him in America, and referred to the immense popularity the swami used to enjoy there."<sup>104</sup>

The swami's good friend and admirer, Swami Nikhilananda (1895-1973) of the Ramakrishna-Vivekananda Center in the city of New York, praised him at the Memorial Service:

It is a tremendous loss not only to his numerous devotees, disciples, and friends all over the United States, but to the Vedanta movement in this country as well. It is a very great personal loss to me. Since the very foundation of my work in New York he has never failed to stand by my side and give me encouragement in an arduous task.... among the teachers of the Ramakrishna Mission who came to this country after the passing away of Swami Vivekananda, he has been the most successful in disseminating the ideals of this ancient system of Hindu philosophy.... Above all, his sweet and gentle

nature, his suave temperament, his dignified demeanor, and his unfailing courtesy have endeared him to all classes of people.... He was full of fun, merriment, and gaiety.<sup>105</sup>

William Norman Guthrie, the Episcopalian rector mentioned above, wrote in part:

How fine and pure and humble at heart, how gentle, how highbred and noble he was, you know. Never did he go back from his vision of one human religion—uttering itself diversely in different ages and races, but to the same effect; and he most winsomely communicated his conviction, his hope, his benediction to all alike with the blended wealth of inspiration and holy experience. My wife and I feel we have lost a beautiful friend.

Swamis Akhilananda and Yatiswarananda also attended the Memorial Service in Boston, and Swamis Prabhavananda and Ashokananda in La Crescenta.<sup>106</sup>

Marion Wentworth from Santa Barbara wrote an affectionate letter to their centre stating, “His work has borne good fruit.... I am grateful for all he did for me; grateful for the simplicity and wisdom of his teaching, for the privilege of having known him through the years.”<sup>107</sup>

Because of his sudden, unexpected loss of life and not being a great believer in organization, Swami Paramananda left no



*Gayatri Devi*

written instructions concerning the future leadership of his centres. Supported by most members, the well-trained Sister Daya (Georgina Jones) conducted all public services and classes at the La Crescenta Centre until her passing (September 1955) and was aided by other nuns. Sister Gayatri Devi (1906-1995) was in charge of the American Centres, and Charushila Devi of the Dacca, India Ananda Ashrama and educational institution. Their organization appealed to the Ramakrishna Math and Mission to be allowed to continue as a Sisterhood, with Sister Daya and Gayatri Devi conducting public services and lectures as they had been doing for many years. The Ramakrishna Order had no provisions to create a Sisterhood, and their women’s counterpart in India, the Sarada Math, was not founded until 1954. Swami Virajananda, President of the Ramakrishna Order 1938-1951, wrote in October 1940 that the two women should abandon their posts since Paramananda left no written instructions designating them as his successors. After much negotiation, it was decided by the Order in February 1941 that, since these centres were without the leadership of an Indian swami trained at the Belur Math, they would no longer be

recognized as part of the Ramakrishna Math and Mission. From that time, they became an independent Vedanta organization.<sup>108</sup>

Gayatri Devi admitted, “Without exaggeration I can say that this was the most difficult, challenging, and painful period of my entire life.” She quoted the following statement made by Swami Vivekananda in an 1897 letter to Shrimati Sarala Ghosal:

The only woman who went over from our country was Ramabai; her knowledge of English, Western science and art was limited; still she surprised all. If anyone like you goes, England will be stirred, what to speak of America! If an Indian woman in Indian dress preach there the religion which fell from the lips of the Rishis of India—I see a prophetic vision—there will rise a great wave which will inundate the whole Western world (CW, IV:485-86).

Gayatri Devi later said, “It was Swami Vivekananda’s dream that someday a woman from India dressed in a sari would go abroad and share the teachings of our sages. That was his dream, and it just happened that I have been that woman.”<sup>109</sup>

Some of the Boston students wanted an Indian swami to be the head of their center. At their request in 1941, Swami Akhilananda (1894-1962), a disciple of Swami Brahmananda, quickly responded by forming a new Vedanta Society in Boston to carry on the work of the Ramakrishna Order. Its present home is just across from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. Within eleven years, the Paramananda group was no longer in Boston.

Because of violent political uprisings, the Dacca Ashrama under the direction of Mother Charushila Devi in East Bengal lost all of their property. In 1950, she was forced to rebuild the Sri Ramakrishna Ananda Ashrama in Calcutta. Gayatri Devi (1906-1995) assumed leadership of both the La Crescenta and the Cohasset Centres until she left the physical body. After Sister Achala's passing in 1960, Charushila Devi wrote, "It was wonderful to know that Swamiji filled up Sister Achala's last moments with himself, charging the whole atmosphere around her. The Lord is collecting His own one by one."<sup>110</sup> In her later years Gayatri Devi empowered Los Angeles born Mother Sudha Puri (b. 1942), the present head of the organization to be her successor in spreading Sri Ramakrishna's teachings. Before joining their monastic community in 1980, Sudha Puri (Dr. Susan Schrager) had received a doctorate in educational psychology from the University of Southern California.<sup>111</sup>



Sudha Puri

Since the desire to create a Sisterhood is mentioned above, let us consider a brief history of women Vedantist monasticism in the West. Since the time of Swami Vivekananda, women devotees have been shouldering much of the work of Vedanta in America. First, Swamiji bestowed sannyas on his French disciple Swami Abhayananda in 1895, and brahmacharini vows on Sister Christine at Thousand Island Park the same year, and Yatimata (Sarah Waldo), and Sister Nivedita in 1898. In addition, Marie Louise Burke informs us that in 1899 Swamiji arranged two pieces of *gerrua*-colored cotton, "cloth as a skirt & chudder around her [Sara Bull]

waist—then he called her a sannyasini & putting one hand on her head & one on mine [Sister Nivedita]." On the auspicious evening of Easter Sunday, April 2, 1899,

Second, Swami Abhedananda initiated Gurudasa (later Swami Atulananda) and five women into Brahmacharya (Brahmcharinis) on Easter Sunday, April 2, 1899.<sup>112</sup> Sister Shivani (Mary Hebard) and Sister Bhavani (Elizabeth Mayson) along with some other women lived at Swami Abhedananda's Berkshire Retreat until 1916.

Third, Several women had wanted to form a separate community under the spiritual direction of Swami Trigunatita. They had wanted to live in a separate facility for the purpose of devoting their lives to intense spiritual practices. Consequently, on October 25, 1908, the first Vedanta community of women devotees in the United States was opened. The nuns lived "in the top flat of the building on Webster on the N.E. corner of Filbert opposite the Hindu Temple." The women performed all of their cooking and housekeeping chores in the spirit of worship and service to God. They faithfully adhered to the rules that Trigunatita laid down concerning eating, hours of rising and general spiritual conduct. Except for Mrs. Clara Pettee who had a private income, the other female renunciates held outside jobs in order to pay their expenses. In 1912, after a valiant try of a few years, the convent was disbanded.

Fourth, in 1912, beginning with Sister Devamata, Swami Paramananda formed a Sisterhood of American Women. For nearly three decades, he was assisted by sisters who embraced the monastic life. Most of the nine American sisters remained residents of the community for the rest of their lives and, consequently, felt a strong spirit of group loyalty.

Fifth, as previously described, in 1946 the trustees of Belur Math gave Swami Prabhavananda permission to establish a monastery and a convent. In 1954, a Women's Sri Sarada Math was formed in India on the eastern bank of the Ganga, a little north of the Dakshineswar Kali Temple. Originally, the Math was run by the Brahmacharinis under the guidance of the Trustees of the Belur Math, but later it was decided they should work independently.

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### III. The Swami Prabhavananda Era: The Formative Years (1930-1949)

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The word meanings for the abbreviations used in the endnotes can be found at the end of the eBook in the “[Bibliography Alphabetized by Abbreviation](#)” Section.

<sup>1</sup> *PB* (March 1928), pp. 132-33; *VK* (Feb. 1927), p. 389.

<sup>2</sup> See Appendix II-IV.

<sup>3</sup> See Appendix III.

<sup>4</sup> Jackson, p. 108; the 1926 Census Data were not used because not all of the Vedanta Centers reported their membership.

<sup>5</sup> *Times* (April 19, 21, 1929); Mukherjee (1963), pp. 162-65; *New York Times* (Nov. 30, 1930), p. 2.

<sup>6</sup> Isherwood3, II, pp. 13-16; III, p. 11; *PB* (June 1930), p. 312; Varadaprana1, p. 1; *VK* (May 1930), p. 40; “Swami Prabhavananda.” VSSC. [www.vedanta.org/vssc/prabhavananda.html](http://www.vedanta.org/vssc/prabhavananda.html); Anandaprana, pp. 89-90, *MOTE* (Oct. 1928), p. 252.

<sup>7</sup> Anandaprana, pp. 94-95; Aparna, “The History of the Vedanta

Center in Hollywood” (1934), p. 3, VSSC Archives; *PB* (June 1930), p. 312; *VK* (May 1930), p. 40; *Times* (Feb. 22, 1930), p. A9; (July 12, 1930), p. A8; (July 26, 1930), p. A9; (Oct. 4, 1930), p. A6; (Nov. 29, 1930), p. A3; (Dec. 13, 1930), p. A9; (Dec. 27, 1930), p. A9.

<sup>8</sup> Aparna (1934), pp. 2-3, VSSC Archives; Anandaprana, pp. 94-95.

<sup>9</sup> *PB* (July 1932), pp. 362-63; *VK* (July 1932), pp. 119-20; (Sept. 1958), p. 240; Gambhirananda, pp. 325-26, 431; *Times* (Jan. 30, 1932), p. 9.

<sup>10</sup> Amiya, p. 141; Anandaprana, pp. 95-96; Isherwood3, III, p. 11; IV, p. 6.

<sup>11</sup> Anandaprana, p. 96; Isherwood3, III, p. 14; IV, pp. 9-10.

<sup>12</sup> Varadaprana2, p. 40; *Times* (March 19, 1932), p. A9; (April 5, 1932), p. A6; (Oct. 14, 1933), p. A6; Aparna (1934), p. 3; *Hinduism Comes to America* (Chicago: Vedanta Society, 1933), pp. 47-48; *Directory* (1933).

<sup>13</sup> *Hinduism Comes to America*, p. 48.

<sup>14</sup> *Directory* (1932-33).

<sup>15</sup> Isherwood3, III, p. 12; IV, pp. 10-11; Isherwood2, p. 150; Prabhaprana, pp. 5-6.

<sup>16</sup> Yale, p. 132 “A Video Interview with Sister Amiya,” VSSC Archives.

<sup>17</sup> Yale, p. 130; Yogeshananda, p. 94.

<sup>18</sup> Amiya, p. 141; Aparna (1934), p. 4.

<sup>19</sup> *Vedanta*, p. 39; Varadaprana1, p. 3; Aparna (1934), p. 4.

<sup>20</sup> Aparna, “The History of the Vedanta Center in Hollywood,” p. 2, VSSC Archives.

<sup>21</sup> Atulananda, pp. 284-85, 342; Burke, V, pp. 371-72; VI, pp. 17, 139-40, 151, 154-58, 293.

<sup>22</sup> *VK* (Feb.-March 1936), p. 476; Isherwood3, IV, pp. 7, 11.

<sup>23</sup> *PB* (Nov. 1935), p. 570; *VK* (Nov. 1935), pp. 279-80.

<sup>24</sup> *PB* (Nov. 1935), p. 570; *VK* (Nov. 1935), pp. 279-80.

<sup>25</sup> M. V. Kamath, *The United States and India 1776-1976* (Washington D.C.: Embassy of India, 1976), p. 108; *WARHD*, p. 139.

<sup>26</sup> *PB* (Jan. 1936), p. 50; “Swami Prabhavananda’s Lecture,” *The Hindu* (March 16, 1936), VSSC Archives; The Citizens of Calcutta, “Address of Welcome” (Dec. 16, 1935), VSSC Archives; Anandaprana, pp. 104-08; “A Tribute of Love,” VSSC Archives; “Sister Lalita’s Visit to Vishnupur” (Nov. 17, 1935), VSSC Archives.

<sup>27</sup> *PB* (Feb. 1936), pp. 274, 276; (April 1937), pp. 253-56; Gambhirananda, pp. 341-46.

<sup>28</sup> Anandaprana, pp. 97-99.

<sup>29</sup> Anandaprana, pp. 99-102.

<sup>30</sup> *WARHD*, p. 923

<sup>31</sup> Anandaprana, pp. 106-09; Katherine Whitmarsh, “Reminiscences of Sister Lalita,” p. 2, VSSC Archives; *PB* (July 1970), pp. 295-97; (Aug. 1976), pp. 331-34; Swami Prabhavananda, *Narada’s Way of Divine Love* (Hollywood, CA: Vedanta Press, 1971), p. 153; Peter Shneidre discovered the volume by Swami Vijnanananda in a storage area in 2005.

<sup>32</sup> Anandaprana, pp. 109, 120-21; Isherwood3, IV, pp. 19-20; Varadaprana1, p. 3.

<sup>33</sup> Varadaprana2, p. 42; Anandaprana, p. 110; Isherwood4, p. 40; Varadaprana3, p. 290; Yogeshananda, pp. 93-94.

<sup>34</sup> Anandaprana, p. 111.

<sup>35</sup> Isherwood3, III, p. 13, 15; IV, pp. 5, 7-9; Anandaprana, pp. 94, 110-11, 134; Isherwood2, p. 963.

<sup>36</sup> <https://silverlakearchitecture.shutterstock.com/pictures/803>; <https://www.laconservancy.org/architects/armand-monaco>

<sup>37</sup> *Voice of India* (Sept. 1938), p. 15; *PB* (Oct. 1938), p. 519.

<sup>38</sup> Isherwood3, IV, pp. 13-14; Pravrajika Prabhaprana, “Reminiscences of Sister Lalita” (Aug. 14, 1983), pp. 7, 11, VSSC Archives.

- <sup>39</sup> *PB* (Oct. 1938), p. 519; *Voice of India* (Sept. 1938), pp. 15-16; *Amiya*, p. 142; *Times* (July 6, 1938), p. A8; (July 9, 1938), p. A2.
- <sup>40</sup> Chetanananda (1997), p. 507.
- <sup>41</sup> “Constitution of the Vedanta Society of Los Angeles” (March 1939), VSSC Archives.
- <sup>42</sup> *Isherwood3*, III, pp. 15-16.
- <sup>43</sup> *Varadapranaz*, pp. 39-40; *Vedanta* pp. 39-40; *Yogeshananda*, pp. 88-89; *Anandaprana*, p. 111; *Varadapranaz*, p. 291.
- <sup>44</sup> *Vedanta*, pp. 39-40; *Varadapranaz*, p. 40; *Prabuddhaprana* (1990), p. 280.
- <sup>45</sup> *Anandaprana*, pp. 111-12; *Vedanta*, p. 28; *Conversations*, I, p. 47; “What is Vedanta?” p. 38, VSSC Archives; *Hindustan Standard* (Oct. 3, 1948), VSSC Archives.
- <sup>46</sup> *Voice of India* (March-April 1940), pp. 28-32; *Varadapranai*, p. 5.
- <sup>47</sup> *Voice of India* (Sept-Oct. 1940), p. 30.
- <sup>48</sup> *VW* (Sept-Oct. 1941), p. 30.
- <sup>49</sup> *Devamata*, II, pp. 309-16.
- <sup>50</sup> *Yogeshananda*, pp. 8-9, 12-13; *Bulletins; PB* (1966), p. 80.
- <sup>51</sup> *Vedanta*, p. 42; *Varadapranaz*, p. 42; *Prabhaprana*, p. 13; *Varadapranai*, p. 8; *Isherwood3*, IV, pp. 15-17.
- <sup>52</sup> *VW* (July-Aug. 1942), pp. 120-28; “History of the Vedanta Society of Western Washington,” VSSC Archives; *Brahmaprana*, 1994, p. 483.
- <sup>53</sup> *WARHD*, pp. 752-53.
- <sup>54</sup> *Thomas*, pp. 145-49; *EWB* (1998), XVI, pp. 462-63; *Jackson*, pp. 131-32; *Kamath*, pp. 140-41; *Times* (Jan. 28, 1925), p. B4; (Aug. 29, 1942), p. A2; *VK* (March 1952), p. 436; *PB* (Nov. 1959), pp. 478-79.
- <sup>55</sup> *Varadapranaz*, pp. 41-42; *Varadapranai*, p. 7; *Isherwood 4*, pp. 98-103; *Amiya*, p. 143.
- <sup>56</sup> *Isherwood3*, IV, pp. 4-5; *Isherwood4*, p. 172.
- <sup>57</sup> *Times* (Nov. 12, 1944), p. 3; (Nov. 18, 1944), p. A3.
- <sup>58</sup> *Isherwood4*, pp. 50, 176-77; *Isherwood2*, p. 373.
- <sup>59</sup> *Publishers' Weekly* (Aug. 2, 1947).
- <sup>60</sup> *Yogeshananda*, pp. 107, 337-39, 343, 364-69, 372, 397; *ELC*.
- <sup>61</sup> *Varadapranaz*, pp. 43-44; *Varadapranai*, p. 10.
- <sup>62</sup> “A letter from Edythe Allan to Ida Ansell” (Oct. 26, 1948), VSSC Archives.
- <sup>63</sup> *DAB* (1980), Sup. VI, pp. 711-15; *EWB*, XVI, pp. 398-401.
- <sup>64</sup> *Isherwood4*, pp. 197-98; *Member's Letter* (April 5, 1957); *Pravrajika Prabuddhaprana*, *Tantine* (Calcutta: Sri Sarada Math, 1990), pp. 292-93; *Prugh*, p. 432.
- <sup>65</sup> *VW* (Sept-Oct. 1949), pp. 154-56, 160; *Pravrajika Prabhaprana*, “Sister Lalita,” *VK* (May 1988), pp. 179-80; *Prugh* (1985), p. 38; *Isherwood2*, pp. 149-50; *Vedanta*, pp. 46-47.
- <sup>66</sup> *PB* (Nov. 1935), p. 570; *VW* (Sept-Oct. 1949).
- <sup>67</sup> *Amiya*, pp. 145-46; *Varadapranaz*, p. 41; *Varadapranai*, p. 7; *Prabhaprana* (1988), p. 178; *Prugh* (1985), p. 23; *Isherwood4*, p. 181; *Pravrajika Anandaprana*, “Swamiji in Southern California,” *VW* (Nov-Dec. 1962), p. 60.
- <sup>68</sup> *Prugh*, pp. 111-15, 381-82, 406-08, 411-12, 438, 538-39; *Vedanta*, pp. 45-46; *WARHD*, pp. 253-54.
- <sup>69</sup> *Prugh*, pp. 431, 457-59, 475-83; *Prabuddhaprana* (1990), pp. 248-49, 293-99; *Amiya*, p. 145; “Letter from Tantine to Swami Prabhavananda” (March 3, 1949), VSSC Archives.
- <sup>70</sup> *VK* (Nov. 1949), p. 356.
- <sup>71</sup> *Varadapranai*, pp. 10-11; *Times* (Oct. 8, 1949), p. A3; *Amiya*, p. 146; *Prabhaprana*, pp. 8-9; “Letter from Swami Rudrananda to Aseshananda” (Nov. 16, 1949), VSSC Archives.
- <sup>72</sup> *Vedanta*, p. 58.
- <sup>73</sup> *Prabhaprana*.
- <sup>74</sup> *Prabhaprana*, pp. 1-2.
- <sup>75</sup> *Amiya*, pp. 147-48.
- <sup>76</sup> *Prabhaprana*, pp. 1-2.
- <sup>77</sup> *Vedanta*, pp. 41, 58-59; *Varadapranaz*, p. 43; *Prabhaprana*, pp. 1-2, 7; *Varadapranai*, pp. 8-9; “Santa Barbara Center.” [www.vedanta.org/vssc/centers/sb.html](http://www.vedanta.org/vssc/centers/sb.html).
- <sup>78</sup> *Isherwood3*, IV, pp. 18-19; *Varadapranaz*, p. 43.
- <sup>79</sup> *Prabhaprana* pp. 2-3; *Yogeshananda*, p. 81; *Member's Letter* (April 5, 1958); [www.vedanta.org/vssc/centers/sb.html](http://www.vedanta.org/vssc/centers/sb.html)



<sup>80</sup> Varadapranaz, p. 43.

<sup>81</sup> NCAB (New York: James T. White 1947), XXXIII, pp. 453-54; "Spencer Kellogg." Buffalo Architecture and History. <http://ah.bfn.org/a/linc/128/128ext/index.html>

<sup>82</sup> CA (1999), New Rev. Ser., LXIX, pp. 297-300; RLA, pp. 260-61.

<sup>83</sup> Amiya, p. 148; Varadapranai, pp. 9-10; Varadapranaz, p. 291; Vedanta, p. 41; "Santa Barbara Center." [www.vedanta.org/vssc/centers/sb.html](http://www.vedanta.org/vssc/centers/sb.html)

<sup>84</sup> Varadapranaz, pp. 288-91.

<sup>85</sup> Varadapranaz, p. 43; Amiya, pp. 148-49; "Vedanta Sisterhood Eschews Distractions," *San Diego Union* (Nov. 6, 1949), p. d-11.

<sup>86</sup> Falby, pp. 104-05; Email from Alison Falby later author of the biographical *Between the Pigeonholes; Gerald Heard, 1889-1971*.

<sup>87</sup> "Trabuco Ranch Trust Budget of Expenditure" (April 11, 1942), VSSC Archives; The new secretary and treasurer of Trabuco College after it had been acquired by the VSSC wrote a letter on August 1, 1949 to Philip Schwabacker the Vedanta Society lawyer stating, "From the papers we have received it appears that the property was purchased in the name of Felix Greene for the trust and a policy of title insurance dated December 31, 1941, in the amount of \$41,000 was issued showing title in his name." VSSC Archives. According to Dr. William H. Forthman, Felix Greene the manager of the College in practical matters bought the Trabuco property using money supplied by the Trabuco Ranch Trust.

<sup>88</sup> "Gerald Heard Website." [www.geraldheard.com/index.htm](http://www.geraldheard.com/index.htm); "Letter from John Barrie to the Vedanta Archives" (June 7, 2005), VSSC Archives; Vedanta, p. 58; *Times* (Aug. 14, 1983), p. L5; Falby, p. 183. Critical comments by John Roger Barrie, Dr. William H. Forthman and Marvin Barrett have been taken into consideration in writing up the Trabuco College section.

<sup>89</sup> Isherwood2, pp. 96, 158, 163-64, 234-35, 1001; "A Letter from John Barrie to the Vedanta Archives" (June 7, 2005), VSSC Archives.

<sup>90</sup> Falby, pp. 106, 114.

<sup>91</sup> CA (2000), New Rev. Ser., vol. 83; Diary (March 8, 1953).

<sup>92</sup> Isherwood2, pp. 162-63, 411, 940; "Trabuco Monastery Guest Book," VSSC Archives; Diary (March 21, 1954).

<sup>93</sup> Web: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pNqIsoliR\\_M](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pNqIsoliR_M)

<sup>94</sup> CA (1975), I, pp. 200-01; UCLC; WC.

<sup>95</sup> CA (2001), vol. 95 (Day); CA (1969), 1<sup>st</sup> Rev., vol. 5-8 (Nixon, Hunter); CA (1982), vol. 106 (Lindley); Falby, pp. 105, 111, 113.

<sup>96</sup> Gerald Heard Website." [www.geraldheard.com/index.htm](http://www.geraldheard.com/index.htm); Vedanta, pp. 49-50; Falby, pp. 107, 113-17.

<sup>97</sup> Falby, pp. 107-08, 117-18.

<sup>98</sup> Sister Amiya, "Ramakrishna Monastery in America," *PB* (Jan. 1952), p. 61.

<sup>99</sup> "Isherwood4, p. 75; Vedanta, pp. 49-50; Saradapranaz, p. 23.

<sup>100</sup> Yogeshananda.

<sup>101</sup> VK (Nov. 1949), pp. 356-58; *Times* (Sept. 25, 1949), p. 17; Yogeshananda, p. 68; Diary (Sept. 7, 1949).

<sup>102</sup> Vidyatmananda.

<sup>103</sup> Vedanta, p. 29; Varadapranaz, p. 42; Isherwood4, p. 187; Diary (Nov. 1, 1949).

<sup>104</sup> PB (July 1940), p. 335; (Aug. 1940), p. 382.

<sup>105</sup> WARHD, p. 745

<sup>106</sup> MOTE (July-Sept. 1940), pp. 148, 169-71; Devamata, II, pp. 309, 312-16; WARHD, p. 667.

<sup>107</sup> Devamata, I, pp. 252-53; II, p. 332; MOTE (1916), p. 264; (1917), p. 94; (1918), p. 144; (1919), p. 120; (1927), p. 254; (1928), pp. 251-52; (1931), p. 158; (1940), pp. 203-04; *Times* (Oct. 7, 1916), p. 18; *Santa Barbara Directory* (1917).

<sup>108</sup> Jackson, pp. 120-22; Levinsky, pp. 565-66; *Times* (Jun. 12, 1960), pp. GB1-2; *New York Times* (Oct. 21, 1939), p. 18.

<sup>109</sup> Jackson, p. 120; *Times* (Sept. 9, 1985), p. F1.

<sup>110</sup> MOTE (Summer 1960), pp. 126-27.

<sup>111</sup> Bhaktiprana, p. 191; MOTE (Oct-Dec. 1951), pp. 251-53; *Times* (Sept. 9, 1985), p. 3; "Spiritual Leadership." Ananda Ashrama. [www.anandaashrama.org/aboutleadership.htm](http://www.anandaashrama.org/aboutleadership.htm)

<sup>112</sup> Swami Swahananda, "Vedanta Convents in the West," VK (1990), p. 487; CWSA, X: 91-92; Burke, V, pp. 9, 141; Tathagatananda, pp. 150-51.