

Sankalpa Putri

Swami Niranjanananda Saraswati

Sankalpa Putri







Swami Satyasangananda was initiated as a Paramahansa on 1st January 2007.



Swami Niranjan,

Tell the story of Swami Satsangi in a book and call it
Sankalpa Putri.

Swami Satsangi

I received three instructions from my guru, Swami Sivananda: serve, love, give. These precepts became the sadhana to be perfected in my life, and took a definite form when I came to Rikhia. To help others grow and become better in all respects, external and internal, social and personal, is my sankalpa. The methods I adopted over the years, whether yoga or the activities in Rikhia, were only a means to fulfil this sankalpa. All of you must learn to live for others apart from making individual resolutions.

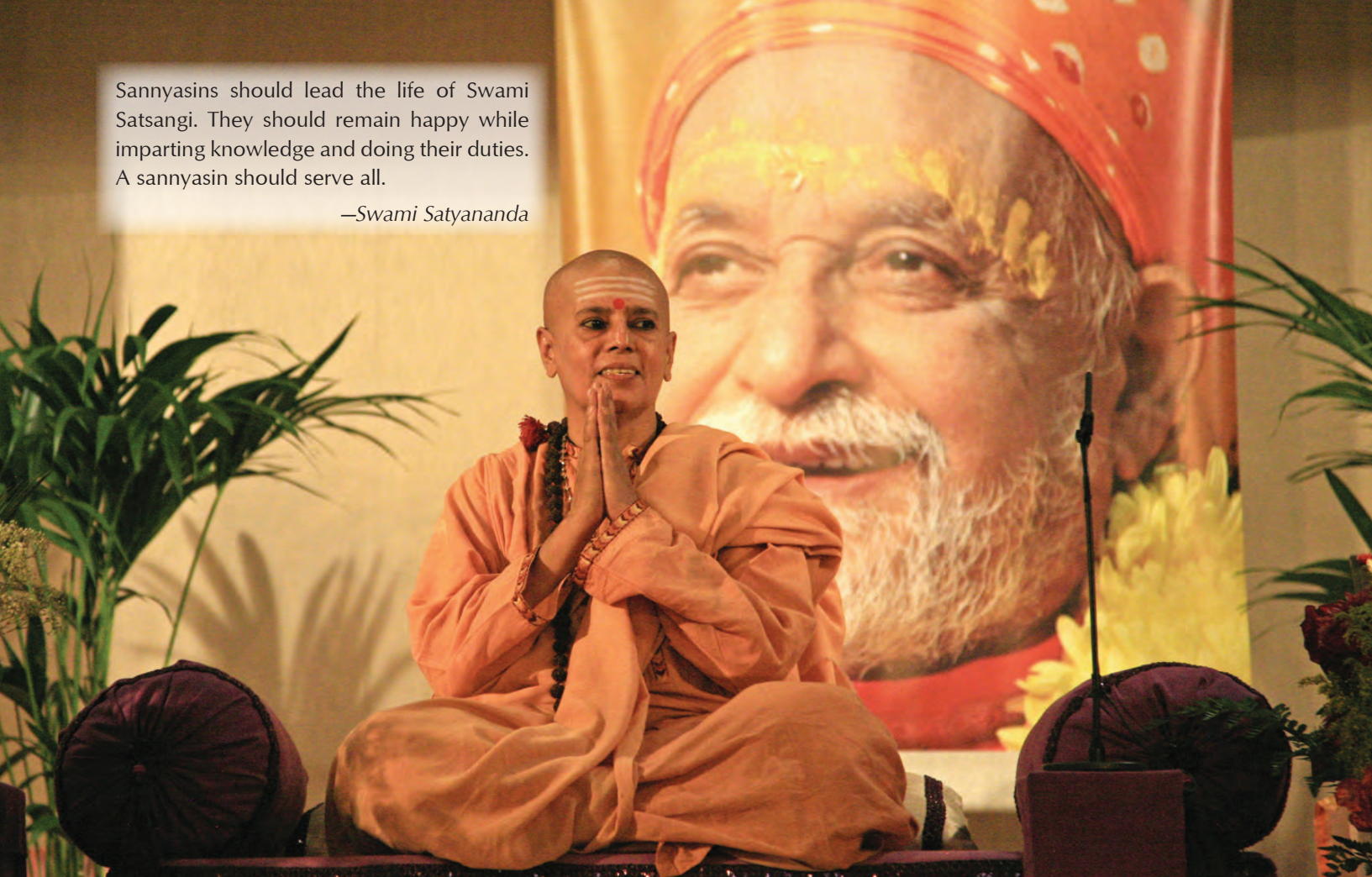
The Rikhia ashram will now be known as Rikhiapeeth. *Peeth* means ‘seat’, an apt term for Rikhia as the instructions given by Swami Sivananda have culminated and fructified here. Rikhia is an ashram in the original sense of the word, because here a lifestyle is lived. Swami Satyasangananda is the first peethadhishwari, or acharya, of Rikhiapeeth and has been given the sankalpa that the three cardinal teachings of Swami Sivananda – Serve, Love and Give – would be practised and lived here. This is the future vision for Rikhia.

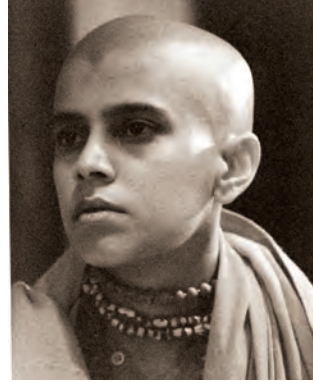
—Swami Satyananda Saraswati



Sannyasins should lead the life of Swami Satsangi. They should remain happy while imparting knowledge and doing their duties. A sannyasin should serve all.

—Swami Satyananda





The year 2013 is a year of milestones for the Satyananda family. On 24th March this year, Swami Satyasangananda Saraswati, peethadhiswari of Rikhiapeeth, completed sixty orbits around the sun.

When the great gurus descend upon earth, the shaktis that will assist them in their mission also follow. Some are like little candles, and the rare few are like the moon, effulgent in their role of reflecting the sun's rays, enabling weary travellers to find their way in the dark. Such was the part destiny designed for Swami Satsangi, and it is our joy and honour to commemorate her *shashtabdapurti*, completion of sixty years of life on earth, which is a particularly

momentous event for a sannyasin. Every sixty years, Jupiter, the ruling planet of the guru tattwa, and Saturn, the ruling planet of karma, come together in the same conjunction. This indicates that the two most important aspects of sannyasa life, connection with the guru and transcending karmas, reach a certain peak at this time. Of her sixty years upon earth, Swami Satsangi has spent over thirty-five as a disciple and sannyasin, and for every moment of those sannyasa years, she has been true to her commitment. As she comes full circle in the cosmic scheme, we celebrate her presence among us by deriving inspiration from the path she has walked.



A true disciple

Guru and disciple can relate on many levels; however, the nature of the relationship depends solely on the quality of the disciple. If the disciple is great enough – not in intelligence or talent, but in the level of trust and surrender offered – the connection with the guru is elevated to a level far beyond the physical plane. This connection is not personal, nor is it emotional. No, it serves a much greater purpose and it is transcendental in nature. In such a relationship, the disciple completely abandons the personal identity, becoming one with the guru.

The possibility of a relationship of this depth exists, but one thing must be clear: few have the capacity. If the connection with the guru isn't immediate and intense, if the desire to be with him and serve him in every possible way isn't the only thought on one's mind, if one is not willing to endure every kind of suffering and criticism in order to empty oneself completely of any negative and limiting factor in the personality, then a relationship of such refinement, subtlety and union cannot occur. Only the most faithful disciple is meant for such a role, only someone who desires to experience the highest states of consciousness can

succeed. Ultimately, it is beyond one's choice; it is one's destiny.

The guru who has such a disciple can rest assured that his mission will be carried on to future generations. Sri Swami Satyananda Saraswati had such a relationship with his guru, Sri Swami Sivananda Saraswati. This profound connection enabled him to remain in contact with Swami Sivananda after he had left the guru's ashram in Rishikesh, and even after Swami Sivananda had left his mortal body. This is the kind of connection Swami Satsangi had with her guru, Swami Satyananda.

Nobody knew Sri Swamiji better than Swami Satsangi. For over thirty years she served him, and in all that time she never left his side. In all the years with her guru, she accepted his will, and this compliance became her strength.

Swami Satsangi allowed her guru to change her. She allowed him to mould her into a form that perfectly suited his needs. Sri Swamiji once asked me, "Niranjan, who do you think is the most capable transmitter of my teachings?" I answered, "Swami Satsangi." To this day, nobody has imbibed his teachings so thoroughly, nobody has been so completely undone by him, nor has anyone



been reconstructed so beautifully. Every great accomplishment in her life is due to the learning she imbibed from her guru. She is a disciple in the truest sense of the word.







The early years

A sannyasin is twice-born, but Swami Satsangi is thrice-born. Her first birth took place in 1953 at Chandernagore, West Bengal. She was the youngest of six children, and she was blessed with a carefree childhood and loving parents who gave their children all the opportunities available to the upper classes. They attended the finest English medium schools, played clubhouse sports and participated in artistic pursuits such as drama, music and dance. At the same time, an underlying note of spirituality permeated their lives, as her parents were devout followers of the Radha Soami Satsang sect, and had in fact taken on the surname of 'Satsangi'. She was a friendly and warm child who did well in her studies, and she grew up to be an independent and free-spirited young woman.

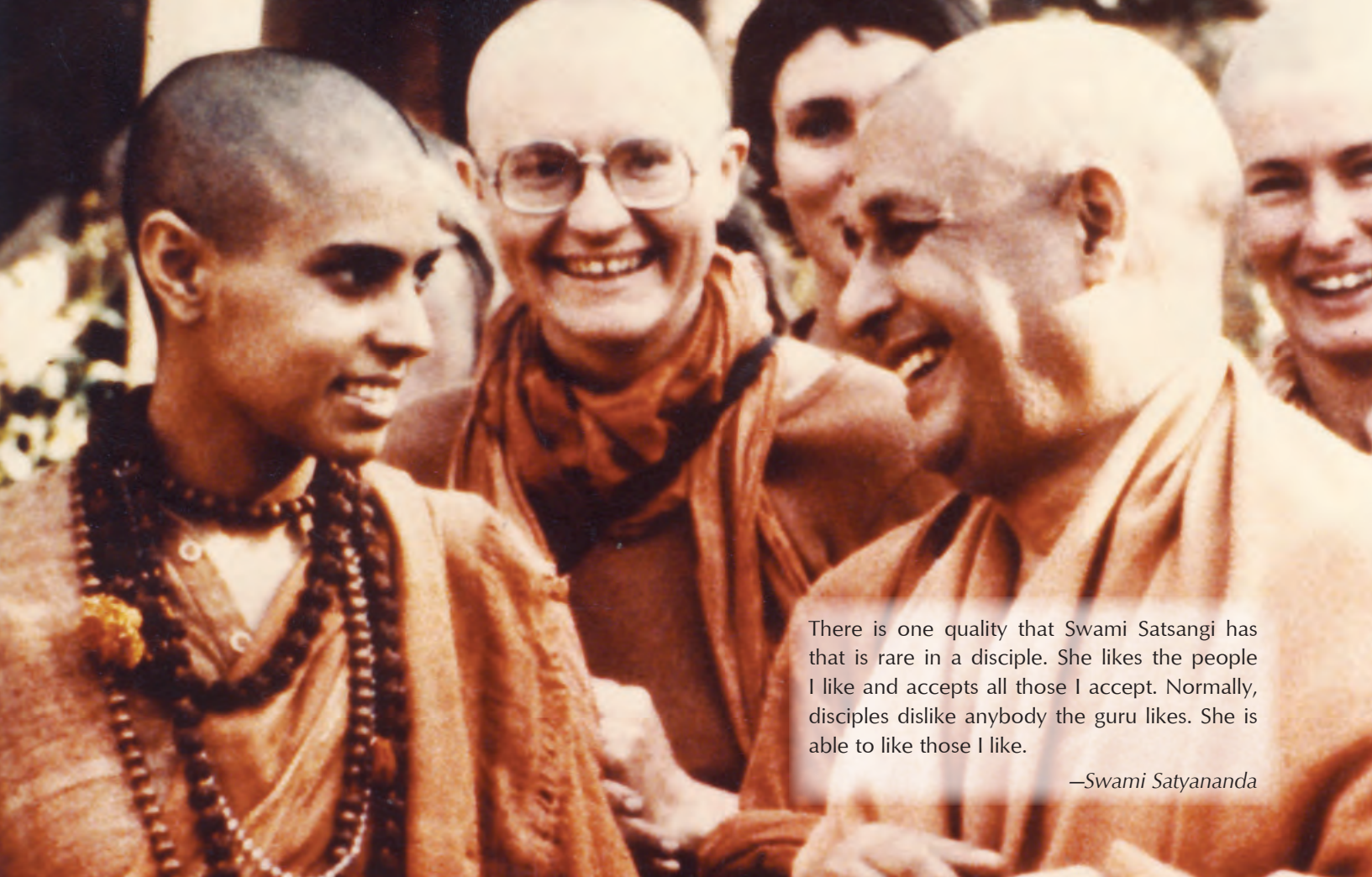
With her happy childhood behind her, she graduated from the prestigious Miranda House College in Delhi with English Honours and then sought work in the travel industry. A brief stint with the Tourist Bureau of India led her to a job as an air hostess with Air-India. She began travelling the world, meeting new and exciting people, and experiencing different world cultures. She kept her



own apartment in Mumbai, had an active social life, and even worked part-time as a fashion model and documentary filmmaker. By all accounts, her life was a thriving success at the material level, even at such a young age. Destiny, however, had other plans. Even as her external life blossomed, in her private, inner world she was beginning to get glimpses of other dimensions of her own self. At this time, when the



world around her was full of glitz and glamour, Swami Satsangi experienced several inner awakenings which caused her to begin questioning the purpose of life, leading her to her guru in the late 1970s. Her first encounter with the Bihar School of Yoga was at a yoga class organized by Mani Umrolia in Mumbai. There she saw Sri Swamiji's photograph, and within days she was in Munger to meet the person she had



There is one quality that Swami Satsangi has that is rare in a disciple. She likes the people I like and accepts all those I accept. Normally, disciples dislike anybody the guru likes. She is able to like those I like.

—Swami Satyananda

recognized as her guru. During that first meeting, Sri Swamiji said to Swami Satsangi, “You will play a part in my future mission.”

In the early days of her life with Sri Swamiji, Swami Satsangi wrote a book called *Light on the Guru and Disciple Relationship*. It contains the essence of her own life. For every spiritual aspirant, a guru is necessary, whether they are walking the path of sannyasa or living in the world. The guru will guide the seeker to greater peace, and when they are ready, he will guide them to their true nature. The *guru tattwa* is that aspect of a person which is pure, luminous and indestructible. It is their inner light, the link with the Higher Self. When an expanding awareness or a shift in consciousness is experienced, it can indicate that this element has become active. However, without the guidance of a living guru, the connection to this inner light remains out of reach. Long before she even had the



language to express what it was, Swami Satsangi experienced the stirrings of her guru tattwa. She felt the call to find a guru who would help her express it. Guru and disciple were spontaneously drawn to one another; the guru tattwa within her exploded and her destiny was sealed.



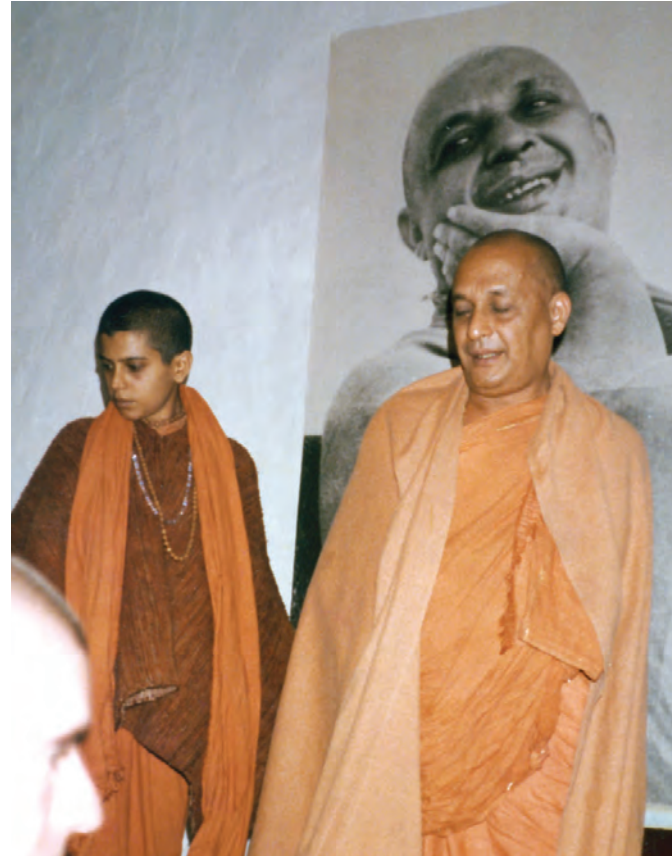
The second birth

Swami Satsangi's second birth was at Ganga Darshan. On 6th July 1982, the day of Guru Poornima, Sri Swamiji initiated her into Dashnami sannyasa, giving her the name Swami Satyasangananda Saraswati, meaning 'one who is blissful by remaining in the company of truth'. Sri Swamiji would call her Satsangi, and that is how she came to be known.

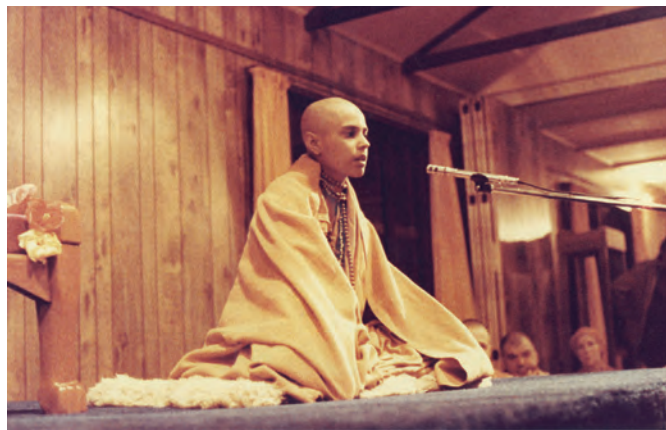
In 1982, I was stationed in the US to develop Satyananda ashrams there. It was here that I first heard of Swami Satsangi. Sri Swamiji called from Italy to say that he was arriving in the US with a new sannyasin called Swami Satsangi. They landed on the assigned date, and upon spotting them at the airport I offered my pranam to Sri Swamiji, said 'Hari Om' to the 'new swami', and then we proceeded to the car. Sri Swamiji and Swami Satsangi got in the front, and myself and Jivat (Swami Suryaprakash's father) were on the backseat. As we drove down, this shiny, freshly-shaven head was bobbing up and down just under my eyes. I tapped it. The head turned slightly. Everything was quiet in the back, so the head turned back. I tapped again. The puzzled head again turned slightly. The faces in the back revealed nothing. Another tap. With Sri Swamiji sitting there,

it wasn't possible to express a reaction. Another tap. Now she looked back squarely. I pointed at Jivat, who became all fuddled in embarrassment, and no more was said . . .

In those first few days, Swami Satsangi came across as a serious and focused girl who would occasionally break into a brilliant smile and reluctantly give in to our teasing. We were all staying with some disciples in Denver, and it so happened that their house was full of about thirty cats. Now, Swami Satsangi is just a little wary of cats, especially if there is a possibility that they will share the bed with you at night. So, while Sri Swamiji and myself slept in the guestroom, she shut herself in the bathroom and slept in the bathtub!

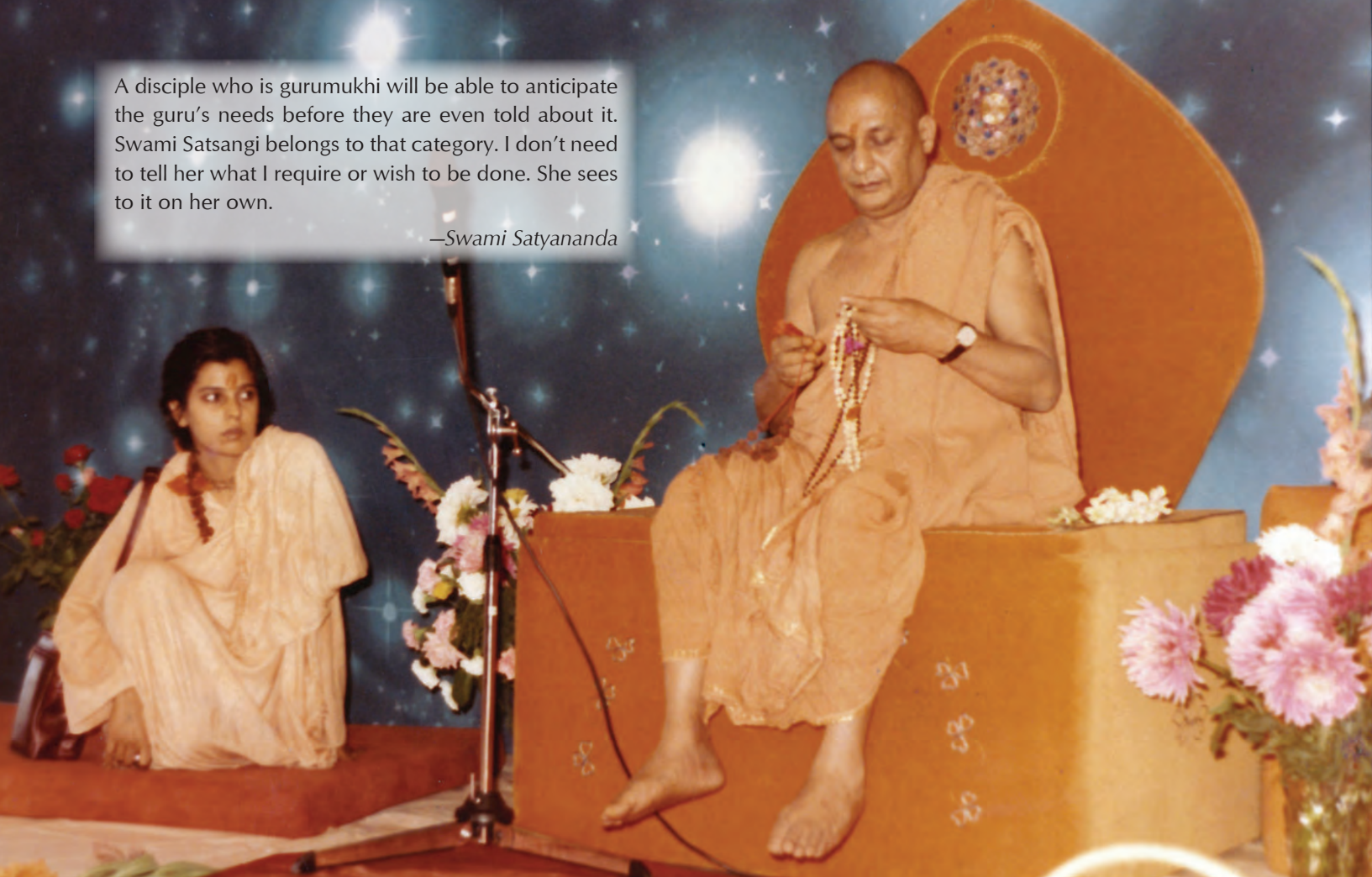






A disciple who is gurumukhi will be able to anticipate the guru's needs before they are even told about it. Swami Satsangi belongs to that category. I don't need to tell her what I require or wish to be done. She sees to it on her own.

—Swami Satyananda





On the serious side, new though she was to the tradition, her strong samskaras, determination and commitment were evident even then. What was most remarkable was her one-pointed focus on Sri Swamiji, her attentiveness to his needs, and her intense desire to serve him. That she shared a timeless connection with him was unmistakable. I also had a feeling that our futures were linked.

I returned to Munger in 1983 to take up the presidency of the Bihar School of Yoga (BSY) and the yoga movement. To fulfil my obligations I remained



at Ganga Darshan, learning the administrative and management duties of the role. With my arrival at BSY, Sri Swamiji was able to spend more time abroad, inspiring the developing Satyananda ashrams and guiding the swamis in care of them. Whenever Sri Swamiji travelled, Swami Satsangi would travel with him, whether within India or abroad. No doubt many see such travels as a luxurious duty; moving about with the guru, staying in fancy accommodation, meeting and greeting famous, influential and inspiring people. However, the guru gives a disciple



such opportunities only to train him or her, and Swami Satsangi was a fast learner. Touring with Sri Swamiji was like holding four jobs at once with no office or assistant, and Swami Satsangi fully rose to the challenge. She was travel planner, secretary, lecturer, troubleshooter, ever-ready and ever-alert. She was being prepared for her future role.

Sri Swamiji had many ways of teaching his disciples. Sometimes he used direct methods to convey a message, but more often he chose an indirect approach that forced a disciple to discover the solution for themselves. These lessons came frequently for Swami Satsangi, and sometimes at the most unexpected moments. She had to hone her creative wisdom to conquer the situations she found herself in, which, of course, she did beautifully.

On one occasion they were en route to Mumbai during Sri Swamiji's tirtha yatra. They were at the waterfront in Panjim, Goa. It was early in the morning and still dark. Suddenly, Sri Swamiji told Swami Satsangi that he was proceeding ahead on his own and she would have to catch the bus, which wasn't due for several hours, to follow him. Another person may have fretted and fumed, but Swami Satsangi always trusted her guru's actions. So what did she do? In the silence of the morning, with nothing in her possession except a tanpura given by Sri Swamiji, she went to the beach, sat down on the soft sand and started singing Raga Bhairavi to the pink glow of the new day dawning over the horizon.

Another time, Sri Swamiji sent Swami Satsangi to London for computer classes. The cost of her

airfare and schooling was covered, but no extra money was allotted to her, and she had to manage room and board on her own. What was an Indian woman swami to do in a foreign country with no money? Before she left India, Swami Satsangi wisely conjured up memories from her jet-setting days. Knowing the cost of living in London, and also remembering the western appeal for exotic fashion, she bought forty pairs of Chattisgarhi chappals, those cheap sandals worn by poor rural farmers in the fields. In an act that must have shocked her upper-class sensibilities, she stood on a London street corner and hawked every single pair, taking whatever price people offered. In this creative way, she survived. She found a place to stay and food to eat, and eventually returned home barefoot, because she had sold the sandals off her very own feet!

By training her in this manner, Sri Swamiji showed Swami Satsangi the way to humility and the real meaning of self-sufficiency. He taught her to believe in her inherent capability to survive and succeed, and to utilize every moment creatively and efficiently. Most importantly, he taught her to trust in the will of guru and God.



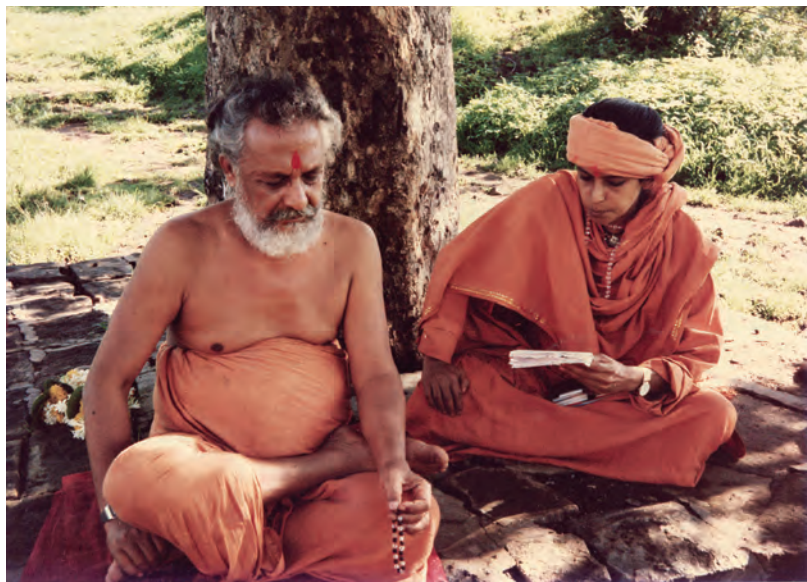






During this period, when she was not travelling, she could be often spotted with a large scriptural volume in her hand, poring over it diligently. Every evening she would ask Sri Swamiji questions about what she had discovered during the day, and this is how he honed the scholar in her. Then, on 8.8.88, Sri Swamiji left Ganga Darshan. The only person to accompany him was Swami Satsangi. They were on the road again; only, this time there would be no fancy hotels or airports, and no throngs of devotees waiting to greet them. She did not know what situations or tasks she would face next. The only wealth she carried was faith and trust in her guru, and she was ready for anything.

They travelled throughout the siddha tirthas of India. Every now and then Sri Swamiji would ask me to join them on the travels, and I would be literally transported to another realm. At these times, I also admired how a modern city girl like Swami Satsangi, used to every kind of comfort and luxury, could sleep on bare floors and travel general



class with utmost ease, purely out of devotion to her guru.

On 8th September 1989, Sri Swamiji gave her the toughest task so far: to find his next place of sadhana in 'Chitabhoomi', based on the vision he described. The grace of the Divine was with her, and she discovered Rikhia.



Heart surgery in Rikhia

Rikhia means 'the land of rishis'. It has a rich spiritual history, but when Sri Swamiji arrived there in 1989, it was a lost land, having no connection to its past, no discernible link to the twentieth century, and seemingly no future. For kilometres around his tiny encampment, there were no roads, buildings, shops, or telephones. There was no electricity, and not even any trees. The people in the area were the poorest and most neglected in all of India, forsaken by society and left to struggle for their survival. The



state of their lives was unimaginable. They lacked even the most basic necessities: food was scarce, they lived in hovels, there was no clean water, tattered rags barely covered their frail bodies, and medicine and healthcare were non-existent.

The level of poverty in Rikhia could hardly be believed, and Swami Satsangi had never even conceived of such destitution. She herself had not known a day of hunger in her life, even while abroad and selling chappals for meals. Witnessing the situation in Rikhia shocked her deeply, completely shaking up her reality: the ultra urban girl suddenly found herself transported to the most backward, destitute, empty and barren place in India, surrounded by suffering and misery.

The first few years in Rikhia called for major adjustments and there were many challenges. Knowing nothing of rural life, Swami Satsangi had to adapt to the new surroundings. She needed to learn a whole new way of thinking and being as she adjusted to the unfamiliar customs and way of life in Rikhia. In search of labourers to help with projects in the Akhara, she began visiting the villages. During these first interactions with the people of Rikhia she observed their customs, their behaviour,



When I first came to Rikhia, there was nothing growing here, not even a tree, shrub or bush; this area was desolate. It was all stones. When I first came here, many villagers around us had nothing to eat in their homes. I became aware of this when Swami Satsangi told me about the pitiable conditions of the people around me. When she visited the homes of the people around this ashram, only then could I understand their conditions.

—Swami Satyananda



and the great struggle they faced each day to simply survive. These people bore their suffering with such acceptance that she felt her own problems shrink in comparison. Realizing their need, Swami Satsangi's heart opened to their plight. Yet, for her to help them or for them to help her, she had to break through the deep-rooted patriarchy of village life and win their trust in her: a stranger and a woman who spoke English, rode a bike, had no idea about their customs, and could look any man in the eye. Sri Swamiji's will was behind her and soon enough,

not only had she secured the confidence of the villagers, but they also came to admire and depend on her. The women would open up their hearts to her and the elders would consult her on important matters. She became their Mother.

In 1992, Sri Swamiji received the divine order to serve his neighbours, and suddenly everything fell into place. In those initial years, Swami Satsangi had compiled detailed information about each person in every village. She knew their names, their ages, and most importantly, their needs. The list was a long one, but with Sri Swamiji's mandate she felt confident that the quality of life in the region could be transformed. It was a pivotal moment in her life that fuelled her spirit with resolve, action and inspiration. Throwing off the final shackles of her worldly life, she sold her apartment in Mumbai and cashed in the severance package from her last job. Thus, funds were available to start the project, and systems were put in place to deliver hope and dignity into the lives of the people of Rikhia.

A simple start was made. Blankets, clothes, cooking pots and food were distributed directly to the villagers. The gratitude of the people was overwhelming; it was humbling for Swami Satsangi



In the first few years she worked very hard building and learning about rural life. Then Bihar School of Yoga and Sivananda Math came forward to assist her. When Swami Satsangi first came to Rikhia she was completely ignorant of rural India and rural life, but since she was living here with me, naturally she had to attune herself to these surroundings.

—Swami Satyananda



to see the tremendous impact that such a simple gesture could have. Plans quickly grew to include building houses, digging wells and improving the productivity of the farms. A clinic was opened to distribute medicines. Jobs were created. Children were educated, and soon flames of hope ignited in many hearts. The items were not given as charity; no, it was all *prasad*, the fruit of Sri Swamiji's *sadhana* that he freely distributed.

The work that started in those early years continues to this day. Rikhia has flourished and blossomed as a centre of serving and giving. What





started out as a sadhu's quiet place of sadhana has become a destination with international appeal, a thriving ashram and a pilgrimage that draws people from all over the world to serve, to love and to give. Sri Swamiji brought Swami Satsangi to Rikhiya, placed her in the lap of poverty and performed a unique heart surgery on her. It is she who is the founder of Rikhiapeeth in every way: financially, administratively, and in the implementation of the vision of Sri Swamiji. Many people have contributed their time, money and efforts, but it is her dream and her creation. Sri Swamiji would say it is her maya, she is the creator of the reality you see there.





Developing a vision

The transformation of Rikhia wasn't easy, especially in the early days. Swami Satsangi had to learn how to build houses, how to dig wells, how to plant trees, how to properly prepare soil for irrigation and planting. She knew nothing of this when she

arrived, but today she knows all the practical details. She knows the A to Z of construction, of plumbing, of electrical work and agriculture, and she knows how to teach others to do it. Sri Swamiji guided her in the first few years, but she has managed everything by herself for most of the time. She is now an expert on the minutest details of every project that is carried out in Rikhia.

Once a swami from Sweden donated a cow. Sri Swamiji was delighted, as cows are sacred in India; to give a person a cow is the purest gesture one can make.

He instructed Swami Satsangi to create a plan to distribute cows to the rural people. As a child she had been fond of animals, keeping guinea pigs and a squirrel as pets, but this was about the extent of her experience with animals. She couldn't even tell a cow from a bull back then, being totally ignorant of and even intimidated



Swami Satsangi has a very strong personality. She calls a rose a rose and a spade a spade. A person who shoulders responsibility should be very strong. Of course, after me, she will carry on the work of Sivananda Math in Rikhia very well.

—Swami Satyananda



by such huge animals. However, Swami Satsangi is very determined, and once she sets her mind on something, nothing can stop her. She visited a local veterinarian and found out all about cows: how to inspect one, what problems to look for, how to determine its health, how to milk it, how to give it medicine and how to manage the overall care of the animal. Having learned everything she could about cows, she then visited the homes of the



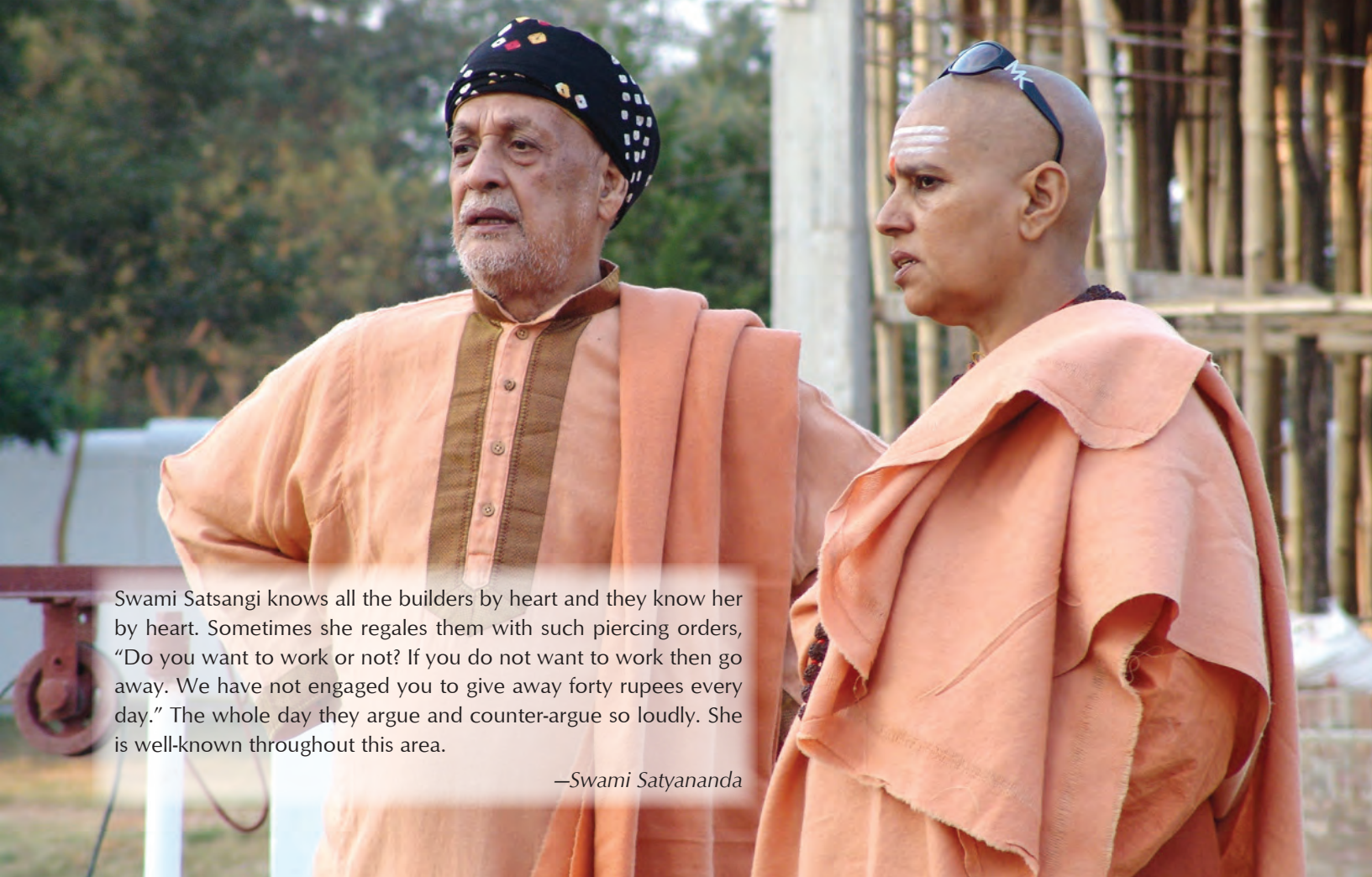
people who would receive a cow and found out all about them. She ensured that they could care for it properly, that it would have good shelter, and that they could understand its needs. It was like this with every new thing she learned; whether it was laying a foundation, digging a well or ploughing a field, she learned the proper way to do it, the best way to do it, and made sure that everyone around her also learned properly. This is how she

managed Rikhia: with efficiency, care, and an eye for every last detail.

The most inspiring quality in Swami Satsangi is her utter commitment to serving Sri Swamiji. The work that happens in Rikhia is an expression of that; it is an offering to her guru and she never loses sight of this. Developing such a vision is a demanding and difficult task, but she bears every struggle, every upset with dignity and understanding, inspiring others to do the same. She understands all too well the stresses and strains of the workload. She has great compassion and understanding, but she also knows the value of struggle, and encourages others to look deeper into the difficulties they face so that the greater lesson can be learned. The environment that she has established in Rikhia is one of practical sadhana; it is not a place for yoga. There is no time for asana or pranayama. Like a poor villager who works hard all day long to survive, the daily routine is steady and demanding. That is the sadhana. In Rikhia, one learns that the daily stresses of life can serve as the tools for developing patience, acceptance and understanding, through which one grows in awareness and devotion.







Swami Satsangi knows all the builders by heart and they know her by heart. Sometimes she regales them with such piercing orders, “Do you want to work or not? If you do not want to work then go away. We have not engaged you to give away forty rupees every day.” The whole day they argue and counter-argue so loudly. She is well-known throughout this area.

—Swami Satyananda



A particular sadhana is revealed only through a disciple who has been able to practise it and derive its benefits. Even as my guru taught me kriya yoga and revealed the practice, in the same way, through Swami Satsangi, the practice of tattwa shuddhi is being revealed to all.

—Swami Satyananda





If you want to befriend your mind, treat the whole world as your family and reach out to as many people as you can. This is a practical sadhana I am giving you. I do it and Swami Satsangi does it.

—Swami Satyananda





Role model for kanyas and batuks

Swami Satsangi is a role model for the new generation of Rikhia, especially for the kanyas. Everyone who goes to Rikhia knows about the *kanyas*, the little village girls who spend so much time in the ashram. These girls, considered the most undervalued members of society due to class and gender, now lead all the programs held in Rikhia with confidence and skill. The mahayajnas,



sometimes having crowds 10,000 strong, cannot dampen their surety and poise. You have seen and heard them, they are professionals! Their chanting, even the most difficult stotras and paths, is performed with perfection, they lead kirtan effortlessly, sometimes for hours without tiring or complaining. They dance with elegance and grace, speak beautiful English and learn computer skills with utmost ease. All this and more they



have imbibed from Swami Satsangi. Who better to teach young girls resilience and confidence than someone like Swami Satsangi? Their love for her shines from their eyes and radiant smiles light up their faces when they see her. Many of the kanyas say they want to be like her when they grow up, they too want to be strong and unafraid, they want to be happy, intelligent and free. With Sri Swamiji's grace and Swami Satsangi's guidance, these neglected girls have been elevated to the status of goddesses, to the benefit of the entire community.

The Rikhia ashram's work with the children began with the kanyas, and after some years, the *batuks*, the small boys, were also included. Their

shiny, excited faces are now well known to all who visit Rikhiapeeth. Alongside the kanyas they participate in all the activities, such as conducting abhishekas and havans. The batuks' expertise on the dance stage has become legendary. During major events, the Boogie Woogie Batuk Boys enthrall all with their special performances. This is a way to allow them to discover their potential, express their creativity, raise their confidence levels, and also channel their energy.

The children of Rikhia love and admire Swami Satsangi. It is she who gave them hope, it is she who gave them opportunity, it is she who gave them security and love. Motivated by the memory of her own happy and secure childhood, she has worked tirelessly to ensure that all the children of Rikhia receive the same kind of opportunities to grow into healthy, positive adults. Like a doting mother she is now also ensuring that every child in the care of the ashram gets two solid meals a day, through Sri Swamiji's sankalpa of the Kanya Kitchen, which opened doors in 2010.

Sri Swamiji used to say that he saved Swami Satsangi from the troubles of marriage and instead gave her the opportunity to be mother to thousands. The kanyas and batuks of Rikhia are her children.







At Rikhia, we have adopted almost five to six thousand young boys and girls, kanyas and batuks. These poor, humble, simple, innocent and meek children are all the blessed children of Rikhia who were born after I came to live here. These children never see me because I live in seclusion. It is Swami Satsangi who arranges everything for them and interacts with them. She has been doing this for the past eighteen years.

—Swami Satyananda





When the girls saw Swami Satsangi speaking English so fluently, they were surprised. They were even more astonished when they saw her driving vehicles. Thus, they followed suit and the process of education among the girls began.

—Swami Satyananda



Organizing the mahayajnas

The yajnas conducted at Rikhiapeeth are a continuation of Sri Swamiji's sankalpa. People travel from all over the world to experience the beauty and joy of selfless service and giving, amidst the timeless vedic and tantric rituals of yajna and pooja.

Before she was a sannyasin, Swami Satsangi enjoyed good food, fine clothing, art and design. She loved beauty and elegance. Now she wears a simple dhoti and eats plain rice and dal; nonetheless,



her appreciation of beauty finds expression in her work. For each event, Swami Satsangi selects the finest items for prasadam distribution, plans delicious meals, and decorates the stage and the entire ashram with bright colours and fragrant flowers. During these periods she is like a mother planning for her child's wedding. If a single item is not absolutely perfect she will reject it, even if it means several hours of work to make it right. During the programs, she may be on stage participating in the yajnas, but her eyes are everywhere, ensuring that



prasadam distribution is proceeding smoothly, guests are comfortable, the children are happy, and that Devi herself is pleased.

All the activities undertaken by Sivananda Math and Sivananda Ashram are supervised and guided by her, as is the running of Rikhiapeth and everything associated with that, from the two annual yajnas to the various courses and seminars which are offered, not to mention the ongoing activities of the kanyas and batuks who throng the ashram and the Kanya Kitchen in thousands.





There are many factors to consider (in the donation of a cow) and Swami Satsangi knows about this. The cows are examined by our vet and thoroughly checked for disease. Swami Satsangi then speaks to the head of the village to decide who should receive the cows and to determine whether they can learn to keep a cow properly. Her department is very efficiently organized. She has full details on computer of all the families living in hundreds of villages in this area, which is something even the government does not have.

—Swami Satyananda



The entire credit of the creation of the Rikhia chapter goes to Swami Satsangi. She is the actual founder of this institution in every way, monetarily and administratively. It is her dream. Everything you see here is the maya of Swami Satsangi.

—Swami Satyananda





In Rikhiapeeth, one finds the inspiration to live a life devoted and dedicated to the upliftment of each and every one. That learning is there and it comes naturally and spontaneously: opening of the heart, connecting with people, living the ideals of sannyasa, living the principles of serving, loving and giving. Rikhiapeeth has developed beyond imagination, and Swami Satsangi is at the helm of that movement. I am using the word 'movement', as it is a movement; it is not an institution. It is the movement that has inspired and encouraged millions to change their outlook, their attitude, their mentality, their viewpoint, their perspective of life.

—Swami Niranjanananda



Swami Satsangi was seldom there in the early yajnas. She appeared after supervising all that needed to be done behind the scenes. She placed herself in the background and this enabled Sri Swamiji, Swami Niranjan and the guests to have more focus. She completed the triangle that moved as a unit, enabling us all to enjoy the festivities to the fullest. She too understood and played her role, as she moved in and out of the proceedings. And always so radiant. But not just because of her striking appearance, but because of an inner grace which shone through her inherent modesty. Swami Satsangi, a woman not only of today but of tomorrow, combined the lifestyle of a sannyasin with the grace of the East and the flair of the West.

—Swami Sivamurti

The third birth

In 2007, twelve years of the Sat Chandi Yajna were completed, marking the culmination of the Rajasooya Yajna. Ten thousand people flocked to Rikhia to join in the worship and celebration of Sri Swamiji's conquest. Rikhia was officially named Rikhiapeeth, and Swami Satsangi was appointed its peethadhiswari, being officially handed the mandate of living Swami Sivananda's philosophy of 'Serve, Love, Give' as a daily practice in Rikhiapeeth.

In 2007, Sri Swamiji also initiated Swami Satsangi into paramahansa sannyasa, an honour bestowed upon sannyasins of the highest calibre. They must be the epitome of *tyaga*, renunciation, and *viveka*, discrimination. They must possess knowledge and understanding of the highest spiritual teachings. Their devotion must be resolute, their imbibing of their guru's teaching total and complete. This is when, in Rikhiapeeth, Swami Satsangi had her third birth.

Although everybody is part of the success of the yajna, certain people stand out. One is Swami Satsangi. It is entirely her effort that has brought about the happy culmination of this event. When the sankalpa is selfless, that person's yajna is also successful and obstacle-free.

—Swami Satyananda





Who is Swami Satsangi?

On 5th December 2009, Sri Swamiji attained mahasamadhi. He had always said that he would pass from this life without doctors, nurses or weeping disciples by his side. As ever, he remained true to his word. He wasn't alone, however. Swami Satsangi watched as he sat in padmasana and slowly released the pranas from his body. By midnight he had moved into another loka. Certainly Swami



Satsangi must have experienced feelings of loss at the physical absence of her beloved guru, but she never showed grief or expressed sadness, only her awe and gratitude at being allowed to witness such a rare and magnificent event. Her focus during the days following his mahasamadhi was on the needs of others, comforting and consoling the thousands who came to Rikhia to pay their respects and express their love.

One year after Sri Swamiji's mahasamadhi, Swami Satsangi unveiled his beautiful samadhi sthal. Feeling playful and excited when the time came to reveal the monument, she called everyone in the ashram to the Akhara. There were no lights on and everyone was shuffling in the dark when, suddenly, Swami Satsangi's best air hostess voice came over the loudspeaker: "Welcome. Please take a seat and fasten your seat belt. Now prepare for a trip to Guru Loka!" The lights came on, and the beautiful marble monument bathed in blue light was revealed for all.

Before his mahasamadhi, Sri Swamiji gave clear instructions to Swami Satsangi and myself about how to proceed with our lives. My duty was to establish Sannyasa Peeth and hers was to continue developing Rikhiapeeth, while also travelling around the world to share her knowledge. In 2008, she departed for Hyderabad on her first public engagement in over twenty years. Throughout all the years with Sri Swamiji, he had



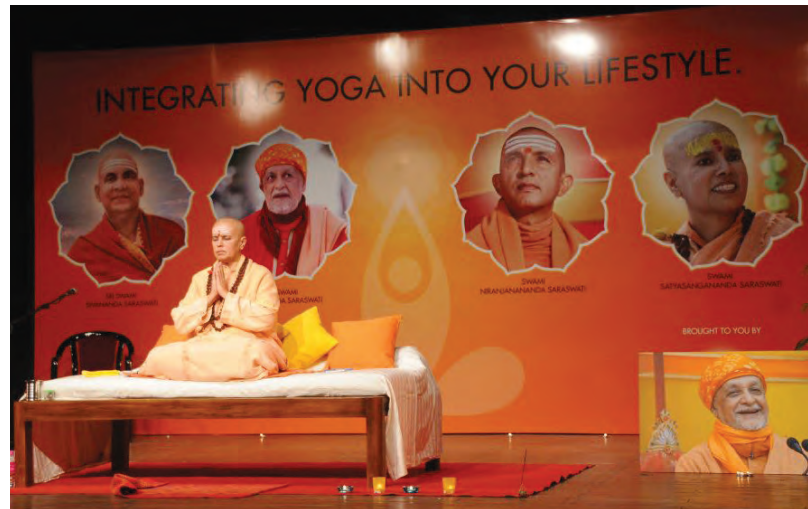
been the guide, and now she was becoming his vessel. Time had seasoned her into a thoughtful, mature and engaging voice for his teachings. Her topic in Hyderabad was 'Rediscovering Yoga,' although I would say for those present the experience was one of 'Rediscovering Swami Satsangi'.



Soon after, her overseas tours began. In the ensuing years she has visited the UK, Italy, France, Spain, Hungary, Colombia, Bulgaria and Australia. Everywhere Swami Satsangi travels she receives the warmest, most heartfelt welcome from huge crowds, as if she is coming home. She has the quality and charisma of a celebrity, but that has never been her wish, for she is a sannyasin. Forever and always, a sannyasin.



Swami Satsangi has given her life to her guru. In exchange, he taught her how to live fully, openly, with happiness, grace and awareness, and she has become a source of inspiration to us all. Swami Satsangi herself has written that only a true disciple can become guru, that only the disciple who has dissolved herself completely can lead others to the light.





On the occasion of the Golden Jubilee of the Bihar School of Yoga, the sannyasins, disciples and devotees extend a heartfelt *Hari Om* and *Namo Narayan* to Swami Satsangi in her sixtieth year. We know that she will continue to walk the only path she knows, beside her beloved master on the journey of self-discovery. As she travels that path, the sparkling monuments she creates are her guru's wishes manifested in this world; for she is the sankalpa putri.



Swami Niranjana and Swami Satsangi have renounced for the wellbeing of humankind.

—Swami Satyananda



SATYANANDA YOGA
BIHAR YOGA

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