

**Autobiography of a YOGI**  
**HISTORY AND DEVELOPMENT**



### Dedication

This text is dedicated to our beloved Master, Gurudeva Yogananda, whose presence remains in this world also through his ever-inspiring

### **AUTOBIOGRAPHY OF A YOGI.**

It will be “my messenger,” he said!

### Acknowledgement

A great "thank you" and the main merit go to a devotee and passionate lover of the "AUTOBIOGRAPHY OF A YOGI," Bob Andrews, who did most of the long, detailed and precise side by side comparison of Yogananda's *Autobiography*: Edition for edition, page for page, word for word; who generously shared the fruit of his long labor of love, and who thus made this text possible, for all interested devotees of Yogananda to read.

May God and Guru bless him!

### Before reading

This study was made because of personal passion for one of the most glorious spiritual books ever written. Obviously it does not claim to be infallible.

Yogananda dedicated his "AUTOBIOGRAPHY OF A YOGI" to Luther Burbank, a good-hearted “American saint.” May the saint in you, the reader, be patient with any errors you find.

## Introduction

In the "AUTOBIOGRAPHY OF A YOGI," Paramhansa Yogananda (1893-1952) described not only his inspiring life and journey to Self-realization, but has left the world a precious jewel of highest spiritual literature. Where else, for example, does one find such a vivid and real description of the experience of Cosmic Consciousness, by a true Master?

Most music and books are popular only for some time, while truly great works remain loved and cherished for centuries. Seeing the development over more than half a century, such seems to become the case also with the "AUTOBIOGRAPHY OF A YOGI": Amazingly, it is listed even today, 60 years after first being published, amongst the spiritual best-selling books in different parts of the world, and is generally and widely regarded as a true spiritual classic of highest nature. Today it is translated officially into 18 languages, unofficially into even more (Russian, Croatian...).

Yogananda stated that he had worked for 25 years on writing his most important book (meaning: from 1921!). The result was, and is, quite astonishing: Millions have read the "AUTOBIOGRAPHY OF A YOGI," and a steady stream of seekers is continuing to discover this precious spiritual pearl.

Here is a first little history:

**1921-35:** Yogananda collected and wrote down many stories which he planned to use in his *Autobiography*. Some of them he also used in his "Praecepta Lessons": Hazrat-the Muslim Wonder-Worker ("Allow to grow in the mind only that which is good"); the Missing Cauliflower ("a valuable lesson in concentration"); the policeman severing the saint's arm ("Such is the power when you contact OM");

**1935-36:** In India, Yogananda collected especially stories concerning the life of Lahiri Mahasaya.

**1937-46:** He worked on his *Autobiography*, mostly in the tranquility

of the Encinitas Hermitage. Especially in 1939/1940 he dedicated himself intensely to his book.

When the "AUTOBIOGRAPHY OF A YOGI" was first published in 1946, the Western world knew little or nothing about such words as "yoga," "karma," "Cosmic Consciousness," "yogic powers" etc. Yogananda's book has done an enormous service to open the Western world to the Eastern teachings of yoga. Yogananda was actually the first Eastern Master to have spent the larger part of his life in the West, spreading the liberating teachings of yoga. Vivekananda and a few others had visited America before him, but just for a few years. Their impact was not the same. Later other great yogis came to teach in the West, the result being that today a huge number of Westerners practice yoga. Millions, according to a recent TIME-article, practice meditation- and not little merit goes to the magnetic, uplifting and God-inspired presence of Yogananda in the West, and his *Autobiography*, which launched this process mightily! This might be why David Frawley (director of the *American Institute of Vedic Studies*) described Yogananda as "the father of Yoga in the West".

The "AUTOBIOGRAPHY OF A YOGI" has also helped to launch the sacred Kriya Yoga mission in the western hemisphere- a movement inspired and originated by Jesus Christ himself, as Yogananda stated. His teachings present "original Christianity" and "original Yoga": Self-realization in God. "Self-realization will unite all religions," he prophesied, because Self-realization is the eternal essence of all true religions.

"The time for knowing God has come," he proclaimed with vigor and mighty voice! Kriya Yoga he explained to be an "airplane-route!" Still, he always sincerely respected and revered all other true paths and religions. Dogmatism, sectarianism and "churchianity" (using his word) were alien to Yogananda. His freedom of spirit could easily be felt by his readers in his masterly *Autobiography*.

Even today the "AUTOBIOGRAPHY OF A YOGI" seems to remain the strongest and most inspiring spokesman for *Kriya Yoga* in the West. Already during Yogananda's lifetime, its impact was stronger than his own lecture tours, as he himself stated in 1948: His *Autobiography* was doing "what I meagerly did while traveling and lecturing to thousands." Actually he lectured to hundreds of thousands, and initiated them into yoga. He filled the largest halls in America and was so well received as hardly any other speaker was in the 20th century. Yogananda was even received in the White House by President Coolidge. People big and small were magnetized by his powerful speech and presence. And still, as he said, the "AUTOBIOGRAPHY OF A YOGI" did even more: With it, a new era started for Yogananda's mission: Soon his was to be a world audience.

There is a beautiful photo showing Yogananda happily holding his literary jewel, the "AUTOBIOGRAPHY OF A YOGI," in his hands: A book which he knew would find its way into the homes of millions of seekers, all over the globe. Startling miracles and concepts, beginning already on page 6 with the miraculous physical materialization of Lahiri Mahasaya, began to conquer the hearts and minds of many scientifically oriented Westerners: Readers often perceive in these pages the goodness and honesty of the author: A purity and truthfulness which is convincing in spite of a rationally doubting mind.

It is interesting, in this context, that Yogananda stated that the book carries his vibrations! And certainly these beautiful, inspiring, divine vibrations of the illumined Master must be the real reason behind the great success of the world-beloved "AUTOBIOGRAPHY OF A YOGI". People's lives were transformed: Thus also, after its publication, a veritable flood of direct disciples found their way to Yogananda.

As Swami Kriyananda, one of Yogananda's close disciples, commented beautifully: "The grace of the 'Autobiography of a Yogi' just gets down inside, and it works bit by bit." Yogananda knew it: He predicted that it will "change the lives of millions."

However, Yogananda was extremely humble in writing his

*Autobiography*: reading it, he comes across as a sweet, sincere, but pretty normal spiritual seeker- fortunate enough to have met many great saints.

One reads about his own intense search for saints and masters, his challenges and victories, about the greatness of other saints, his meeting with Mahatma Gandhi, with the Catholic stigmatist Therese Neumann, with Rabindranath Tagore, with Luther Burbank, with the non-eating Giri Bala, with the body-duplicating Swami Pranabananda, with the ecstatic saint in communion with Divine Mother, Master Mahasaya, with the levitating saint Bhaduri Mahasaya, etc. It takes spiritual sensitivity to perceive, between the lines, Yogananda's own stature as a towering God-filled saint.

A leading spiritual figure in India, the Shankaracharya of Kanchipuram, perceived who Yogananda really was: "As a bright light shining in the midst of darkness, so was Yogananda's presence in this world. Such a great soul comes on earth only rarely, when there is a real need among men." Yogananda's close disciples recognized his greatness, too: Even though Yogananda was never a Master to "show off," still they saw him at times performing miracles, levitating, knowing all their thoughts, and at times they tangibly experienced his divine power. Often his close disciples felt God's presence around him, his total freedom from ego-consciousness ("I have killed Yogananda long ago- none lives in this temple but God"), sometimes witnessed his materializations, saw his miraculous after-death state, and some even experienced him appearing in flesh and blood after his *Mahasamadhi*. Yogananda had told his disciples that he was, indeed, an avatar.

Only such a soul, in fact, could ever write this incredible and unforgettable promise (from "God's boatman," *Whispers from Eternity*, 1949):

"Oh, I will come again and again!  
Crossing a million crags of suffering,  
With bleeding feet, I will come-  
If need be, a trillion times-  
So long as I know  
One stray brother is left behind."

Such a one was the author of the "AUTOBIOGRAPHY OF A YOGI"!



## Before publication:

The task to write the message of his gurus and the great Indian saints came from Swami Sri Yukteswar, and was prophesied by Lahiri Mahasaya. One reads in Yogananda's "AUTOBIOGRAPHY OF A YOGI":

"About fifty years after my passing," he (Lahiri Mahasaya) said, "my life will be written because of a deep interest in yoga which the West will manifest. The yogic message will encircle the globe, and aid in establishing that brotherhood of man, which results from direct perception of the One Father."

"My son Yogananda," Sri Yukteswar went on, "you must do your part in spreading that message, and in writing that sacred life." Fifty years after Lahiri Mahasaya's passing in 1895 culminated in 1945, the year of completion of this present book...."

In a later chapter, Yogananda continues:

"My object in seeking out Keshabananda was connected with this book. I had never forgotten Sri Yukteswar's request that I write the life of Lahiri Mahasaya. During my stay in India I was taking every opportunity of contacting direct disciples and relatives of the Yogavatar. Recording their conversations in voluminous notes, I verified facts and dates, and collected photographs, old letters, and documents. My Lahiri Mahasaya portfolio began to swell; I realized with dismay that ahead of me lay arduous labors in authorship."

Durga Ma writes that much of his authorship happened in Encinitas. Most of the time, Yogananda wrote longhand. At other times he dictated to Daya's shorthand. Or Daya and Mataji (Daya Mata's sister, Ananda Mata) would alternate in taking dictation on the typewriter. Yogananda liked it when they read the text back to him. The typed text, as Daya Mata recalls, was then given, piece after piece, to Tara Mata for editing. While writing, Yogananda would often pause, look up, and enter *samadhi*.



Yogananda originally intended to call his *Autobiography* "Yogi-Christ of India". At the end of the 1938 version of *Cosmic Chants*, where he publicized his other books, Yogananda announced its future publishing: "YOGI-CHRISTS OF INDIA. The product of twenty years of metaphysical research. Stranger than fiction, and yet a record of authentic happenings, and personal experiences of the author. Many amazing stories of the miraculous lives of the great masters and saints of India. True, illuminating and entertaining from beginning to end. Contains an extraordinary description of the Astral World, the true Hereafter to which all mortals repair between incarnations. Will be published in Feb. 1944."

But it took quite a bit longer for Yogananda's literary jewel to be born:

Yogananda recounts that there was a great lesson for him in the book he has been writing, because he used to write without ever reading over the manuscript- a task he always avoided. But he had to go "over and over" every bit of his *Autobiography* (see *Man's Eternal Quest*). Yogananda added that the Lord disciplined him, yet in a noble way, because he has enjoyed reliving those wondrous experiences as he read the account again.

In August 1945 he may have fished the manuscript, since one of the very last sentences is this joyful exclamation: "August 15, 1945, close of Global War II!"

During New Year 1945, however, Yogananda was still making revisions. In the last chapter he writes: "New Year's week of 1945 found me at work in my Encinitas study, revising the manuscript of this book."

Yogananda obviously expected the book to be published in early 1946: In "*East-West*" (Jan.-March 1946), in a 1946 New Year's message, he urged the readers of the magazine to "spread the message" by sharing with others their copy of *AUTOBIOGRAPHY OF A YOGI*, or by presenting copies to their friends. He even announced how he would use the proceeds of his book: to build the "Golden World City" (World Brotherhood Colony) in Encinitas.

But it took almost one more year before his masterpiece could finally reach his readers: It turned out that it was not at all easy to find a publishing house for the AUTOBIOGRAPHY OF A YOGI. Tara Mata had to search for a long time before she found one. Innovative and challenging thoughts never tread a smooth path.

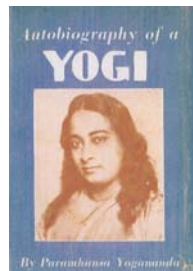
It was, interestingly, the first and only time that Yogananda chose an outside publisher. “Whispers of Eternity,” “Cosmic Chants,” and other books had all been printed by SRF. Was it to have wider distribution? Or did Yogananda have some other reason? At any rate, the task was finally given to the *Philosophical Library* in New York.

Soon after the book was finally ready to begin its blessed role in East and West: “May all men come to know that there is a definite, scientific technique of Self-realization for the overcoming of all human misery!”

## The AUTOBIOGRAPHY OF A YOGI during Yogananda's lifetime:

### 1946, 1st edition:

In December 1946 the AUTOBIOGRAPHY OF A YOGI was first published. Shortly before Christmas it reached Mount Washington: A beautiful Christmas gift for Yogananda, his disciples, and many other seekers!



To Tara Mata (L.V. Pratt), the book's editor, Yogananda wrote on the dedication page that he is "deeply indebted" to her "for her long editorial labors over the manuscript of this book." Her karmic blessing was obviously immense: Yogananda wrote in a letter to Rajarsi that the Lord would bless her with redemption for the immortal service she has given.

The AUTOBIOGRAPHY OF A YOGI started to "rouse the world" (in Yogananda's words), and Yogananda received, as he said, "thousands of letters" as a result. It indeed proved to be a book for the world: not only for *Kriya Yogis*, but also for seekers of all kinds, the AUTOBIOGRAPHY OF A YOGI has been, from the very beginning, a shining and beautiful star on the firmament spiritual life, illumined by one who had reached its supreme heights.

As readers know, it is pleasant, enjoyable, fun, inspiring to read from beginning to end. Divine truths are presented in a story-telling fashion: The AUTOBIOGRAPHY OF A YOGI conveys universal teachings, a fresh and inspiring approach to religion, and a sense of joy on the spiritual path- all clothed in Yogananda's life-story. It inspires the reader to love God, to search Him, and to make Him real in his live. It lets us know that we can all find Him, and introduces the ancient science of *Kriya Yoga*.

Yogananda unites impersonal wisdom and deep devotion in a most beautiful way, in a language which all readers can understand.

Here is a big question:

What did Yogananda's mostly want to accomplish with his AUTO-BIOGRAPHY OF A YOGI? Why did he work for 25 years on it?

You may answer: "He wanted spread India's ancient yogic science of Self-realization". "He wanted to introduce the path and ray of *Kriya Yoga*". "He wanted to inspire the reader with God-love". "He wanted to uplift the reader".

Certainly true. But his universal and expansive mind, it seems, was even aiming at a global goal: **World-peace!** Here are some of his quotes:

"The yogic message will encircle the globe, and aid in establishing that brotherhood of man which results from direct perception of the One Father."

"Toward realization of the world's highest ideal—peace through brotherhood— may yoga, the science of personal contact with the Divine, spread in time to all men in all lands."

"Kriya Yoga, the scientific technique of God-realization," he finally said with solemnity, "will ultimately spread in all lands, and aid in harmonizing the nations through man's personal, transcendental perception of the Infinite Father."

"The effective League of Nations will be a natural, nameless league of human hearts...[flowing] from knowledge of man's sole unity— his kinship with God."

To his German readers, Yogananda's wrote this preface in Oct. 1950 (translated back from German into English)- a call for brotherhood, too:

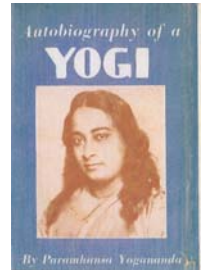
"It is a great joy for me to hear that there will be a German edition of the *Autobiography of a Yogi*. Not less than seven German publishing houses wanted to translate and publish the book. This certainly proves

that Germany is turning toward the thought of spiritual growth. After all, it was Germany in the late 18th century, where the vast Sanskrit-heritage of India found its first enthusiastic friends and translators.

In 1936 I traveled by car through Germany. What a marvelous country! And how friendly its people! To my German readers I send this message:

Let us walk forward together- Germans, Indians, the whole human race! What could delight the heart of our One Father more than when we rejoice in our brotherhood?"

## 1949, the mysterious, lost 2nd edition:



Strangely, no edition of the AUTOBIOGRAPHY OF A YOGI can be found stating it to be a "2nd edition." Sometimes, therefore, a London edition by *Rider and Company*, published in Great Britain, is considered the 2nd edition. Did the *Philosophical Library* maybe figure:

"Well, since in Great Britain another publishing house also printed their first edition, we'll count that as our 2nd edition"? Not very likely. As a matter of fact, the 3rd and 4th editions both refer to the existence of a 2nd *Philosophical Library* edition, printed in 1949. But then....where did it disappear to?

Also strangely, two quite different versions of the 1946 1st edition exist: a thinner and a thicker book- quite different in appearance. Both, however, state the year 1946 as their publication year.

Three reasons make it certain that the thicker "1946" version is, in truth, the 1949 2nd edition- which has exactly the same wording as the 1st edition, without even changing the publishing year:

1) It was printed on different, thicker paper; also the cover colors are slightly different. And the binding (the number of "signatures," groups of pages sewn together) is different, too. These differences wouldn't happen within a single edition.

2) The table of illustrations and the order of illustrations are different in the two books. Also the thicker edition's illustrations are double sided, the thinner edition's are single sided. In other words, the set-up of both books is different, meaning: these are two different editions!

3) On the back of the dust jacket of the thinner book is a list of other books published by *Philosophical Library*, all published between 1942 and 1946. On the back of the dust jacket of the thicker edition is a list of books published in 1948 and 1949, showing that this book must have been printed in 1949 or later. It couldn't have been published in 1946.

So: If you are a owner of a 1946 edition, and want to find out if it's a true 1st or (sigh!) a 2nd edition, here is what you can do: measure the thickness of the book. If it is 7/8," and if it has thin, almost translucent paper, you have a 1st edition! If you measure 1-3/16," and you see thicker paper, you have a 1949 2nd edition!

To make things even more mysterious: there is yet another version of the "1946" edition, and it is difficult to place it: It is 1-1/4" thick. It is printed on slightly thicker paper than the 1st edition, not on reflective paper, and the list of books on the back is the same as in the 1st edition, but, on the other hand, it shares the same double-sided illustrations which one finds in the 2nd edition. We leave it to the reader to figure out where it belongs to: to the first or to the second edition. (Maybe a "in-between" edition?)

## Worldwide

In 1949 the AUTOBIOGRAPHY OF A YOGI was, as we said, also published in Great Britain, by *Rider & Company*. For that edition, Yogananda wrote: "The arrangement for a London edition of this book has given me opportunity to revise, and slightly to enlarge, the text. Besides new material in the last chapter, I have added a number of foot-notes in which I have answered questions sent me by readers of the American edition."

Many of these changes, however, didn't find their way into any of the later American editions.

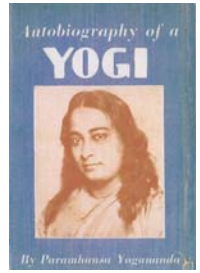
At any rate, after Great Britain many other countries followed, opening all corners of the world to the liberating message of *Kriya Yoga* and Self-realization. One is reminded of Yogananda's words in his *Autobiography*: "Many spiritually thirsty men and women eventually found their way to the cool waters of *Kriya Yoga*. Just as in the Hindu legend, where Mother Ganges offers her divine draught to the parched devotee

Bhagirath, so the celestial flood of *Kriya* rolled from the secret fastnesses of the Himalayas into the dusty haunts of men."



## 1951, the 3rd edition,

the last one during Yogananda's lifetime:



In 1951, for the third edition of the AUTOBIOGRAPHY OF A YOGI, Yogananda added an additional chapter 49, "The years 1940-1951." In a footnote at the beginning of the new chapter, Yogananda writes: "Much new material in Chapter 49 has been added to the third edition of this book. In response to requests made by a number of readers of the first two editions, I have answered, in this chapter, various questions about India, yoga, and Vedic philosophy." He also described the development of his centers and various activities during the last years.

Otherwise Yogananda was mostly satisfied with the existing chapters: In the first 47 chapters only few changes were made in the main text (6 paragraphs added, 4 deleted, 13 modified). Mostly one finds footnote changes (40).

Some readers might be interested in knowing what kind of changes Yogananda made for this edition in the already existing chapters. Here is the gist of the changes:

-At the end of chapter 9, part of a paragraph is deleted, about Yogananda's memory of the seraphic Master Mahasaya. Instead three philosophical ending paragraphs are added, about the God-love of all saints, their humility and bliss, and Divine Mother's play with devotees in important and unimportant matters.

-The end of chapter 12 another two paragraphs are added: Discouraging some students without realization to enter the swami-path: Instead they are advised to practice *Kriya*. And that saints see just two classes of men: Those who seek God and those who don't.

- Chapter 32, two sentences about Lahiri Mahasaya, regarding the divine decree of his life, smouldering and bursting into flame, were deleted.

- In chapter 37 a Bhagavad Gita quote is included: "If there should

rise...” The poetic words of Emma Lazarus from the Statue of Liberty are taken out, replaced by Walt Whitman’s poem, “Hymn to America”.

-At chapter 38 a line is deleted which says that both Luther Burbank and Henry Ford believe in reincarnation.

- In chapter 44, a paragraph by Gandhi about the law of love was taken out. Instead a paragraph was included about the necessity of spiritual vision, and that science has brought a sense of insecurity and insubstantiality of matter to humanity, which can go nowhere else but to the Spirit within.

- A Gandhi “In Memoriam” was added, the poem “The Soundless Roar,” “God, God, God,” and the description of the flag of India .

That is basically all in the first 47 chapters. The rest are minor changes.

The last existing chapter 48 was partly “exported” into the new chapter 49, and several paragraphs in it were modified: The description of world-brotherhood colonies has been shortened and changed, but not deleted: there is an “urgent need” for them in the world.

Interestingly, Yogananda included in this 1951 edition only very few of the changes which he had added to the 1949 Rider edition (which also used, of course, British spelling and hyphens).

By this edition, in 1951, the AUTOBIOGRAPHY OF A YOGI was already available in seven languages!

India was proud of Yogananda: Great and famous Masters like Ramana Maharishi and Anandamoyee Ma had highest regard for Yogananda, as a true ambassador of the ancient Vedic philosophy. The famous Swami Shivananda of Rishikesh wrote that Yogananda has been “an ideal representative of the ancient sages and seers, the glory of India.”

Not long after the 3rd edition appeared, Yogananda left his body,

which remained in a phenomenal state of incorruption for weeks. No normal sign of decay was visible when the casket was closed: Yogananda looked, after having been "dead" for three weeks, as if he was peacefully asleep. Never before had America witnessed such an inexplicable case.

In this way, it seems, the great Master gave a powerful last testimony to the truth of the "miraculous" yogic teachings he had described in his AUTOBIOGRAPHY OF A YOGI.



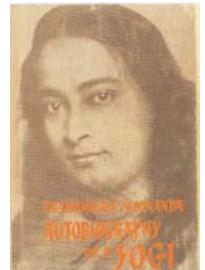
## After Yogananda's passing:

The *Autobiography* evolved, grew, changed, from edition to edition. SRF explains that Yogananda made further revisions after the release of the 3rd edition, and instructed that these be included in a subsequent reprint. These “further revisions” number over 1000.

A careful look at the next editions of the AUTOBIOGRAPHY OF A YOGI will present its steady evolution.

### 1952- 4th edition

The 4th (1952) edition was still published by the *Philosophical Library* in New York. Its wording is 100% identical with the 3rd 1951 edition. So if you happen to have a 4th edition, you may justifiably enjoy the text as a 3rd edition.



In those days, as one reads in a future publisher’s note, the retype-setting of a book was fairly costly and difficult. For this reason, the New York publishing house did not include Yogananda's revisions.

In fact, the only change one can find is the explanation of Yogananda's Mahasamadhi in chapter 1, page 2. That page was left blank in the 3rd edition.

### **The dust jackets**

For fans of the *Autobiography*, here are a few words about the dust jackets which were used over the years (since the 4th edition has a special one):

During Yogananda's lifetime (meaning: the first three editions), the dust jackets were all similar in color: light blue. Yogananda loved the colors blue, yellow (gold), and white, since they are the colors of the spiritu-

al eye.

The dust jacket of this 4th edition of AUTOBIOGRAPHY OF A YOGI is unique: It has a brownish color, and uses a different font.

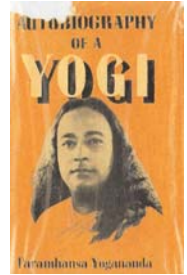
From the 5th edition on, various orange dust jackets have been used.

## The AUTOBIOGRAPHY OF A YOGI in SRF's care:

### 1954- 5th edition:

In late 1953 SRF bought the copyrights of the AUTOBIOGRAPHY OF A YOGI, and from then on printed and sold it.

In this 5th edition one observes the first few changes. It is interesting to look at them: since they are the very first ones made after Yogananda's passing, they would presumably be the changes desired by Yogananda. One finds (comparison by hand, not computer) four changes of footnotes (two deleted and two added), concerning yoga postures, Yogananda's school, and information about the Bhagavad Gita.



Apart from these four footnotes, one finds these further changes:

#### - Publisher's note

This 5th edition carries a new publisher's note. It mentions that SRF bought the rights to Yogananda's *Autobiography*; the passing of Yogananda and his phenomenal after-death state; Yogananda's founding of SRF/YSS to spread *Kriya Yoga* world-wide; Rajasi Janakananda as the new president; and Yogananda's remaining spiritual presence.

#### - In Memoriam

A text "In Memoriam," appearing in the 4th edition, is deleted.

#### - Illustrations

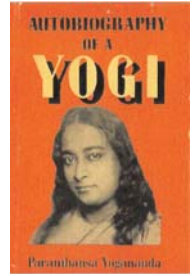
One finds 27 illustration changes: Photos cropped; put in different places of the book; added to other photos; deleted photos; added photos. Lahiri Mahasaya now appears dressed (a painting, even though Yogananda writes that his "photograph is reproduced in this book"). Lahiri's original miraculous photo reappears in the SRF-1998 edition, with the explana-

tion why the painting was used: Yogananda later designated it as the formal portrait of Lahiri for SRF publications; and that it hangs in Yogananda's Mount Washington sitting room.

## 1955- 6th edition

In the 6th edition one finds new changes.

As an observation: some editions of the AUTOBIOGRAPHY OF A YOGI mention their changes in the publisher's note, while others don't: The 3rd and 7th editions contain such references; the 5th, 6th and 8th do not.



This is what the study shows: one observes in the 6th edition about 31 text and footnote changes. The last chapter is quite condensed: 4.5 pages in it are now reduced to 1.5 page (mostly the scenic description of Lake Shrine, the “India Hall,” and Yogananda’s varied activities).

Some fun and interesting parts, which now are deleted, are:

### -Yogananda’s Gold Medal for humanitarian activities:

Members (before this 6th edition) were encouraged not “to isolate themselves from the community, but to lead balanced lives of meditation AND constructive outer activities.” Interestingly, Yogananda had “SRF Gold Medals Awards for Services to Humanity,” which were given annually as rewards to humanitarians in the fields of religion, art, science, and public service. During the opening ceremonies of India House, in 1951, he presented eight of these Gold Medals. The Gold Medals displayed the symbols of “a Cross, a five-pointed star with the eye of wisdom in the center, and a lotus- its roots in the mire and its crown in the sun, a symbol of ascent from mortality to Godhood.”

### - Charitable gift shops and a Welfare Fund

In the editions 3-5 one could read about welfare SRF gift shops: Renunciates sold donations made by members and friends of SRF. The proceeds of this activity were “wholly used for charitable purposes”.

There even was a “SRF Welfare Fund” to which the renunciates



(receiving no salaries) donated “all gratuities”. Food, so one reads, was in this way provided “to children in India and Europe”.

#### - A founder

-It is interesting to read (before 1955) that Yogananda referred to Swami Premananda as “the founder of the SRF Church in Washington, D.C.”

In 1946 Yogananda even wrote: "...during a visit to his (Premananda's) new temple,..."

These words seem to indicate that Yogananda bestowed a great deal of authority to his various center leaders.

#### - Yoga Asanas

During the opening ceremonies of Lake Shrine, in 1951, “the audience then witnessed a remarkable demonstration of SRF boys of scientific asanas (postures) for health of body and mind”. The asanas ended in 1955. (Also the sweet word “boys” which Yogananda sometimes used for his monks)

#### -Poetry

-Two of Yogananda’s poems were deleted from this edition, which had been added to the 3rd edition:

“God, God, God,” and “The Soundless Roar” (the AUM-poem).

#### - Publisher’s note

- A new publisher's note was printed. It adds the death of “Rajasi Janakananda,” and mentions the new president, Sister Daya.

#### - Illustrations

28 photo changes were made (deleting, adding, cropping, other page). In this edition, Sister Daya’s photo appears, as the new SRF president. So does Rajarsi (still spelled “Rajasi”) Janakananda's photo.

- The SRF "Aims and Ideals"

They appear for the first time in this edition.

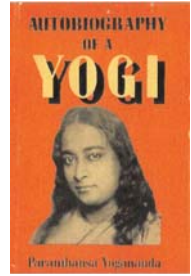
- The line of Gurus of Self-Realization Fellowship

The line now appears at the end of the book, with an explanation of how to pronounce their names: Five Gurus (without Krishna) were part of the guru-line.

The first AUTOBIOGRAPHY OF A YOGI to mention Krishna as part of the guru-line is the 12th edition, which was printed in 1988. Editions 6-11 explain the line as consisting of five gurus.

## 1956, 7th edition:

The number of changes in this 7th edition is impressive: one finds over 850 paragraphs and footnotes changed: many grammatical changes (the ones an English teacher would make), text additions, text deletions, word changes, rearrangements, and also important changes in content. The list is long. Hardly a page is left untouched.



The reader finds two explanations in the publisher's note:

1) It first states that this 7th edition contains revisions made by Paramhansa Yogananda in 1949 for the London (Rider) edition.

It is true: One finds that 127 of the 495 earlier "Rider-changes," are included in this 7th edition. The mystery is: but why did Yogananda include only a tiny handful of these "London-changes" in his 3rd American edition, in 1951 (only 24 of 495)? He easily could have included them all.

Interestingly, one of these Rider-changes was included already in both the 5th and 6th editions.

2) Then the publisher's note states that Yogananda's later revisions, made in 1951, had not been incorporated into the 5th and 6th editions, because during those years other duties prevented the SRF editorial department from undertaking the formidable task of incorporating the author's revisions on the electrotype plates, and that the work has been accomplished in time for the seventh edition.

A word-for word study has been done to see what these changes in this 7th edition are about, apart from the grammatical corrections. However, it seems advisable not to list them here, as this wouldn't help to create harmony amongst Yogananda's various disciples – it hasn't in the past. Discussions have been going on if these changes are really Yogananda's. Let's avoid that dispute here.

## 1959, 8th edition

The publisher's note to the 7th edition states that the work (of incorporating the author's revisions) has been accomplished in time for the seventh edition. Further revisions, however, appear in this 8th edition.

In the recent SRF edition one reads the explanation that Tara Mata made, after 1956, further editorial revisions, in accordance with guidance she had received from Yogananda before his passing.

The count shows that in this 8th edition around 280 further paragraphs and footnotes are changed. Altogether over 1000 paragraphs and footnotes have been changed between editions 5 and 8. The "feel" of the book certainly changed.

Again, we prefer not to publish the detailed study of the changes in this edition, in order not to trickle dispute. The only two which cannot remain unmentioned are:

### 1) Yogananda's 11 "Aims and Ideals" are now changed:

Here are the three main changes:

- "To prove the practical truth in the immortal teachings of Jesus Christ and the Self-realized Masters of India" is now different, expanded.

- "To attain threefold perfect development: body, mind, and soul" now talks about the purpose of life: To attain God Consciousness; and to this end to establish SRF temples throughout the world, and to encourage the establishment of individual temples of God in the homes hearts of men.

- "To spread a spirit of brotherhood among all peoples; and to aid in establishing, in many countries, self-sustaining world-brotherhood colonies for plain living and high thinking" has now become an encouragement for plain living and high thinking, and to spread a spirit of brotherhood among all peoples, by teaching the eternal basis of their unity: kinship with God.

2) Yogananda's spiritual title

"Paramhansa" is now changed to "Paramahansa". Yogananda's handwritten signature is forged by the editors.

This edition lasted for almost a decade.

## 1968-1996

A 1968 9th edition followed, by 1969 the 10th edition was published, by 1971 the 11th and by 1988 the 12th edition. The changes in these editions have not yet been examined. An obvious addition, however, is “The Spiritual Legacy of Paramahansa Yogananda,” declaring that only those books, recordings, films, and other publications which are published by SRF may be trusted to faithfully and accurately represent Yogananda.

At some point SRF published a special "luxury" leather-bound version of the AUTOBIOGRAPHY OF A YOGI, with extra photos.

In 1996 SRF also published an audio-version of their most recent AUTOBIOGRAPHY OF A YOGI-edition, read by the famous movie actor Ben Kingsley. Swami Kriyananda too published an audio book, with selected chapters of the 1946 original edition.

Swami Kriyananda also produced a AUTOBIOGRAPHY OF A YOGI-slideshow video, with quotes from the 1946 edition and musical background.

For the 1998 edition, the SRF cover is presented with the new official SRF design, and the SRF-logo.

## Today

The AUTOBIOGRAPHY OF A YOGI in 2004 saw its 13th edition. Today it has truly become a spiritual classic. It can be found all over the world and has been elected as one of the 100 most important spiritual books of the past century.

In the West, in 1993, celebrating Yogananda's 100th birthday anniversary, the Ananda community re-published the original 1946 edition (Crystal Clarity Publishers).

In 1997, in India, SRF/YSS also arranged for the publication of the original 1946 edition, "in response to interest generated by the fiftieth anniversary of this historic work" (Jaico-publishers).

Ananda too, in 2004, published that original edition in India, since the Jaico book was either out of print or at least hard to find in bookstores.

The original 1946 AUTOBIOGRAPHY OF A YOGI is now in the public domain. Everyone can freely print it, including all of its pictures. The text can be downloaded from the internet. Also, thanks to the internet, all early editions of the *Autobiography* can be obtained by interested readers with a bit of patience. The best place to go seems to be the auction on ebay.com. Obviously the 1st and 3rd editions are highly requested, and expensive. One also finds precious editions signed by Yogananda.

The AUTOBIOGRAPHY OF A YOGI is a book which will probably make even more history, if Yogananda's statement will prove to be true: "The blessed role of *Kriya Yoga* in East and West has hardly more than just begun."

Beautifully, all editions end with Yogananda's words of Love: "Lord, Thou hast given this monk a large family." Here is our last question: What

did he mean with “large family?” “SRF members”? “All his disciples”? “All Kriyabans of any Kriya line”? Or “even larger...”?

Oh Lord, may we all understand Yogananda’s Divine Love!

### AN FINAL STORY

Here is a fascinating ending story for all to enjoy, which Yogananda originally wanted to include in his AUTOBIOGRAPHY OF A YOGI:

Yogananda tells of the following event which one of his friends witnessed with his own eyes. The point of his story was to show that bodies can be changed "like car models":

There was a young man in India who had died, and his body was lying ready for cremation; the family was about to set fire to the funeral pyre. At this moment an old yogi came running out of a nearby forest, crying: "Stop it, stop it! I need that young body, cremate this one," and everybody was stunned. He fell to the ground, dead. A moment later the young man leapt up off the pyre; before anybody could catch him, he ran off into the forest. The family could only cremate the old man! That was a yogi who changed his "model": His body was too old- so he got himself into a new "model!"

Yogananda explains that he couldn't find his saintly friend who had witnessed this incredible scene- that's why he chose not to publish it.

### PRAYER

Oh Lord: May this detail-study never draw anyone away from his simple love for Yogananda and his divine *Autobiography*!

**Sat-Gurum twam namami! AUM**

### A CHALLENGE FROM THE MASTER:

Yogananda wrote this inscription into the *Autobiography* of Shradha Mata, a close disciple. Let it be a sacred goal for us all:

*“Find the Infinite hidden on the altar of these pages!”*



# The Author's Life



# The Author's Life

with quotes from "The Path" by Swami Kriyananda  
(in the rounded text-boxes)

## Birth:

On January 5, 1893 Mukunda Lal Gosh was born in Gorakhpur, India.

Clearly this was no ordinary child, though in his autobiography Yogananda presents himself so unassumingly that the reader, unfamiliar with the intense preparation required for high yogic attainments, might draw the conclusion that anyone similarly placed might have had the young yogi's spiritual experiences....

The Shankaracharya of Kanchipuram told me, "Such a great soul comes on earth only rarely, when there is a real need among men."



*Mukunda at age of 6*

## His parents:



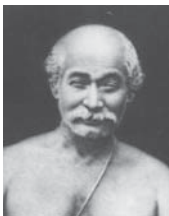
His father:  
Bhagabati Charan Gosh  
(1853-1942)



His mother:  
Gyana Prabha Gosh  
(1868-1904)

## They have 8 children:

Ananta, Roma,  
Uma, Mukunda, Nalini,  
Sananda, Thamu, Bishnu.



Both parents are disciples of Lahiri Mahasaya (9/30, 1828-9/26, 1895). Lahiri had told Mukunda's mother before his birth:

"Little mother, thy son will be a yogi. As a spiritual engine, he will carry many souls to God's kingdom."

### He lives with his family in:

- 1893-1902 Gorakpur (age 0 to 8)
- 1902-1904 Lahore (age 8 to 10)
- 1904-1906 Bareilly (age 10 to 12)
- May 1906- July 1906 Chittagong (Age 12)
- 1906-1909 Calcutta (age 12 to 16)

Then: • 1909-10 Benares (meeting his guru)

- 1910 back to Calcutta
- 1912-15 Serampore, then back to Calcutta
- 1917 Dihika
- 1918 Ranchi



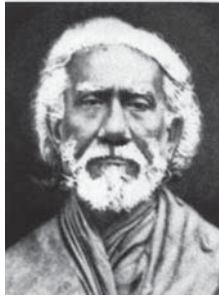
### **Early signs of his mission:**

Around the turn of the century there was a young boy in India who, during periods of ecstatic meditation, caught glimpses of a mysterious mountaintop monastery in a distant land. The message conveyed by his enigmatic visions concerned the mission that, he knew, he was meant someday to fulfill. Mukunda Lal Ghosh, later known to the world as Paramhansa Yogananda, was the son of a senior executive in the Bengal-Nagpur Railway; as such, he faced the prospect of wealth and high worldly position when he grew up. But it was not this world that attracted him. From earliest childhood he had longed for God as intensely as others long for human love, or for worldly recognition. Mukunda's favorite pastime was visiting saints. "Choto Mahasaya" they often called him—"Little Sir," or, literally, "Little Great-Minded One." Treating him not as a child, but as their spiritual equal, many posed him deep questions, or sought his advice on spiritual matters.

### As a youth in India:

- 1908 Mukunda's first ashram: "Sadhana Mandir", in Calcutta
- 1909 The ashram is moved next to Tulsi Bose's home. It included a "Saraswati Library" (1910 moved elsewhere- it is still existing)
- 1910 Mukunda meets his guru

*Swami Sri Yukteswar  
(Priya Nath Karar)  
May 10, 1855-  
March 9, 1936),  
disciple of Lahiri Mahasaya*



*Mukunda  
at that time*

Soon after graduation from high school, Mukunda met his guru, the great Swami Sri Yukteswar of Serampore, Bengal. At the feet of this great master he attained, in the amazingly short space of six months, the high state of samadhi, or unconditioned oneness with God. His guru kept him in the ashram another nine and a half years, while he trained him for his mission of yoga dissemination in the West. “The West,” Sri Yukteswar explained, “is high in material attainments, but lacking in spiritual understanding. It is God’s will that you play a role in teaching mankind the value of balancing the material with an inner, spiritual life.”

- 1910 College begins in Calcutta (at least nominally)
- 1912”Studies” continue in Serampore
- 1915: University degree



*During his  
university years*

- 1915, July: His guru gives him the name: Swami Yogananda Giri
- 1916 Yogananda re-starts the ashram at Tulsi’s home
- 1916 He discovers the principles of the Yogoda exercises, which later become his energization exercises
  - 1916 From August to November he visits Japan
  - 1917 Yogananda founds the “Yogoda Satsanga Society”
  - 1917 He starts a school in Dihika (Bengal)
  - 1918 The school is transferred to Ranchi (Bihar)



In 1917, Mukunda, now a monk with the name Swami Yogananda, took the first outward step toward the fulfillment of his mission by founding a small school for boys in the village of Dihika, Bengal. In 1918 the Maharaja of Kasimbazar graciously gave him permission to transfer this fast-growing school to the Kasimbazar palace in Ranchi, Bihar. Here the school flourished. An institution offering education in the divine art of living along with the standard curriculum made an instant appeal to parents and children alike. In the first year, enrollment applications reached two

thousand—far more than the existing facilities could absorb. By the end of two years, the young yogi-headmaster’s educational theories were already beginning to have a serious impact on other educators.

In 1920 the youthful yogi was meditating one day when he had a vision: Thousands of Americans passed before him, gazing at him intently. It was, he knew, a divine message. The time had come for him to begin his lifework in the West.

The very next day he received an invitation to speak as India’s delegate to an International Congress of Religious Liberals, being held that year in Boston, Massachusetts, under the auspices of the American Unitarian Association. “All doors are open for you,” Sri Yukteswar told him, when he applied to his guru for instruction. “Your words on yoga shall be heard in the West.” Thus commanded, he accepted the invitation.

- 1920 Still in India, Yogananda's publishes his first book: “Dharmavijnana” (Wisdom of Dharma)-later “Science of Religion”
- 1920 In Ranchi, he receives an invitation from America

- 1920 In Calcutta, he is blessed by meeting Mahavatar Babaji



*Mahavatar  
Babaji*

## In America

- 1920: In September, Swami Yogananda arrives Boston

*1920, Boston: Yogananda's maiden speech in America: At the Congress for Religious Liberals*



He uses the name "Yogoda Satsanga" until 1934 also in America. From 1934 on he calls it "Self-Realization Fellowship".

- 1920 Dr. Lewis becomes Yogananda's disciple
- 1920-23 For three years Yogananda lives and teaches in Boston
- 1922 He establishes his first American ashram at N. Waltham, MA.
- 1923 Publication of "Songs of the Soul"
  
- 1923-25 Yogananda starts his transcontinental lecture tours. He lectures in the major cities, in the greatest halls, of America. Thousands hear him everywhere.

In 1923 he began a series of lectures and classes in major American cities. His success everywhere was extraordinary. Crowds flocked to him in unprecedented numbers, sometimes queuing up for blocks to get in.

- 1924 Publication of "Science of Religion"
- 1924 Publication of "Scientific Healing Affirmations"
- 1924 Luther Burbank becomes Yogananda's student
- In 1924 he visits Alaska



*On route to Alaska.*

*Yogananda with his famous friend and student, Luther Burbank*



During his transcontinental tour in 1924, many would have been thrilled for Swami Yogananda to make his home in their cities. But to every such invitation he replied, "My soul calls me to Los Angeles." Years later, a guest at Mt. Washington asked him, "Which do you consider the most spiritual place in America?" "I have always considered Los Angeles the Benares of America," the Master replied.

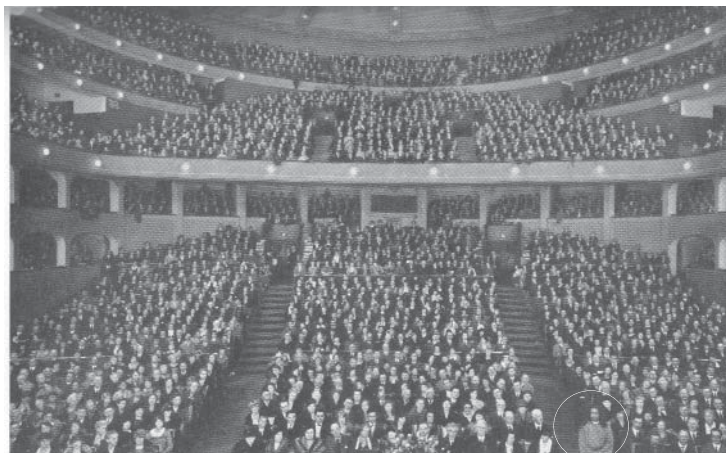
- 1925 Yogananda establishes his headquarters at Los Angeles, Mount Washington
- 1925 At Mt. Washington, Yogananda tries to establish a "how-to-live" school
- 1925 Yogananda meets Gyanamate
- 1925 Yogananda begins to publish a magazine: East-West (1925 to 1936) and (1945 to 1947); Inner Culture (1937 to 1944); Self Realization Magazine (1948 to 1969); Self-Realization (1970 to present). They also feature his commentaries on the "Second Coming of Christ", the "Bhagavad Gita", and the "Rubaiyat of Omar Khayyam."
- 1925-33 Yogananda continues to lecture to thousands



*Swami Yogananda on "campaign"*

His magnetism was irresistible. On January 25, 1927, in Washington, D.C., after a lecture attended by 5,000 people, the Washington Post reported, “The Swami has broken all records for sustained interest.” For some time a famous photographer kept a life-size photograph of the Master on the street outside his shop. President Calvin Coolidge received Yogananda at the White House. On April 18, 1926, in New York’s famous Carnegie Hall, the Master held a crowd of three thousand spellbound for an hour and a half, repeating with him the simple chant “O God Beautiful!” which he had translated from the original Hindi of Guru Nanak. That night many in his audience found themselves transported into a state of divine ecstasy.

In 1924 Swami Yogananda toured westward across the continent. As he taught and lectured, countless thousands found their lives transformed—not by his words alone, but by his magnetic love, and the sheer radiance of his inner joy.



*The greatest halls filled up!*



- 1927 President Coolidge receives Yogananda at the White House
- In 1929 Yogananda meets famous opera singer Amelita Galli Curci, who becomes his student



*Yogananda with Amelita Galli Curci*



*Yogananda as a guest in the  
White House*

- 1929 Publication of "Whispers from Eternity"
- 1929 Yogananda visits Mexico



*Yogananda  
with the presi-  
dent of  
Mexico, Senor  
Portes Gil*

For some years Swami Yogananda continued to tour the country, lecturing, teaching, and drawing to his work a gradually growing band of dedicated disciples. At last he felt guided by God to end these spiritual “campaigns,” as he called them, and return to Mt. Washington to devote his time to training the souls he had sent there.

- 1931 Daya Mata becomes Yogananda’s disciple
- 1932 Rajarsi Janakananda becomes Yogananda’s disciple
- 1932 Publication of "Metaphysical Meditations"
- From 1933 Yogananda withdraws from “campaigning” in America
- 1935 Yogananda registers “Self-Realization Fellowship” as a church

### Europe:

• 1935 On his way to India, Yogananda passed through Europe: He visits England (London, Stonehenge), Scotland, France, Belgium, Holland, Germany (Therese Neumann), Switzerland, Italy (Assisi, Rome), Greece (Athenian temples), Israel (Jesus' places), and Egypt (pyramids)



*In Bavaria*



*Visiting pyramids in Egypt*

### India:

• In August 1935 Yogananda arrives in Bombay.

His first stop, still in August, is in Wardha, visiting Mahatma Gandhi.



*With Mahatma Gandhi,  
who became a kriya yogi*

By 1935 the work was firmly established and flourishing.

This was the year that Yogananda's guru, Swami Sri Yukteswar, summoned him back to India. The now-famous disciple spent a year there traveling about, addressing large audiences.

• Then to Calcutta, seeing family and friends.

In Serampore, he meets his guru Sri Yukteswar again.

The next visit is to his school in Ranchi.

In October and November 1935, in South India, he visits Mysore, Bangalore, Hyderabad, Madras, Arunachala (Ramana Maharishi).

In December, he meets Anandamoyee Ma in Calcutta, later in his school at Ranchi.

In late December 1935, during Sri Yukteswar's Winter Solstice Festival, Yogananda receives the title "Paramhansa"



*At the Kumbha Mela in Allahabad.*



*Yogananda with Ananamoyee Ma*

• In January 1936 Yogananda visits the Kumbha Mela in Allahabad. Afterwards he visits Agra (Taj Mahal), Brindaban (Keshabananda, ancient temples), Delhi, Meerut (once Ananta's home), Bareilly (a boyhood friend), Gorakhpur (his birthplace), and Benares (Vishvanath temple, Lahiri's home). In early March, back in Calcutta, a telegram calls him to Puri: Mahasamadhi of his Guru, Sri Yukteswar.

*In May Yogananda visits the non-eating Giri Bala in Biur.*



In June, back in Bombay, he witnesses the resurrection of his guru.

• In September 1936 Yogananda visits England for a few weeks and arrives in late October in New York.

In late 1936 he is back at Mt. Washington.

It was hoped by many Indians that Yogananda would remain in India now. But God was already calling him inwardly back to America. His guru's death was a further, outward, sign that God was releasing him to go. Accordingly, in 1936, he returned to Mt. Washington. And now a new phase of his mission began.

### Back in America:

• 1936 Returning from India, Yogananda is given the Encinitas hermitage as a gift from his most advanced disciple, Rajarsi Janakananda.

A period of writing begins for Yogananda.

• 1938 Publication of "Cosmic Chants"

In conjunction with his early visions of Mt. Washington, Yogananda had always seen two other buildings. The first was the main hall of his Ranchi school. The other had yet to be found. It was a beautiful hermitage somewhere by the sea.

Several times, while driving down the California coast to San Diego, he had felt attracted to a certain spot in the little town of Encinitas. Each time he had received the inner prompting: "Wait. Not yet." Obedient to the divine guidance, he had never pursued the matter further. But after his return from India a surprise awaited him. On the very spot that had attracted him on those drives, Mr. James J. Lynn, a wealthy disciple and highly advanced spiritually, had purchased and built the hermitage of his visions! Here it was that Paramhansaji, as many people now began calling him, spent most of his time over the next several years writing books, including his spiritual classic, *Autobiography of a Yogi*.

His days now were an idyll of divine tranquillity. After years of traveling, of spiritual "campaigning," and of courageously meeting a never-ending series of challenges to his mission, he was able to enjoy for a time some of the fruits of his labors. The challenges he met now were in the more congenial realm of spiritual ideas.



*The Cosmic Chanter*



*Writing and establishing his work*

- 1938 Construction of the Golden Lotus Temple of All Religions at Encinitas. (The first one, as Yogananda writes, to carry the name “of All Religions”). It slipped into the ocean in 1942.
- 1938 Dedication of the Self-Realization Church of All Religions in Washington, DC.
- 1939 The YSS headquarter was established in Dakshineswar, India
- 1941 Yogananda founds a Yoga University at Mount Washington (which discontinued because of lack of interest from the public)

Within a year and two months of the loss of the Encinitas temple, two new places of worship were established. The first was in Hollywood, at 4860 Sunset Boulevard, dedicated in August 1942. The second was in San Diego, at 3072 First Avenue, dedicated in September 1943. The Master now began lecturing in these churches on alternate Sundays.

This increase in his public activities attracted an ever-larger number of lay disciples to the churches, in addition to those coming to live as renunciates at his Mt. Washington and Encinitas ashrams. It was now that an old dream, one that he had often described in lectures and in magazine articles, began to take definite shape.

One of the primary aims of his work had been, as he put it, “to spread a spirit of brotherhood among all people, and to aid in establishing, in many countries, self-sustaining colonies for plain living and high thinking.” It was to the establishment of such a “world brotherhood colony,” as he called it, that he now turned most of his energies.

- 1942 A Self-Realization Church of All Religions was built and dedicated in Hollywood
- Early 40ies: Yogananda starts a “World-Brotherhood Colony” at Encinitas, inviting families. It stopped due to lack of interest of the public.
- 1943 A Self-Realization Church of All Religions was dedicated in San Diego
- 1944 Publication of “Attributes of Success”, now: Laws of Success
- 1946 Publication of his most famous book, Autobiography of a Yogi.

In 1946 his best-known book, Autobiography of a Yogi, was published. Its appearance marked the beginning of the last chapter of his life: the completion of his major literary works, and the arrival of a veritable flood of new disciples.

- 1947 A Self-Realization Church of All Religions was dedicated in Long Beach
- 1947? Publication of his guru's book: "The Holy Science"
- 1948 A Self-Realization Church of All Religions was dedicated in Phoenix
- 1948 In June, Yogananda experiences the supreme state of samadhi

In the summer of 1948 he experienced a supreme state of ecstasy. God, in the form of the Divine Mother of the Universe, showed him the secrets of cosmic creation. It was as though, in lifting these last veils, She wanted to prepare him for his own departure from this stage of material appearances....

Increasingly, during these last years of his life, he spent his time working on his writings. One of the major assignments that his guru had given him was to demonstrate the intrinsic compatibility of the Indian Scriptures, particularly the Bhagavad Gita, with the Old and New Testaments. At Twenty-Nine Palms he wrote commentaries on the Bhagavad Gita, Genesis, and Revelation. (The teachings of Revelation he said, are "pure yoga.") He had already completed detailed commentaries on the four Gospels of the Bible.



*Yogananda with his enlightened disciple, Rajarsi Janakananda*



*In his last years he is more withdrawn, ecstatic, impersonal*

- 1948 Swami Kriyananda becomes Yogananda's disciple
- 1949 The "Lake Shrine" property is donated to Yogananda, which he dedicates as a shrine in August 1950
- 1951 The India Center in Hollywood is dedicated
- 1950-52 Yogananda spends much time in his desert retreat "Twenty-Nine Palms" to complete his writings, especially his Bhagavad Gita commentaries



*Swami Kriyananda  
serving his Guru*

Within this period of time, too, he acquired several new properties: a retreat in the desert at Twenty-Nine Palms, California, where he went for periods of seclusion to work on completing his writings; a new church in Long Beach, California, and another one in Phoenix, Arizona; and a lake and temple in Pacific Palisades, California. He also developed the already-existing church property in Hollywood, adding an auditorium and an excellent vegetarian restaurant.

The lake and temple in Pacific Palisades were dedicated by him in 1950. This was his last and most beautiful center. The SRF Lake Shrine, as he called it, forms a natural bowl of steep hillside around a charming jewel of a lake. It contains a church, an outdoor temple, little shrines to each of the major religions of the world, and beautiful flower gardens. The Lake Shrine is enjoyed by many thousands of visitors every year.

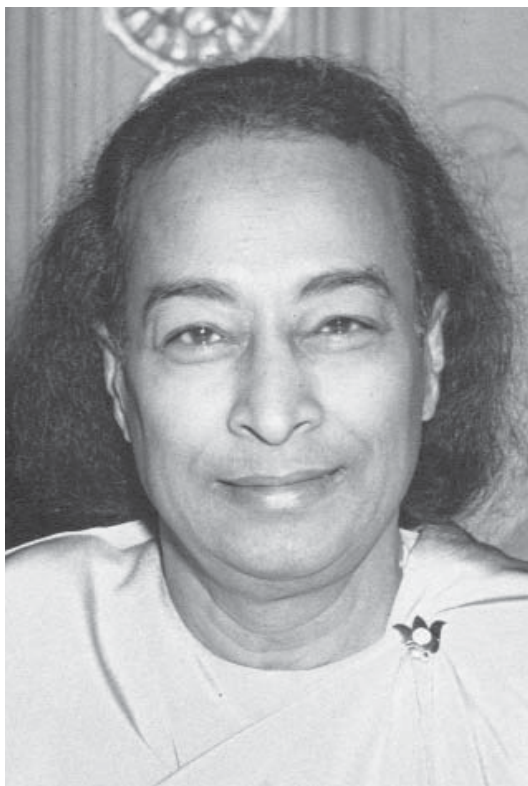
It was on March 7, 1952, that he left his body. It had been an incredibly fruitful life. By the time it ended, SRF centers flourished in many countries. Yogananda's disciples around the world numbered many tens of thousands. He had opened the West to India's teachings in a way that no other teacher has ever succeeded in doing. This was the first time that a great master from India had spent the greater part of his life in the West. It is largely as a result of his teaching and radiant personal example that there has been, in recent decades, such widespread and growing interest in India's spiritual teachings.



### **Mahasamadhi:**

On March 7, 1952, in the Biltmore Hotel in Los Angeles, during a function for Mr. Sen, the Indian ambassador to the USA, Yogananda consciously leaves his body. He had known the day, cause and circumstance of his passing beforehand.

His case is unique in America's history: For three weeks, up to the point the casket is closed, Yogananda's body shows none of the normal signs of physical decay, odor, or disintegration. The Western world is amazed as it witnesses a “phenomenal state of Immutability”.



“Only Love can take my place!”