

Pages Excerpted from:

Rajarsi Janakananda

(James J. Lynn)

A Great Western Yogi

The Life of Paramahansa Yogananda's
First Spiritual Successor



Sel - cal zat on Fellowship

FOUNDED 1914

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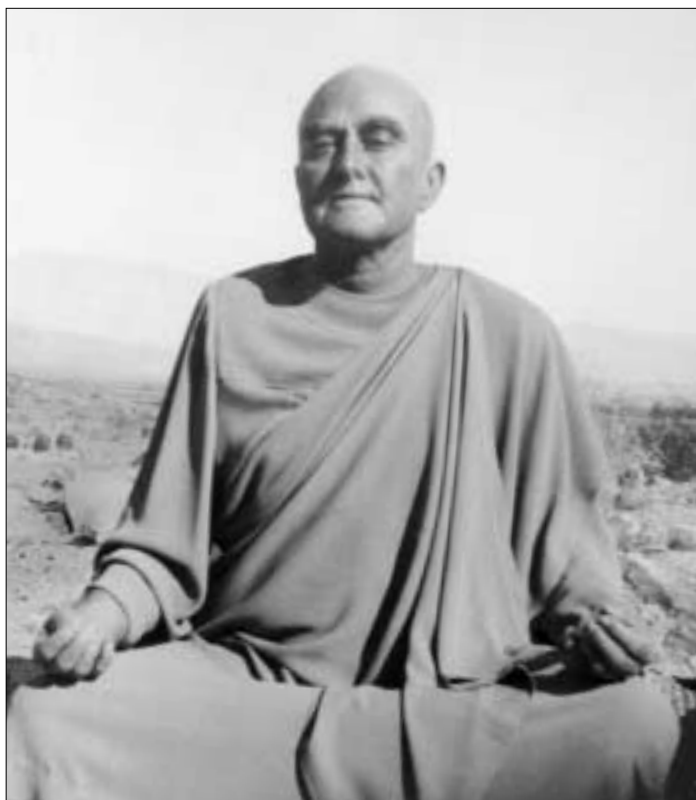
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RAJARSI JANAKANANDA

(JAMES JESSE LYNN)

May 5, 1892–February 20, 1955

Revered president, 1952–1955, of Self-Realization Fellowship
and Yogoda Satsanga Society of India.

Ideal disciple of Paramahansa Yogananda for more than
twenty-three years.

Rajarsi Janakananda (James J. Lynn)

"...one of the most sensational American success stories."

—Kansas City Star

"...one of Kansas City's most remarkable stories of individual brilliance and achievement."

—Kansas City Times

"The scope of his activities implies that he is one of the busiest executives in this part of the United States."

—Kansas City Star

"...people who like the ring of the term 'business empire' could put him in the empire class...."

—Kansas City Star

"...I have never seen him when he was not inwardly communing with God."

"...he has attained in samadhi the grace of unshakable peace."

"Because God is reflected in his countenance, his very face sends me into the inner spiritual ecstasy of God's presence."

"In him and in a number of other Occidentals I happily see a fulfillment of Babaji's prophecy that the West, too, would produce saints of true Self-realization through the ancient yogic path."

—Paramahansa Yogananda

One of the most extraordinary and inspiring stories in the annals of modern spirituality lies behind the fact that all of the above statements refer to the same man.

Known to the business world as James J. Lynn, he is revered by countless Self-Realization Fellowship members and friends as Rajarsi Janakananda, beloved and exalted disciple of Paramahansa Yogananda and his first spiritual successor as president of Self-Realization Fellowship/Yogoda Satsanga Society of India.

James Jesse Lynn was born on May 5, 1892, near the small village of Archibald, Louisiana. The remarkable story of his rise from poverty-stricken beginnings to become a self-made millionaire—and of his transformation from business magnate to God-illuminated saint—is recounted in the following biographical sketches.



SAINT LYNN (RAJARSI JANAKANANDA), 1933

Paramahansa Yogananda remarked: "As my great Master said years ago, 'You will find some saintly souls in America.' And I really believed it when I saw Mr. Lynn. I hope you will all follow his saintly example."

Saint Lynn: The Business Magnate Who Became God-Illumined

(From "Rajarsi Janakananda: A Centennial Tribute")

Though the extraordinary outer success of James J. Lynn won him the deep respect of the business community, newspaper accounts of his life do not fully reveal his supreme achievement in life—his inner spiritual attainment. So great was his spiritual advancement through Kriya Yoga that Paramahansa Yogananda referred to him as Saint Lynn. The following account, taken from an article published in Self-Realization magazine in commemoration of Rajarsi's birth centennial in 1992, sheds more light on the spiritual side of this self-made millionaire who became a God-realized master through India's ancient science of yoga.

It was in January 1932 that James J. Lynn met his guru, Paramahansa Yogananda, who later bestowed on him the spiritual title and name of Rajarsi Janakananda.* By that time, Rajarsi was a financial success by any standard. His inner life, however, was another matter. "My life was business," he later said, "but my soul was sick and my body was decaying and my mind was disturbed. I was so nervous I couldn't sit still."

"I was a totally frustrated man," he recounted on another occasion. "I had thought money could give me happiness, but nothing seemed to satisfy me. I lived in a state of nervousness, a state of strain, an inward state of uncertainty. Then I met Paramahansa Yogananda and started to practice yoga."

That meeting proved to be the most significant turning point in the life of Rajarsi Janakananda. It also marked a new era in the history of

* The monastic name Rajarsi Janakananda was bestowed on Mr. Lynn by Paramahansa Yogananda in 1951. (See page 47.) To avoid the confusion of two names, Rajarsi is referred to by his monastic name throughout this article.

Paramahansa Yogananda's world mission.* "Shortly before meeting Rajarsi," Sri Daya Mata has written, "the Guru had passed through grave times trying to keep his work from total collapse. It was a period of great upheaval in the society; and the burdens, financial and otherwise, seemed almost insurmountable. Recognizing Paramahansaji† as his divine guru, and embracing the Self-Realization Fellowship teachings as his everyday way of life, Rajarsi also assumed many of the financial burdens of the society."

The scriptures of India say that when a great master comes to this world with a God-ordained mission for the upliftment of humanity, he brings with him advanced disciples from past incarnations to assist his work. In a talk in 1942, Paramahansaji referred to this, saying: "A great saint in India used to cry, 'O my dear ones, where are you? Wherever you are, come to me.' And one by one they came as his disciples in this life. So it is with these close disciples around me: I knew them before....When I heard the name of Mr. Lynn I knew that I had known him before. I knew that such a one would be sent to me."

In a 1932 letter to ashram residents at Self-Realization Fellowship headquarters in Los Angeles, Paramahansaji wrote: "Lecture campaign work at Kansas City and meeting some of the most spiritual Yogoda students there has been one of the greatest happinesses of my life." Such was Rajarsi's receptivity that in that first meeting, in January 1932, the Guru was able to transmit to him the experience of *samadhi*, ecstatic union with God. In a lecture in 1933, Paramahansaji said: "A wealthy Kansas City man, the first day we met, touched Christ Consciousness. His soul was ripe. When he received the Kriya technique he said, 'Life boils within my spine. That is the technique I have been seeking. I have found God.'‡ He meditated six hours with me the first day."

* See pp. 184–85. Paramahansa Yogananda had been sent to America from India by his Guru in 1920, to found Self-Realization Fellowship as the means of disseminating worldwide the ancient spiritual science of Kriya Yoga. (In India Paramahansa Yogananda's work is known as Yogoda Satsanga Society. He also used "Yogoda" to refer to his work in America in the early years.)

†The suffix "ji" is customarily added to names in India as a means of expressing respect.

‡Reference to Kriya Yoga, an advanced technique of meditation taught by Paramahansa Yogananda in the *Self-Realization Fellowship Lessons*, which enables the practitioner to centralize the life energy in the spine and brain, effecting a blissful awakening of the subtle spiritual centers of divine perception.



A Westerner in *samadhi* (superconsciousness), January 1937, Encinitas. Mr. Lynn said: "The love and joy of God that I feel is without any end. One can never forget it once he has tasted it; it is so great he could never want anything else to take its place."

Balancing Business Success and Spiritual Success

Even after his profoundly transforming spiritual awakening, Rajarsi continued a full schedule of business activities for another twenty years. Though he now devoted more time to his spiritual life and less to his corporation, his business continued to grow and prosper. However, the requirements of his business prevented Rajarsi from remaining for long periods in the Guru's ashram; and he was well acquainted with the difficulties of keeping centered in God while living in a demanding worldly environment. He once wrote to Paramahansaji:

Only my love for Divine Mother is wanted. How distressed I am when pulled away from Her and from communion with Her loved ones. I cannot live *of* the world and would prefer not to live *in* it. Drinking, smoking, and worldliness, selfishness in business and otherwise, just kill my soul—it is this environment that causes me such intense suffering. Will meditate and try to get away from the world. Am with you in spirit....how joyful it would be to be with you in person. But there are yet many things I must do before my work and business are in condition for me to leave again. I am looking forward with deepest earnestness to my return home. What a heavenly blessing that will be. Please do write often....Even short notes or just a word from your heart help to sustain me to a degree that I know it is hard for you to realize. When one knows the sweetness of Heaven on earth and is snatched away by worldly environment he suffers the agonies of hades, but my heart will be stout enough to carry on.

Divine blessings, devotion, and boundless love,
Your little boy

That stoutness of heart and his Guru's loving guidance enabled Rajarsi to persevere in his spiritual efforts despite all outer distractions, until he was firmly established in the divine consciousness. Sri Daya Mata, president of Self-Realization Fellowship/Yogoda Satsanga Society of India since 1955, has described how Rajarsi was able to balance his spiritual life with the demands of his business empire: "Master* told him: 'I make one request of you—that in spite of your many responsibilities,

*"Master" is a respectful title often used by disciples when referring to Paramahansa Yogananda—one who had attained self-mastery. It serves as an English equivalent for "Guru," the customary Sanskrit term for one's spiritual preceptor.



Guru and disciple, Encinitas, 1938. "How heavenly it is to enjoy the company of a saint!" Rajarsi said. "Of all the things that have come to me in life, I treasure more than all else the blessings Paramahansaji has bestowed on me."

you arrange your schedule so that you have a period of meditation each day.' Rajarsi resolved to follow his Guru's instructions, no matter how difficult it might be. Conditions at his home were not favorable, so he arose early each morning and went to his office to meditate. To insure that he was not interrupted, he would leave a note on his secretary's desk, which she would see when she came to work: 'I am in conference. Please do not disturb.' He smiled when he said to us: 'Of course, I never let on that I was "in conference" with God.' The staff may not have understood what he was doing, but they had tremendous respect for him; and it was accepted that until ten a.m. every day, he was 'in conference.' This continued for all the years from the time

he met Master until his retirement. It was the foundation of his liberating spiritual progress."

As Rajarsi deepened in God-realization, Paramahansaji often publicly referred to him as "Saint Lynn." On one occasion the Guru said: "As my great Master said years ago, 'You will find some saintly souls in America.' And I really believed it when I saw Mr. Lynn. I hope you will all follow his saintly example."

The Simplicity of a Great Soul

Though in his outer activities Rajarsi expressed the dynamic will and drive-to-accomplish necessary to create a business empire, to those who knew him as a devotee of God it was his quiet humility that most characterized his personality. "I have never seen anyone more humble than he," Paramahansaji often said. Rajarsi signed most of his letters to his Guru "Little one," or simply with a small dot followed by a one.

Sri Daya Mata has described the humble simplicity of this great soul, which so impressed her when she met Rajarsi in 1933 during his first visit to Mt. Washington (SRF Headquarters in Los Angeles):

"One evening Master called me to his kitchen and asked me to bring him a needle and a spool of black thread. He was holding a pair of suspenders. When I had brought the requested articles he began to sew up a rent in the suspenders. I quickly offered to do the work, but he replied: 'Oh, no, I will fix these myself. Can you imagine! Mr. Lynn has worn these same suspenders for ten years.' Master was filled with delight and affection, realizing that although Mr. Lynn could have purchased almost anything, he had lived so simply that one pair of suspenders had been worn and mended over a period of ten years.

"This incident left an indelible impression on my mind. Truly Rajarsi was one of those great devotees who had learned to live 'in the world, but not of it.' His simplicity was untouched by the material success he had achieved. He was the most humble of men, his mind ever remaining fixed on God."

Brother Bhaktananda, a Self-Realization Fellowship monk since 1939, has said: "Rajarsi Janakananda was a very quiet person. He spoke very little, except perhaps to give us a few suggestions about meditation. On several occasions he asked me to walk with him on the ashram grounds. He kept silent for the most part; but from time to time he

would say, almost as if marveling to himself: 'What Master has done for me! What Master has done for me!' He never talked about all the things he had done for Master—only what Master had done for him."

"He hardly talked when he was with us," recalls Brother Anandamoy, a member of the Self-Realization Fellowship Board of Directors. "When he said anything, it was 'Master's light; Master's love.' He was so absorbed in it; he radiated it."

A Message From Swami Sri Yukteswar

In 1935 Paramahansaji was summoned back to India by his guru, Swami Sri Yukteswar. That great Master knew his time to leave the earth was fast approaching, and recalled his beloved disciple for one last visit. Rajarsi generously provided the funds for Paramahansaji's journey. (Extracts from letters written by Paramahansaji to Rajarsi during the trip are printed on pages 63–133.)

Sri Yukteswarji entered *mahasamadhi* a few months after Paramahansaji and he were reunited. Following are excerpts from a letter written by Paramahansaji to Rajarsi—seven months after Sri Yukteswar's passing:

October 1, 1936

There is just a thin screen of ether between the world and Master [Sri Yukteswar]. He is more real to me than ever, and of great influence, for he is guiding me without the impediments of a body and worldly limitations. Whenever I have arrived at a crossroad in my life he has torn the ether as if with a knife and shown himself unto me. All that he said during his lifetime on earth he is repeating within me now: "Yogananda, I am not only in Serampore but everywhere, and from Omnipresence I shall guide thee." It is wonderful to find that all things he told about are being brought to fruition. He often tells me to say how sorry he is not to have given a written message for you while he was still in the earthly body. He is now writing through me as I write to you:

"Beloved son, your life and actions have glorified us. You are a celestial instrument. Expand fearlessly in the realm of renunciation for the cause of Self-Realization, India, and humanity. India's spiritual habits mark your forehead. Your actions are joyfully recognized and witnessed by the All-Supreme and by the Gurus."

After I had received the above message, Sri Yukteswar vanished from within and I was at once called away on some urgent

work; so now I start to write to you after a lapse of two days. My Guru wanted to tell something more to you, but he must have felt somebody was going to call me. Whenever I hear from him about you and me I will tell you. This is very sacred and strange. What is unreal to millions is real to me.

My heart is purged of all desires except the desire for the fulfillment of the duties assigned to me and to you; after that, wherever I am, I shall roam in the ether, blessing you constantly, guiding you with my love and life until I meet you in the Father's mansion. That is my task, and ever I am grateful that by your nobility and constant effort you have made it easy for me to work to that end. That is my inspiration to write to you, for my letters to you are letters that God writes through me. Compare and reread each line of all the letters I write to you and you will feel His presence. I feel the same in most of your letters, for none in this world has so well responded to me and drawn so much love out of me. In purity and blessedness I will deliver you unto the Lord.

Many years, since childhood, I dreamed of somebody that would be pure, exemplary, God-bent alone, and powerful to accomplish in the world. God fulfilled my desire: in you I behold an ideal one who loves me unconditionally. The love of parents, of woman, is imperfect, as they have the compulsion of instinct or sex attraction; but love between souls like you and me is perfect, for there is only pure unconditional surrender. I love you not only because of what you are now, but because you were sent to me that I express toward you a perfect divine love.

When I leave the mortal coil and enter the Omnipresent Electricity—God's great love came over me just now as I thought of your dear self. I'm happy beyond dreams, finding so much happiness in you.

Whenever I am with you I want to talk only of God. I do not like to talk of negative things. This rule I have faithfully observed and would ever like to observe; for I never can brook any breach of unloveliness even to touch your sacredness. My words to you encourage you to race endlessly for more and more perfection. Ever expand in God until you behold the body changed into energy, the mind into the greater mind, and your soul into Spirit.

The Encinitas Hermitage Years

When Paramahansaji returned from India, a special surprise had been prepared for him by Rajarsi—a hermitage overlooking the Pacific Ocean at Encinitas, California. In his *Autobiography of a Yogi*, Paramahansaji wrote:

“During my stay in India and Europe (June 1935 to October 1936), Mr. Lynn had lovingly plotted with my correspondents in California to prevent any word from reaching me about the construction of the ashram in Encinitas. Astonishment, delight!

“During my earlier years in America I had combed the coast of California in quest of a small site for a seaside ashram. Whenever I had found a suitable location some obstacle had invariably arisen to thwart me. Gazing now over the sunny acres in Encinitas, humbly I saw the fulfillment of Sri Yukteswar’s long-ago prophecy: ‘a retreat by the ocean.’ ”

As often as he was able to leave his business, Rajarsi would join his Guru at the new retreat. Paramahansaji remarked during this period, “In the Encinitas hermitage, St. Lynn and I have been meditating day and night. I have a hard time even getting him to eat or sleep. In this country I have never before known such unity and friendship, such divine communion.”

Durga Mata, a disciple of Paramahansa Yogananda from 1929 until her passing in 1993 (a Board member and Secretary of Self-Realization Fellowship until her retirement in 1986), was assigned by Paramahansaji to look after the cooking, secretarial, and other such needs of Rajarsi when he was in residence in Encinitas—a blessed duty she fulfilled until Rajarsi left his body in 1955. In an informal gathering with devotees, she shared some of her personal recollections: “To see Master and Rajarsi together was one of the sweetest things you could experience; it was like glimpsing a bit of heaven. Master’s eyes became liquid pools of divine love, as when a mother looks at her child—only much, much more. Each time they met it was as though they were meeting for the first time—their relationship was always new. That is what pure love is; it never grows old. In Master and Rajarsi we saw the highest expression of the pure love of the guru and disciple relationship—the melting, the blending, of pure love.

“Rajarsi was both very spiritual and very methodical—he wasn’t born with material wealth; his success came because he earned it. His



Two views of Self-Realization Fellowship Hermitage—a gift from Rajarsi to Paramahansa Yogananda in 1936—overlooking the Pacific Ocean, Encinitas, California. Elsewhere on the spacious grounds are ashram residences and a Self-Realization Fellowship Retreat. An SRF Temple is nearby.

material environment made many demands on him, but he was very strong-willed and high-principled: he never drank, he never smoked, he never swore, he was always honest. When I first met him he was more business than spiritual—except when he was in Master's presence. Gradually through meditation the balance came between business and spirituality. He did not have it easy. He fought for his meditations, and he won. Towards the end, he was all spiritual, and businessman nil.

"After Master left his body, I would sometimes read to Rajarsi from letters Master had written to him. Rajarsi was not an emotional person at all; but when he felt Master's love, tears would come to his eyes—not tears of sorrow that Master was no longer in the body, but tears of love. As though experiencing for the first time the unconditional love of the Guru for his disciple, he would say, 'I did not know he loved me so much!' He would just become drowned in that love, inwardly dancing in that love. He would repeat over and over: 'Joy, joy, Master's joy! Love, love, Master's love!'"

A Perfect Divine Friendship

Sri Daya Mata has described the perfect divine friendship that existed between these two lovers of God, one the Master, one the disciple—him whom Paramahansaji called his "little one" and his "most blessed beloved little one."

"During those times when Master and Rajarsi were in Encinitas together, every evening at sunset they could be seen walking hand in hand like two small children, up and down the flagstone path on the lawn in front of the Hermitage. Their eyes would be shining with the love and friendship they shared with God and with each other. Sometimes Master would be speaking about some deep philosophical subject, and then his 'little one' would remain quiet, listening intently. At other times both would be silent, absorbed in the inner bliss.

"Never have I seen such a sweet friendship and such a reverential relationship as that expressed between these two divine souls. With hearts lifted on high with inspiration, and with a lump in our throats, we young disciples, along with dear Gyanamata, used to stand by the windows, following with our gaze and devotion these two whose companionship is epitomized in Master's poem, 'Friendship.'* We never felt

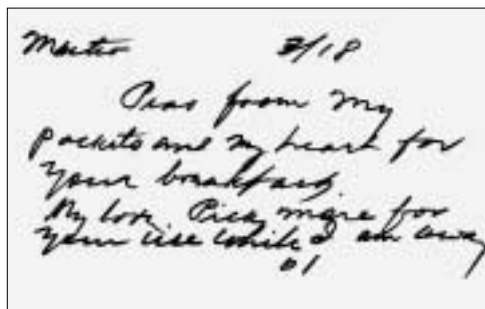
* In *Songs of the Soul*, published by Self-Realization Fellowship.

shut out—our hearts' devotion became one with theirs as our consciousness merged in a transcendent union at the feet of Divine Mother."

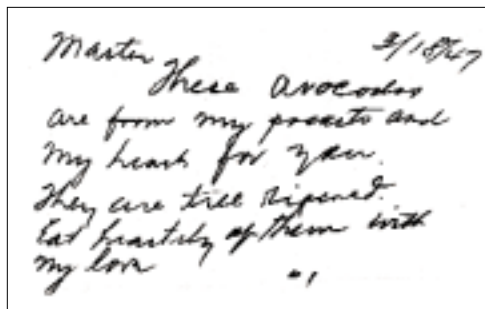
Brother Premamoy, a Self-Realization Fellowship monk who met Rajarsi in 1952, once said: "The friendship between Master and his disciple Rajarsi Janakananda demonstrated perfectly the ideal of respect as the basis of all human relationships. Our Guru treated Rajarsi as a friend, and also as a son, but at the same time as a disciple. And Rajarsi gave Master the same kind of respect—as to a friend, to a father, and above all, to the guru. At times, their relationship was expressed in a childlike simplicity.

"Yet beyond the friend, beyond the father, it was mainly the guru that Rajarsi saw in Paramahansaji. Master often said that Rajarsi had fulfilled one-hundred percent the wishes of his heart. This was not a statement lightly made by our Guru. Rajarsi's attitude of complete re-

Handwritten notes from Rajarsi to Paramahansaji. So humble was this ideal disciple that he frequently signed his notes to the Guru "Little one," or simply with a small dot followed by a one. When staying at Encinitas, Rajarsi supervised the work in the vegetable gardens as his ashram task. These notes accompanied offerings of produce from Rajarsi to his Guru.



Master 3/1/57
 Peace from my
 pockets and my heart for
 your breakfast.
 My love. Peace more for
 you like while I am away
 01



Master 3/1/57
 These avocados
 are from my pockets and
 my heart for you.
 They are tree ripened.
 Eat heartily of them with
 my love
 01

spect had enabled him to achieve perfect attunement with the Guru and become a liberated soul.”

Rajarsi's relationship with his Guru was characterized by a profound receptivity to every nuance of the Guru's spiritual counsel. Paramahansaji once said: “When students ask me why Saint Lynn was able to make such rapid spiritual progress, I reply: ‘He knows how to listen.’ ”

An Exemplar of the Guru's Teachings

It was because of Rajarsi's perfect mastery of the Self-Realization Fellowship teachings that Paramahansaji so often extolled him publicly as an example for all on the path. Brother Anandamoy has said: “Near the end of Master's life, Guruji asked Rajarsi to say a few words to the assembled guests and disciples at a Christmas banquet. In Master's presence Rajarsi always tried to stay in the background, avoiding the limelight. So he said to Master: ‘Oh, no, you talk. You can do it so much better than I.’

“The instant he uttered these words, however, he got up and started to address the gathering. He realized that he had contradicted his Guru; he had shown reluctance when Master had asked him to do something. Immediately he corrected himself. There was not a second of delay.

“He had a very soft voice, and quietly he said, ‘I have the Christ Consciousness. Nobody has to tell me what it is. I know. I have experienced it.’ Then he said, ‘When the ego steps out, God steps in. When the ego steps in, God steps out. There is not room for both.’ There was not a trace of pride in his words; it was simply his humble, sincere testimony to what one can attain through practice of these teachings.”

Another disciple of Paramahansaji has related an example of the great humility of this exalted soul: “I remember an encounter with Rajarsi at the formal opening of the Lake Shrine. After the dedication ceremony, which was conducted by Master, many of the guests congregated around the grounds in little groups. This went on for quite some time.

“Rajarsi came over by the Gandhi Memorial, and was talking to a group of about eight or ten people. He was discussing the sacred experience of communion with the *Aum*, and the state of Cosmic Consciousness. My mother, who didn't know Rajarsi, was part of that group. And as he was describing Cosmic Consciousness, my rather gregarious



Rajarsi Janakananda outside the Self-Realization Fellowship Hermitage,
Encinitas, California, 1951

mother interrupted: 'Well! I can explain that much better.' Imagine!

"I moved over to her as quickly as I could. I kept trying to poke her with my elbow, but she continued her 'discourse.' Then I tried stepping on her foot. At last in desperation I blurted out: 'Mother, you don't know who you're talking to!' And she finally stopped. I then introduced them: 'Saint Lynn, this is my mother. Mother, this is Saint Lynn, and he knows God.'

"He greeted her very graciously; there was absolutely no sign of offense. My mother apologized right away: 'I'm so sorry. I didn't know who you were.' With childlike humility, Rajarsi said: 'Oh, that's all right. One can never know all of God. He is ever new, always expanding. He just goes on and on expanding throughout eternity—ever new Joy.'

"What a beautiful explanation! It made a tremendous impression on me. Here was an active American businessman, not a hermit who was free to meditate in a Himalayan cave. Yet he could apply these teachings to his life and manifest complete realization of their truth. This is a real ray of hope for the rest of us Westerners! He was still busy in the world at that time, looking after his business responsibilities. But his consciousness was at all times totally absorbed in God and Master."

Paramahansaji often pointed out to those who admired Rajarsi's business accomplishments that his spiritual achievements were far more important. "I remember one evening when Master and I were walking on the lawn in front of the Hermitage," recalled Meera Mata, a close disciple of Paramahansaji's. "Rajarsi was sitting on the ground in lotus posture. Without saying anything, Master took me by the hand and led me quietly away. When we had gone some distance, Master said, 'Let us not disturb him. Rajarsi is doing more good by the depth of his meditations than by all the money he has given to the work. If only you could all realize how important meditation is. In changing yourself you have already changed thousands. Always remember Rajarsi sitting here meditating and serving me in this way.' "

In 1951, after the last Kriya Yoga initiation ceremony that Paramahansaji conducted, the Guru bestowed upon his disciple formal vows in the ancient monastic Swami Order. He gave him the name of Rajarsi Janakananda, and announced that he would be his first successor as president of the worldwide society. "He has mastered *sabikalpa samadhi*," Paramahansaji informed those present, "and

A LETTER TO PARAMAHANSA YOGANANDA
IN MR. LYNN'S HANDWRITING

*"I have dived deeper into God than ever before,
and wherever I go will be with Him"*

Encinitas, Calif.
April 22nd 1951

Blessed Beloved Master,

Just a short last note before my departure for Kansas City. It is difficult to realize that I must depart this holy environment and cast myself again into the busy, noisy, and noisy environment. I have dived deeper into God this time than ever before, and wherever I go will be with Him.

The dates you sent are delicious and I have eaten generously of them since they came. The variety gives me a change from the Deglet Noors [dates grown in Indio, California] although all are good and the change is welcome and enjoyed. The Deglet Noors are the best—so you and I think. Thank you for your loving thought of me.

Good-bye for a while
and with all my blessings and love—
Little one—

Encinitas, Calif.
April 22nd [1951]

Blessed Beloved Master:

Just a short last note before my departure for Kansas City. It is difficult to realize that I must depart this holy environment and cast myself again into the busy and noisy environment. I have dived deeper into God this time than ever before, and wherever I go will be with Him.

The dates you sent are delicious and I have eaten generously of them since they came. The variety gives me a change from the Deglet Noors [dates grown in Indio, California] although all are good and the change is welcome and enjoyed. The Deglet Noors are the best—so you and I think. Thank you for your loving thought of me.

Good-bye for a while, and with all my blessings and love,

Little one

he is rapidly approaching the *nirbikalpa* state.”*

Spiritual Successor to Paramahansa Yogananda

The *mahasamadhi*† of Paramahansa Yogananda in 1952 was a catastrophic blow to the Guru’s thousands of followers worldwide. Many wondered, “How will this work go on without a living guru?” Mrinalini Mata, close disciple of Paramahansaji’s and vice president of Self-Realization Fellowship, has observed: “Often, when a spiritual leader leaves the body, his work gradually dies out. But you will see that though Paramahansaji’s *mahasamadhi* was so many years ago, his spiritual family, his society, is growing steadfastly. Why? Because those whom Guru chose to represent him in the leadership of his organization have had the humility, and the divine attunement with God’s will, to keep before all who come, not themselves, but the image of God alone, Guru alone.”

The first Self-Realization Fellowship Convocation after Paramahansaji’s passing was held in July 1952. Rajarsi, as the new president of Self-Realization Fellowship, was scheduled to speak. Brother Anandamoy recalls:

“Many members expected that Rajarsi would assume the role of Guru (not knowing that Master had declared that it was God’s will that he be the last in the line of SRF Gurus), because they thought they had to have a guru in the body, one whom they could see and hear. It would have been very easy for Rajarsi to have proclaimed himself Guru because of his great spiritual power and magnetism. But what he said at that gathering firmly established the course of Self-Realization Fellowship for all future generations. Very simply, in a quiet voice, he told the members, ‘There will be no other guru. Master will always be our guru.’

* Rajarsi recounted how, some months after Paramahansaji’s passing, the Master’s blessing enabled him to achieve the highest state of *nirbikalpa samadhi*. Brother Anandamoy recalls: “Rajarsi said that for three days, he had a complete spiritual blackout. In his meditations he felt absolutely nothing, no matter how much he tried. And for a person who had mastered *sabikalpa samadhi* that must have been quite a letdown! There was no spiritual light; absolutely nothing. Finally, after three days, he saw a tiny point of light in the Christ center. He told me, ‘I entered that light, and it gradually got bigger and bigger, until eventually it was infinite. And I was merged with that light. Now it doesn’t make any difference anymore whether I have a body or no body; it is all the same to me.’ ”

†A great yogi’s final, conscious exit from the body at the time of physical death.

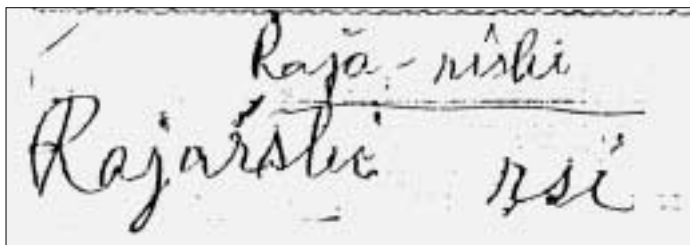


Paramahansa Yogananda's hands are uplifted in blessing on his beloved disciple, on whom he had just bestowed *sannyas*, and the monastic name of Rajarsi Janakananda; SRF-YSS International Headquarters, Los Angeles, August 25, 1951.

"Then he said, *'He is here.'* He wasn't referring to the Master's physical presence, but to his omnipresent spiritual presence. *Just feel and receive.'* As he said these words a wave of divine power flowed over the whole audience—a tremendous surge of spiritual upliftment—and no one could doubt that he was right: The Master is alive."

Passing of the Guru's Mantle

Mrinalini Mata has said: "In India there is the spiritual tradition called *guru-parampara*—that is, the custom wherein the guru bestows his mantle of spirituality and authority on his successor. In Self-Realization Fellowship this continuity is certainly there. We have seen its unmistakable evidence in our revered Rajarsi Janakananda and Sri Daya Mata.



MEANING OF NAME, "RAJARSI JANAKANANDA"

Rajarsi is a spiritual title meaning "royal rishi"; Janakananda means "the bliss of Janaka." Janaka was a great king as well as a fully Self-realized master of ancient India.

Shown above is a note jotted by Paramahansaji while he was explaining the meaning of the monastic title he bestowed on his beloved disciple. The Sanskrit word "Rajarsi" is composed of *rāja*, "king" + *ṛṣi*, "rishi, illumined saint or sage." (Sanskrit is traditionally written in the Devanagari script of fifty characters. In Western alphabets, the Sanskrit vowel *ṛ* is often transliterated as *ri* and the *ṣ* as *sh*. The pronunciation is as shown in Paramahansaji's handwritten phonetic spelling *Rajarsi*.)

Paramahansaji said: "For you, St. Lynn, I interpret this title as 'king of the saints.'"

An early misspelling as "Rajasi," in which the *ṛ* in *ṛṣi* (rishi) is dropped, means "in the quality of *rajas*," the activating force in Nature; and is also the name of an aspect of the Divine Mother, God's creative or "activating force" in Nature. Neither of these definitions is related to the meaning of the spiritual title given by Paramahansaji to Rajarsi and penned by him as deriving from *rāja* (king) and *ṛṣi* (saint).

"I well remember the period shortly after Master left his body. Rajarsi was in such a sublime state of consciousness. So many times Master's presence became manifest in Rajarsi's body. On those occasions, Rajarsi's whole personality was gone, and it was just Master in that form. The little ways of gesturing that were so uniquely characteristic of Master, the special touch of his hand in blessing, the unusual expressions of speech and the quaint names that he had used privately with individual devotees—these we now saw expressing through Rajarsi, things Rajarsi had never done before."

Yogacharya J. M. Cuaron, disciple of Paramahansa Yogananda and leader of Self-Realization Fellowship Centers in Mexico until his passing in 1967, wrote the following shortly after Rajarsi's passing: "Last year, when I visited Encinitas, Rajarsi called me three times to his apartment to meditate with him and to give me his blessings. On these occasions he would pat my hand and head in the same way that Master used to do, with the same gestures and expressions. I hardly knew whether it were Rajarsi or Master sitting before me."

Rajarsi's oneness in Spirit with Paramahansaji enabled him to demonstrate for all future generations of disciples that a true guru is ever living; his blessings, guidance, and spiritual help are not limited by one brief span on earth or residence in a physical form. Speaking to Self-Realization monastics at Christmas 1953, Rajarsi gave the following beautiful testimony to the eternal relationship between a true guru and disciples who keep inwardly in tune with him:

One does not realize how much he changes as he proceeds along the spiritual path. After I met Master in 1932 I felt changed a great deal; but when he would say to me, "I am in you, and you are in me," I did not quite know what he meant. But now I feel the presence of Master within and around me. Indeed, I am not aware of myself anymore! All I can feel is Master.

The love of God is the only Reality. We must realize this love of God—so great, so joyful, I could not even begin to tell you how great it is! People in the world think, "I do this, I enjoy that." Yet whatever they are doing and enjoying inevitably comes to an end. But the love and joy of God that I feel is without any end. One can never forget it once he has tasted it; it is so great he could never want anything else to take its place. What we all really want is the love of God. And you will have it when you attain deeper realization.



Rajarsi Janakananda with Prabhas Chandra Ghosh, cousin of Paramahansa Yogananda and vice president of Yogoda Satsanga Society of India; Encinitas, California, 1954. See poem on page 168.

The Great Ones come to bring people back to God. Jesus came to bring realization to all men. And similarly Master came to save us, to bring us back to God. What a blessing many of us possess, to have known Master in this country! But the physical form means little; it is the soul that matters. Master is here now in an even greater way than he was when in the body. It is our joy, our grace, that we can receive his divine vibrations through following the teachings of Self-Realization Fellowship.

Master is right here. When I close my eyes, Master comes! Receive this blessing of Master, this great light, so great! and Master's greatness in it. He will touch your soul. God is coming through Master to you. Such love! Such joy!



MR. LYNN AND PARAMAHANSAJI, CHRISTMAS DAY, 1936

The photograph was taken at a banquet at Self-Realization Fellowship headquarters, Los Angeles. Paramahansaji had just returned from a visit to India. Mr. Lynn is wearing two gifts from his Guru: a “Gandhi cap” and a long shawl from Kashmir.

Mr. Lynn said: “I revere India as the land whose saints developed the highest of all sciences—yoga, the techniques for soul-exploration.

“How grateful we should be to a people whose greatest men, down the centuries, have given their lives, have renounced everything else, in order to explore the divine potentialities in man! America is rich in material accomplishments. And India is rich in the wisdom of Spirit. A combination of the two will lead to an ideal world-civilization.”

Words of Paramahansa Yogananda

About Mr. Lynn (Rajarsi Janakananda)

The following is a letter to Mr. Lynn, written by Paramahansa Yogananda in Kansas City, February 27, 1932—a few weeks after their first meeting.

This is to bless you on behalf of Babaji, Lahiri Mahasaya, Sri Yukteswarji, and myself, for saving the work at a very critical period of its existence. There is rejoicing in the inner world, for you helped the Great Ones to choose you as their luminous instrument for spreading the great emancipating Yogoda Satsanga work in the human-divine way.

The Great Ones choose able, willing devotees on earth to deliver other men from ignorance and suffering. On your human life the immortals have put their invisible hands. Blessed you are, beyond human dreams. Yes, God and the Masters could employ miracles to create big temples, but that would not change souls. But when the Great Ones find a powerful human soul who makes an altar of his heart with goodness and good works, then they come there to dwell and to work goodness.

The Great Ones love to establish a temple of Spirit in true souls like you, that wisdom-hungry devotees may come there to feast on the divine manna. Rejoice, rejoice, rejoice; and I too rejoice that the Spirit has taken the flute of your life to play the divine song of Yogoda [Self-Realization] and to lure others, truant children, back to His home.

Let us set ablaze new altars of Self-realization all over America. Let us help to drive away all darkness in men. Let us leave spiritual footprints in this dream-life, which others may follow to get out of the bedlam of misery-making nightmares, on to the region where dark dreams dare not tread—where God's fountains of bliss play in ever new ways to enthrall us, and where we may satisfy all the beautiful desires and fancies of the human soul.

With my deepest love and covenant to be your friend forever—until, crossing the portals of finitude and incarnations, we reach the bosom of the Divine Friend and become one with Him.

You are the Hindu yogi of Himalayan hermitages of the past who was sent in this life as an American prince, a Western maharaja-yogi, to light the lamp of Yogoda in many groping hearts.