

The Fifth of March, Dadhici Divas

By Ac. Amitananda Avt. and Ac. Svarupananda Avt.

When we came to Ananda Nagar and started our school in 1964, most of the people supported us. But some local government officials who visited us wanted to become members of all our boards' -the college governing body, the school governing body, the campus boards. They felt they felt know they would create problem so we didn't allow them. That antagonized one of the biggest officials in the area, and he wanted revenge. So he cut off our government subsidy for building materials and food supplies. But still we didn't allow him and others on our boards, and they became very angry.

Meanwhile some local communist leaders were instigating the villagers against us, saying that we were grabbing their lands, which was 100 percent false. Even the land that Raghunandan Singh Deo had given us, we could not fully occupy! But these leaders knew very well that the local people could be easily agitated against us on the land issue, because land is the most important thing for them-their crops are their only income. If they think someone is trying to grab their land, they become completely hostile. It was a very clever strategy that the CPM [Communist Party-Maxist] people used that we were grabbing the villagers' land.

Now the villagers are both Hindus and Moslems, and you know that the Hindus worship cows. So to instigate the Hindus against us the CPM leaders circulated leaflets that we were slaughtering cows and molesting women; and to incite the Moslems against us they said that we are fanatic Hindu sanyasis and against Moslems. So they turned many people-Moslems, Hindus, farmers and peasants-against us. They spent a huge amount of money doing so: they organized big gatherings of many people and gave them all money and liquor, and they became mad with intoxication.

In January 1967 we were sitting with BABA under the wood apple tree. We used to sit in a circle around Him on His blanket, and He would say, "My four children at the Four Corners." It was a clear moonlit night. BABA sat for a long time staring at the stars. He was very serious, not speaking thinking something very deeply. No one dared to speak.

Then Amitanandaji asked Him, "BABA, what are you looking at?"

He replied, "I am seeing the position of the stars."

"Are they telling you something?"

He answered, "Yes, they are."

"What are they saying?"

"They are saying that a very inauspicious time is soon coming."

It was not a very happy news, and we all felt rather sorry. Then BABA said, "But if it is coming, I want that it should come quickly,"

We asked Him, "Can't it be avoided?"

He answered, "No. And if it must come, it is better if it is comes early. When bad days come then we realise the value of the good days."

By the night of March 4th, 1967, it was clear that something was going to happen the next day. On the early morning of the 5th we heard the beating of heavy drums, which the tribal people use to signal war. From all over the area the beating of drums started, and everywhere around us we saw groups of people assembling. We were encircled. The biggest crowd was on the western side. The police were also there: apprehending trouble we had requested their protection.

The crowd was in a rowdy mood: they were being fed a lot of wine, even so early in the morning. At 9; AM they started approaching our ashram from a field in the west about three quarters of a kilometer away. There were thousands of people-about ten or fifteen thousand. They were fully armed with bows and arrows, spears, axes and guns, and they were mad with rage.

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They came to the checkpoint at the banyan tree in the west where we had posted a worker, and so we had to vacate that checkpoint. We had set up many hutments between the checkpoint and BABA's house, but the mob burned them all.

By the time the crowd approached Dadhici Hill it was almost 10:00 AM. Some of the workers were assembled near the hill, to prevent the crowd from coming to BABA's house, for we knew they wanted to kill BABA. The crowd attacked. The workers and trainees were fighting with sticks, but there were so many arrows coming that they fell on the hill. Eight were injured and three were killed.

When Dada Abhedanandaji, who was then BABA's P.A (Personal Assistant), saw this he knew that if we did not stop the mob, they would come straight to Baba's house. So he grabbed a lathi [stick] and cried out, "Chalo (Let's go)! Why are you running back? Let us go forward and fight!" And he charged toward the hill. As soon as he approached, the crowd surrounded him and attacked him. Within a few seconds they cut him to pieces. Then Sacidananda Dada who was watching from Jagrit Hill cried out, "Dada, Dada, what are you doing?" He too rushed toward Dadhici Hill, but the crowd took him in their arms like a small child and killed him. The police were firing teargas canisters but the wind was in our direction so the teargas came towards us, not towards the mob. Actually the police were helping the mob, not protecting us.

Meanwhile some of us workers had run to BABA and shouted, "What is happening? We know you are the Lord-why don't you do something?" He remained silent. Then he asked, "How many have been killed?" We answered, "Three," but by that time actually five had been killed?" Then He came out of His house and simply stood on the veranda and looked at the crowd, and they started retreating back as if driven by teargas or pellets. Soon they had completely disappeared.

By now it was 2 or 3 PM. BABA went by car to Ranchi, and the workers followed. Naturally we had all developed a complete aversion to Ananda Nagar. As you can imagine, it was impossible for us even to think of going back there. We were saying among ourselves, "Otherwise places honour sannyasis, but the people there demons!" BABA knew our minds and, even though He had no intention of abandoning Ananda Nagar, He agreed, "Yes, it is a place of *raksas* [Devils]! Don't keep even a brick there-bring everything, even the last brick, to Ranchi! Get 100 trucks if necessary. We will start all our schools and colleges here in Ranchi."

So we hired many trucks and for days we transported our possessions and goods from Ananda Nagar to Ranchi. We were spending so much money on trucks, but there were still so many things to be brought. Besides, although we had searched everywhere, we could not find any accommodation in Ranchi. Gradually our mood changed, and we thought to ourselves that we had an ashram at Ananda Nagar, why should we move to Ranchi? BABA knew it and said to us, "Alright, you go and occupy Ananda Nagar again, we will not leave that place. You will reestablish everything there-the schools, the

homes, the College." So we all came back. For some time we were protected by the armed forces, but after a few months they also went away.

The Emergency

In the year 1974 on the 6th of July, during the Emergency period imposed by Indira Gandhi, a ban was placed on Ananda Marga. So we all left Ananda Nagar, and everything was completely destroyed, nothing was left-the library, the laboratory, and all the buildings. Gradually the police started breaking the roofs also to get the iron rods; they wanted to drive us so completely out from here that there would not even be a trace of our existence.

Then the Emergency was lifted in March 1977 and immediately BABA ordered us to go back to Ananda Nagar and rebuild it. There was nothing here-no window, no doors. This big college building remained, but Baba's house had been completely demolished. BABA said to us, "Now those bad days are over. You can go back with full force, and now you will get the support of the local people." We wondered how it was possible; we were going back after two years-who would support us? But we came back.

The first thing we started was the medical dispensary. The local villagers needed it so badly. Many people said that in our absence, when there was no Ananda Marga hospital at Ananda Nagar, no Abha Seva Sadhan, many people died, for they could not get treatment anywhere, And those village students who were in class eight or above had nowhere to study. When we came back they were still in class eight-they had been out of school for two years.

The local people realized that our presence in this area was very badly needed, and they appreciated our service. When we came back we had nothing-no rice, no pulse. So the villagers came and gave us rice and pulse, whatever we needed. From those days, until today, there have been almost no incidents excepting a few cases of theft. The people have realized our mission and they understand how much we are helping them. Now everyone depends totally on us for their study, for their medical treatment, for their security, for their jobs. And they know that we are not going to harm them. Those people with vested interests had turned some of them against us, but now we are getting their full cooperation.