

FRIENDS OF LAKSHMI ASHRAM

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NEWS FROM LAKSHMI ASHRAM SANCHAR 120

February 2014

Dear friends,

Sanchar 120 is ready. Here are some good articles, and it is very interesting to read about the hopes and dreams of the students in class X.

- Statement of Accounts 2013
- Swawalambas Divas: 5 December 2013
- Christmas and Winter Holiday in the Ashram – Mamta Pandey
- The Girls of Class X – Hopes and Dreams

We hold the yearly general meeting in Denmark on Sunday 6th April 2014 at 2 pm.
Report of this meeting will be sent in the next Sanchar.

It still costs 1725 Danish kroner and the subscription 75 Danish kroner to be a sponsor (about 230 Euro and 10 Euro) = 1800 Danish kroner. Some people send money once a year, and others divide the amount during the year. Therefore we will put 75 kroner into the administration account the first time of the year, when we receive money from someone. This also applies if you send amounts that are not earmarked. So all will pay the same amount and receive the Sanchar. I assume one membership per household, club, society etc., unless otherwise instructed.

We use very little money for administration, and the money is sent directly from our bank to the Ashram's bank in Kausani, so no money will be lost – only bank charges. The surplus from the administration account will of course be sent to Lakshmi Ashram.

Thank you for all the money. Any amount of money will be received with pleasure. Contributions that are not earmarked are also very good. The money will be used for educational material, study tours, education of the teachers, etc. You can send money by a crossed cheque or by bank transfer – the IBAN account number can be seen on top of this letter.

Best wishes,

Lone Poulsen

Friends of Lakshmi Ashram can save money, if you would be satisfied to receive a mail with the Sanchar. You can also see the Sanchar in the homepage. If you want to get a mail instead of receiving a letter, then please send your e-mail address to: lone-poulsen@comxnet.dk

FRIENDS OF LAKSHMI ASHRAM

STATEMENT OF ACCOUNTS 2013

ORDINARY PROFIT AND LOSS ACCOUNT

Income

Contributions received	130.100,52 DDK
Subscription: 68 members à 75 DDK	5.100,00 DDK
Damage support	26.275,45 DDK
Interest and yield	123,76 DDK
Total income	161.599,73 DDK

Expenses

Administration	3.195,68 DDK
Paid to Lakshmi Ashram	120.579,34 DDK
Damage support to Lakshmi Ashram	14.135,29 DDK
Damage support to Mahila Haat	12.140,16 DDK
Total expenses	150.050,47 DDK

Net result of ordinary account	11.549,26 DDK
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BALANCE SHEET at 31.12.2013

Assets

Danske Bank: Giro	2.702,81 DDK
Danske Bank: Danish Deposit	52.978,28 DDK
Total bank deposits	55.681,09 DDK

Liabilities

Ordinary net capital, beginning 2013	44.131,83 DDK
Net result	11.549,26 DDK
Net capital, end 2013	55.681,09 DDK

Albertslund, 18.02.2014

Lone Poulsen

The accounts have been audited.

Albertslund, 18.02.2014

Claus Broskov Sørensen

Comments of the accounts can be seen on page 8.

SANCHAR 120

Swawalamban Divas : 5 December 2013

Renu Bisht, class XII

Thursday 5 December 2013 was an especially inspiring day for all of us. From early in the morning all the ashram family, from the smallest to the biggest, was looking really cheerful. They had all been waiting for some days for this day, and all had been kept very busy in preparing for it.

Catherine Mary Heilemann, who in India had been given the name of Sarala by which she was much better known, had come from a distant western country. She had founded Lakshmi Ashram on 5 December 1946, and subsequently this day had been given the name of 'Swalamban Divas' (= Self-Reliance Day). This year was the 67th birthday of Lakshmi Ashram. Until last year we had celebrated this day in the ashram by spinning and singing songs of self-reliance, while at lunch we had eaten a meal prepared entirely from ashram produce.

This year we had made a new beginning by celebrating the ashram's founding day in the Sarala Behn Memorial Museum along with the local public. On this important occasion the commanding officer of the Signals Regiment in Kausani, Colonel Rajesh Sharma, formally inaugurated the newly reconstructed Kasturba Pustakalay (= Kasturba Library) in the adjoining Udyog Mandir (workshop). On this occasion he expressed his desire to donate some books to the library on behalf of the Signals Regiment, and subsequently he has donated some thirty excellent books in Hindi to the library.



In front Neema, Pooran and Colonel Rajesh Sharma

We had mounted an exhibition in the newly rebuilt library of items produced in the ashram, and also provided information on the use of various products and their qualities. There were charts on display presenting the monthly production of various departments of the ashram from December 2012 - November 2013. The work of preparing this exhibition had breathed new life into all of us. Everyone had given their heart, mind and body to this task. In undertaking this work my friends and I had come to more clearly understand the real meaning of 'Swawalamban' or Self-Reliance. On the basis of my understanding and experience the meaning of self-reliance is that an individual should become strong in body, mind and feelings. If he or she will work hard physically, will have

the strength of mind to take decisions and will be resolute in his or her feelings, then he or she will be a self-reliant individual. Therefore we should endeavour to produce as much of our personal needs as possible. The Bhagavad Gita says that eating is theft if we do not personally labour.

'Binā Shram ke khānā chorī hai'

In truth we have no right to anything for which we have not personally made an effort.

If within us there is no physical or mental self-development, then we will not have the courage to plan for any new undertaking. Life's journey is very long and along the way we will have both good and bad experiences. If we are self-reliant then we can live our lives with courage. The greatest asset in life is self-reliance. When there is nobody giving us support and encouragement, then at that time our strength of self-reliance alone will see us through. Self-reliance awakens our self-confidence, or else we can say that self-confidence alone makes us self-reliant. We must try to make our lives such that we depend as little as possible on others. We must awaken the strength within us of standing on our own two feet. A self-reliant individual can easily overcome difficulties. A dry chapatti made by one's own efforts is really enjoyable. There is a great sense of pride in achieving success in any work when we have taken the least possible help from anyone else.

Self-reliance frees the individual from being a slave to another. Therefore Sarala Behn had said, "Self-reliance is the guarantee of freedom". We seek through the teaching given in her ashram to gain self-reliance. We feel that we are self-reliant on our level. We do most of our work ourselves, we personally take decisions, and we also try to master our emotions.

I too firmly resolve to become as self-reliant as possible, to the extent that I do not want to be materially dependent upon my parents or anyone else. I look forward to that day when I will stand upon my own two feet. All of you, that is to say Lakshmi Ashram, are my guides. I pray to the Almighty that He will give all of us the courage to become self-reliant.



Christmas and Winter Holiday in the Ashram

Mamta Pandey – Class X

Christmas is a festival that those of us in the Ashram family celebrate together in a spirit of deep friendship. This year too I celebrated Christmas with all the others. Christmas is the very last festival of the year that we celebrate. This year a number of guests shared Christmas with us, and we gave them all a very warm welcome and received their blessings.

We are always extremely happy and full of enthusiasm in celebrating this festival. All of us, big and small sisters, presented an interesting play on stage in the warm afternoon sunshine depicting the incidents surrounding the birth of Christ and some of the work that he did later in life. We are really happy and full of joy this day. It was only on coming to the ashram that I celebrated Christmas for the first time. On this day we also decorate a Christmas tree, which after we have finished looks really beautiful. This year Raj Bhai (Rajendra Bhatt) came with several



Shepherds visiting Joseph and Mary



friends, including the well-known actor, Dalip Tahil. We enjoyed their presence very much. In the evening 'Christmas Dada' also came. This year Christmas Dada, looking fatter than in other years, came bringing us both his blessings and gifts. When this day was over and Christmas Dada had departed, then we felt very sad, for this festival will not come again until December the following year. All of us really love the festival of Christmas.

<<< Neema and Kanti with Christmas Dada

The following day we usually leave our large Ashram family for our small family at home. However this year while our small sisters all left for their homes, we, the girls of class ten, have stayed behind in the ashram family and are studying and working. We are enjoying it very much. This year I am sitting for the Board examinations, and so I am spending my winter holidays here. We are setting aside time for our studies, ensuring that we complete whatever work we are doing on time so that we might it down to study. This year there are many lemons and oranges in our garden. Sometimes we pick the lemons, cut them finely and mix in sugar and yoghurt, and then eat them, something we really enjoy doing in the winter! I am really enjoying myself with the others in my class, and early in the morning we all go with our class Didi into the forest to see the Himalayan peaks. I can also see my village very clearly.

These days there is a lot of snow on the Himalayan peaks. Something tells me that within a few days there will be snow here. It would be lovely to share the snow with you. If it does snow then we will e-mail you so that you can come too!

The girls of Class X – Hopes and Dreams

We are the students of class X. There are ten students in class X. During this year's winter holidays we remained here, all except one friend, Lata, who went home. Our names are Meenakshi, Nirmala, Mamta Koranga, Suman, Babita, Prema, Jaya, Radha, Mamta Pandey and Lata. All of us like very much being here, all having come to receive Basic Education, which is very different from the outside schools. Here our all-round development is taking place. We really enjoy our daily programme. Along with our studies we learn every kind of work, and we participate in all the festivals, celebrating them in an interesting way. We are full of love for our school, Lakshmi Ashram.

All of us ten sisters come from different areas. Three of us – Suman, Nirmala and Meenakshi – have been here since we were small, for the past eight years. Mamta Koranga, Babita, Prema, Radha, Lata and Mamta Pandey have been here for five years. Just one of us, Jaya, came more recently, and has been in our class for the past two years. We all enjoy so very much living together in this family.

Meenakshi comes from Maat village close to Almora. She came to Lakshmi Ashram at a young age because her family was economically very poorly off. She came through one of our teachers, Shobha Behn.

Our second classmate, Nirmala, comes from Bhattigaon in Pithoragarh district. Her family's economic condition too was not good. She came to the ashram through her paternal aunt. Her village is set among green forests and lush greenery.

Mamta Koranga comes from the Dharamghar area of Bageshwar district, and came to the ashram through her elder sister, Tara. She really likes being part of this big family. She came to the ashram because her village was far from the nearest high school, and it would become dark before she could reach home. Her family too is not well off. Mamta's village too is surrounded by rich greenery.

Suman comes from the village of Gheti in Bageshwar district. Her home is set amidst a lush green tea garden. She came to the ashram in class three when she was very small. She came through the contact made by an aunt, as her family was not well off and also because of her own personal desire.

Babita's village, Aulidhara, is close to Danya in Almora district. Her family too is not well off, and moreover the nearest school is at some distance from her village. She enjoys very much being part of the Ashram family.

Prema has come from a village in Bageshwar district, from an economically very poor family. It was through her paternal aunt that she came to the ashram. She too loves being part of the ashram family. Her village too is far from the nearest school.

Jaya's village is in the south of Almora district. Like Prema and Nirmala, Jaya too came through a paternal aunt. Her village too was a long way from the nearest school, and it was difficult for her to go daily to school. Jaya has two brothers and three sisters, and like all of us enjoys very much being one of the Ashram family.

Mamta Pandey has come from Chhatiya village in Bageshwar district. Like so many of us her family is poor and the nearest school was a long way away. She had a personal wish to come to the ashram. She came to know of the ashram through her aunt's daughter, Suman.

Radha's village, Kunjagaon, is in Almora district. She came to the ashram through the contact of Sonu Didi in Mirtola Ashram. Her family's economic condition is not good, and again the nearest school is far from her village. She too wanted personally to come to the ashram.

Finally there is Lata, who comes from Harsila village in Bageshwar district. She came to the ashram through her mother's sister who lives in Kausani. Lata likes the atmosphere of the ashram immensely, and enjoys very much being here. She has now been in the ashram for five years, joining in class VI.



Back row: Meenakshi, Radha, Mamta Pandey, Babita, Lata, Prema
Front row: Nirmala, Mamta Koranga, Jaya, Suman.

All of us ten girls want to become something in the future. For example **Mamta Koranga** has many dreams of what she would like to be, such as a teacher, nurse, policewoman, engineer, government officer, etc. But most of all she would like to develop as an ideal and clever girl, and become a policewoman. She is very attracted by the uniform of the police. Being an ashram student she gains a lot of knowledge, and on the basis of this she wants to greatly increase her understanding very quickly.

Meenakshi says that every individual has an objective in life, that whoever lacks an objective cannot be counted as a human being. Some people aim to become very educated and then to earn a lot through good employment, while others seek to get a good job so that they can then serve those who cannot help themselves. My dream is to get a good education and then enlist in the air force. I want to do something for my nation. I wish to serve those people who are in need of help. If I really try hard then my dreams will surely become true.

Nirmala too wants to complete her education and achieve something. She wants to be able to stand on her own two feet. She loves being part of the ashram family, and will practice all that she has acquired through the ashram education throughout her life. She dreams of becoming a nurse or a policewoman, and of working with complete honesty. If she becomes a nurse then she would take very good care of everyone. She will make such an effort in life that she will definitely achieve her objectives.

Radha says that she is studying at present in class ten, and that she wants to complete her studies, so that she might stand on her own feet and serve her family. She really likes being part of the ashram family. She wants to serve the community, and wants to make her village an ideal village. Whatever she has learned in the ashram family, in both thoughts and work, she wants to practice through her whole life and show to the world that she can achieve all her aims.

Mamta Pandey says that she wants to serve her village community, to bring change in her village, and help the people to the extent that she is capable of. She wishes, like Radha Didi and Basanti Didi, to go from village to village and help the people, and help them in every way to bring about improvement in their lives. At present she is in class ten but says that she will continue to study so that she will fulfill her dreams.

Jaya aspires, and has a deep-felt desire, to become a nurse in the future. However for now she realises that she will have to study and make a great deal of effort, for only then can she achieve something. However Jaya will try very hard to become a nurse. Like everyone else in the world she too has her aim in life.

Suman says that she too wants to serve the society by working hard to become a nurse.

Babita says that each and every individual living, eating and drinking in this world has some goal or the other, to achieve which they will have to face difficulties. A person can only achieve their goal by working very hard, giving of their time, their mind and their body. At present she is a student in class ten who wants to continue her studies and move ahead. She too wants to become something in life. She is one of those who want to become a teacher or a policewoman. If she continues to study then maybe she can achieve her aim. Those who make an effort are never defeated. If Babita too can reach the summit of the high hill challenging her, then she too can perhaps become a teacher, she says.

Prema says that she has many dreams – of becoming a teacher, a nurse, a doctor, an engineer, etc. However she would like the best to become a policewoman, for she would love to wear their uniform. Living in the ashram she is able to acquire a lot of knowledge, and aspires to become an ideal and intelligent young woman. At present she is studying in class ten but she wants to continue her studies and be able to stand on her own two feet. That is her aim in life.

Lata wants to continue her education and then wants to teach children, in other words to become a teacher. She wants to grow into an ideal young woman.

The Monsoon Disaster 2013

In the month of June 2013 the Kumaon region was exposed to a violent monsoon rain for four successive years, which brought great damages. Many landslides damaged several houses, growth of trees and killed many domestic animals. Agricultural crops were washed away. Big and small roads were badly damaged, which caused a total breakdown in the connecting links. There were acute problems with supplies of the most common daily necessities as gas for cooking, groceries, vegetables etc. Thousands of people have lost family members, relatives and friends. Several children have become orphans.

Lakshmi Ashram and Mahila Haat have tried to help the needy people, and therefore they sent an appeal to Friends of Lakshmi Ashram to get support. In about three weeks we succeeded in raising more than over 26.000 Danish kroner (about 3.500 Euro) for this relief efforts. The money was distributed fairly evenly between the two organizations (see the accounts on page 2).

Radha Bhatt brought the money for Mahila Haat in cash, when she and Kanti Behn returned to India in the beginning of August after a visit in Norway and Denmark. The money for Lakshmi Ashram was transferred to the ashram's account in August together with the normal amount we send at that time.

The photos show what some of the raised money has been used for. Mohan Ram's house was totally levelled with the ground. He got some tin sheets, so that he could build his little house before the winter sets in. Mahila Haat has sent the photos.



Mahila Haat is an NGO, who works to improve conditions for the people - especially women – in Kumaon. The leader Krishna Bisht is a sister of Radha Bhatt, and she has also been a student in Lakshmi Ashram. The two organisations work closely.

Comments to the account (page 2)

Contributions received: 35.000 DDK from the Scouts in Farum for the renovation of Udyog Mandir (the workshop) is included in this amount.

Expenses: We have used a little more money for the administration than normally, as we have bought envelopes and labels. Of course it will help if still more people can get the Sanchar by mail.