

FRIENDS OF LAKSHMI ASHRAM

Lone Poulsen, Praestehusene 6, 2620 Albertslund, DK Denmark

Telephone +45 43961371 – e-mail: lonepoulsen2620@gmail.com

Bank Account IBAN no: DK0330000003141861 – SWIFT-BIC: DABADKKK

Bank reg. no: 4434 – account no: 0003141861

Lakshmi Ashram's homepage: <http://lakshmiashram.dk>

**NEWS FROM LAKSHMI ASHRAM
SANCHAR 143**

Oktober 2022

Dear friends,

Here is news again from Lakshmi Ashram.

This Sanchar has the following articles:

- A Successful Adaptation to Ashram Life when coming from my Home by Kanishka Adhikari – Class IX
- Experiences on living in the Ashram during the Winter Holidays by Diya Phaswan
- Kasturba Homeopathic Clinic, Kausani by Neema Behn

We will have a meeting for the friends on 6th November in Albertslund.

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. We will put 75 kroner into the administration account the first time of the year, we receive money from someone. This also applies if you send amounts that are not earmarked. All will pay the same amount in subscription and receive the Sanchar.

We use little money for administration. The money is transferred directly from our bank to the Ashram's bank, 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 donations. Any amount is received with pleasure. Contributions that are not earmarked are also very welcome. 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 – see the 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: lonepoulsen2620@gmail.com (new mail address)

Sanchar 143

A Successful Adaptation to Ashram Life when coming from my Home

Kanishka Adhikari – Class IX

I first came to Lakshmi Ashram on 8 August 2021. Before coming to Lakshmi Ashram while I was at home, then I was forever thinking about the ashram. In my mind I was imagining all sorts of things. I was wondering what the people living there were like. How did they live, what did they eat, what was their behaviour like? What would the daily programme be like? All these and so many other things came to my mind.

When I left home I felt as if I was going to a place where I would not get the love that I receive at home, and neither would I experience a close affinity with anyone. Feeling this way I felt very upset in my mind. Going far from the surroundings of my village and looking out of the car window, I saw rivers and hills, trees and plants, and small villages. Seeing all this I began to wonder what were the natural surroundings of the ashram, what would it feel like there? In this way I began to feel very uneasy in my mind.



Eventually we reached Kausani where the maternal aunt (*Mausi*) of my cousin's wife (*Bhabhi*) lives. She told us that Lakshmi Ashram is situated in very peaceful surroundings, and that everyone there speaks very lovingly to one another. Everything is ideal there – the way of life, the food, the behaviour, the education. Hearing all this, I felt very happy. Then we set off to walk up to the ashram, where on arrival we were first sanitised – all the Covid-19 rules were strictly followed – and then my formal admission took place. My cousin, his wife and her aunt had accompanied me to the ashram and I felt very upset when they left, but I quickly felt happy. I was shown my room, where my new classmates immediately began to ask me questions about myself. I told them my name, and everyone was talking very affectionately with me. Then my new friends took me to the dining hall for our lunch which I enjoyed. As it was Sunday it was a rest day, but later one of my new classmates showed me all around the ashram campus. We first walked up to the old Lakshmi Ashram house where Radha Behn and her sister Kanti Behn (*Odi*) live. I could not meet them then, but seeing the beauty of Lakshmi Ashram then I felt that I had come to the perfect place. My classmate, Soniya, told me that higher up the hillside was the *Samadhi* of Behnji. I asked her, "Who is Behnji?", and she told me that it was Behnji (Sarala Behn) who had started this ashram and had devoted her life to this ashram. Soniya told me lots of other things.

The next day I met Radha Behn and Kanti Behn, Neema Behn, Hansi Behn and all the other senior workers. They all made me feel very close to them and were very affectionate towards me.

All the rules here are perfect. I very quickly came to like it very much here, and slowly I came to know everything that I needed to. Here the festivals of all faiths are celebrated, and I enjoyed very much taking an active part in all the programmes. Each and every activity is organised perfectly. We often have the opportunity to walk in the surrounding forest, from where we can see the Himalayas. One day Neema Behn took us out for a walk early in the morning and told us a great deal about the Himalayan peaks, something we all enjoyed very much.

In December in the ashram we celebrated Christmas in a very fine way, and we received all sorts of gifts. The following day all of us children went home for our winter holidays, and I too went back to my home. Everybody at home was very happy to see me. My aunt (*Tai*), the wife of my father's elder brother, said that by going to the ashram I had done very well, that I had learned so much there, how to do each and every work. How much I had changed in these five months! How I had learned to speak with affection to one and all. The ashram is truly a sacred place. Any girl who studies there, is no ordinary girl. Just as the name of the ashram is Lakshmi Ashram, so each and every girl who studies there is truly a Lakshmi (*the name of a Hindu goddess*).

I am learning so much in the ashram, and I really enjoy living here so much. I am developing so well here, learning each and every activity. Truly coming here from my home has proved a great success.

Experiences on living in the Ashram during the Winter Holidays

Diya Phaswan



I have now lived in the ashram a good number of years, and even now I feel so very much at home here in my mind. This ashram is indeed a very special place, and whoever comes here is fully captivated in their mind. When I came here in class VI, then written on the wall at the entrance I read the name of this institution, Kasturba Mahila Utthan Mandal, Lakshmi Ashram, Kausani. How I loved the name! With such a name, what a marvelous place it must be. With this thought in my mind I entered, and ever since, I have been entranced by the ashram, both in my heart and mind. Since then I have made continual progress and now I have reached class X. In the ashram there are rules governing each and every aspect of the activities, and in obedience to these rules each one of us students develops personally.

This time I will share with you my experiences of spending the winter here. After Christmas all the girls of classes VI, VII, VIII, IX and XI left for their winter vacations, while the girls of classes X and XII remained here during the holidays, so that they might prepare for their upcoming Board examinations. For me,

as a student of class X it was the first time that I had stayed here in the ashram during the winter holidays. The time passed just perfectly. Amidst the beautiful nature and the cold fresh wind my winter holidays were really enjoyable. Previously I had spent every winter holiday at home but this time I did not go, and so to begin with I felt a little dispirited, however our older sisters in class XII cheered us all up and raised our spirits. Slowly but surely we too were laughing and chatting.

Our daily programme was as follows – we woke up at half past four and did some private study for an hour. Then after freshening up, we went to the prayer hall for morning prayers. After this we enjoyed listening to episodes from Premchand's famous novel, 'Godan', before going to the dining hall for an enjoyable glass of hot herbal tea. It was then time to clean the ashram campus before our meal at nine o'clock, following which it was time for community work, meaning physical work for an hour and a half. We then bathed and studied until midday when we took a light meal, the girls preparing various dishes, sometimes white radish (*mooli*) or fenugreek (*methi*) parathas, sometimes pilao or rotis made from rice. Then from two o'clock until half past four we had our academic classes. Our teachers taught us from the set textbooks. Thus throughout the day we had a fixed programme.

During our holidays we enthusiastically celebrated the New Year, Martyrs Day (the death anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi on 30 January) and Ghughutiya, a Kumauni festival that is observed every year on 14 January on the festival of Makar Sankranti. Each and every day through the holidays were spent very enthusiastically. Throughout the winter holidays we kept the ashram campus looking very clean, while our rooms were painted with white distemper, making the rooms beautifully light. Some minor repairs were also carried out in our hostel by the carpenters.

We carried out each and every activity in a very organised way and sought to ensure that we learned something new each day and observed all the daily rules. All of us students having the opportunity to study in Sarala Behn's ashram are dedicated to bringing her dream to reality. Remaining ever alert in our thinking, besides our studies we seek every second to learn each activity and become self-reliant. We are guided in learning everything by our teachers, who every day have something new to teach us, for example that we must have confidence in each and every thing. Thus we have complete self-confidence that we are progressing towards self-reliance. All the electronic gadgets that are ever present throughout the world have only led to people becoming unemployed, also increasing our dependence upon others. This has brought loss, yet we students are not so attracted by these electronic gadgets, instead we want to do each and every activity ourselves. When each one of us has hands and feet, why should we be dependent upon others? Even if we are not totally self-reliant as yet, even so we must continue to make every effort so that we might be self-reliant as Sarala Behn herself was. We cannot work towards our self-development if we are dependent upon others. Thus our teachers continually seek to inspire us to increase our personal capacities. Be it cold or hot we learn not to rest either inside or outside, rather to be forever occupied in some small activity. This in itself gives us rest. Throughout the winter holidays we have strictly followed all the rules and before we knew it the holidays came to an end, and slowly all the other students returned from their homes, and once again the ashram came to life again.

Our entire holidays went off very well, we enjoyed ourselves very much, were fully committed both to our studies and to all the ashram daily activities, and all of us had worked very responsibly together.

Kasturba Homeopathic Clinic, Kausani

Neema Behn

In the early nineteen forties when Sarala Behn first came to Kausani, then there were no health facilities at all in the area, although on a small level there were certainly 'Vaidhyas' practicing traditional medicine. However not everyone in society could avail of their services. Sarala Behn observed that the women and children especially faced various health problems. Thus Sarala Behn began undertaking health and sanitation activities in the surrounding villages.

Sarala Behn prepared traditional ayurvedic medicines, mostly herb-based, in the ashram that were efficient in curing basic illnesses such as stomach and throat infections, colds and coughs, and headaches, and began treating the village women and children. Subsequently she personally studied homeopathic medicine and began to treat the ill, both in the ashram and in the nearby villages, with homeopathic medicines. To further these activities she opened a dispensary in a nearby village.

Even today the older generation in the surrounding area has vivid memories of Sarala Behn's efforts for serving the health needs of the community. In those days the sweet homeopathic medicines prescribed by Sarala Behn to the people restored them to good health. The women in particular held Sarala Behn in great respect, for she would go to their homes or meet them while they were working in the fields to treat their illnesses.

These days there is a government hospital in Kausani that serves the surrounding villages, and the local hospital has also begun offering traditional ayurvedic treatment. However our personal experience is that the local villagers firmly believe in modern allopathic medicine. The women especially will continually seek injections for ordinary day to day complaints. Yet they have no knowledge of what injection they are being given. The hospital provides a very limited supply of allopathic medicines and the patients are forced to purchase most prescribed medicines at expensive rates from local medical stores. People increasingly prefer to seek treatment at private hospitals rather than the government hospitals, but the treatment offered in the private hospitals is very expensive.

Here in Lakshmi Ashram, since the time of Sarala Behn, we have maintained a small homeopathic dispensary to meet the needs of the ashram members up to the present day. Just occasionally nearby people would take homoeopathic medicines from our dispensary.

In 2021 a longtime friend of the ashram introduced us to Doctor Shyam Prasad Parashar from Gwalior, and suggested that Dr. Parashar could run the ashram homeopathic dispensary, and at the same time could run a clinic in Kausani to serve the local community.

After discussing this proposal in depth with Dr. Parashar, it was decided that we should open a homeopathic clinic in Kausani, and in March a room in the ashram's Udyog Mandir was prepared for this purpose.



On 5 April 2022, the birth anniversary of Sarala Behn, the Kasturba Homoeopathic Clinic was formally opened, in the presence of some of the local community. The people of Kausani have expressed their great pleasure in this initiative of Lakshmi Ashram, and have strong hopes that homeopathic treatment will have a positive impact on the health of the community.

Dr. Parashar resides on the ashram campus. The village clinic is

open daily except Mondays from 9.00am to around midday or a little later. Since the clinic opened on 5 April some ninety patients have registered there, of which sixty two patients are receiving regular treatment, proving that there is an ongoing improvement in the health of these individuals. Most of these patients had previously undertaken treatment in allopathic hospitals. When they saw no improvement in their health, then they came to our clinic. The majority of the patients suffer from high blood pressure, heart related problems, piles and stomach related illnesses.

Dr. Parashar says that a good number of people come to his clinic to discuss in depth health issues, including tourists visiting Kausani. Those coming to the clinic include three doctors.

Our main objective in establishing this clinic is to share appropriate knowledge with people as to how they can themselves keep their bodies healthy, and they are told how they can restore their health with the least input of medicines and at less cost. So far we have not carried out any intensive publicity for the clinic. Our experience so far has been that without any publicity many people are finding their way there.



The registration fees and the charges for medicines have been kept to the minimum, and free treatment is being offered to the least well off. The most important thing is that the public are coming to understand the practices of homeopathy and its outcome, and are becoming personally alert towards their health.

FRIENDS OF LAKSHMI ASHRAM

STATEMENT OF ACCOUNTS 2021

ORDINARY PROFIT AND LOSS ACCOUNT

Income

Contributions received	111.268,17 DKK
Subscription: 46 members à 75 DDK	3.450,00 DKK
Total income	114.718,17 DKK

Expenses

Administration	2.955,63 DKK
Paid to Lakshmi Ashram	177.256,44 DKK
Total expenses	180.212,07 DKK

Net result of ordinary account	-65.493,90 DKK
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BALANCE SHEET at 31.12.2021

Assets

Total bank deposits – account no: 3141861	165.904,56 DKK
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Liabilities

Ordinary net capital, beginning 2020	165.904,56 DKK
Net result	-65.493,90 DKK
Net capital, end 2020	100.410,66 DKK

Albertslund, September 2022

Lone Poulsen

We have received a rather big amount from a friend in Denmark. This amount should be used for special projects.