

Apparently many girls had escaped [from SRF Mother Center], and apparently had told neighbors; here is the account of the older couple who warned Laurel Elizabeth Keyes.

“IN MY SEARCH FOR A TEACHER . . . I TRIED MANY CHURCHES AND LECTURERS. AMONG THOSE LISTED IN THE CHURCH SECTION OF THE SUNDAY PAPER WAS YOGANANDA. SERVICES WERE HELD AT MT. WASHINGTON WHICH WAS A LONG WAY FROM WHERE I LIVED BUT THE PACIFIC ELECTRIC TRAIN AND BUSES COULD TAKE ME ALMOST ANYWHERE I WISHED TO GO, IF PLENTY OF TIME WERE ALLOWED FOR TRANSFERS. FREQUENTLY A TRANSFER CAUSED ME TO WAIT FOR 15 MINUTES OR MORE AND IT WAS DURING SUCH A PERIOD ON MY FIRST VISIT THAT THE DIRECTION OF MY LIFE MAY HAVE BEEN CHANGED. SUCH LITTLE THINGS MAY CAUSE THE ENTIRE COURSE OF A LIFE TO BE DIVERTED. YET, THERE ARE NO ACCIDENTS, WE ARE TOLD. WE LOOK AT THE FACTS AND WONDER WHAT MIGHT HAVE HAPPENED HAD WE MADE ANOTHER CHOICE.

“IT WAS A HOT, SUNDAY MORNING. AN ELDERLY COUPLE WAS SEATED IN ROCKING CHAIRS ON THEIR PORCH, CLOSE TO THE BUS STOP WHERE I WAS STANDING. AFTER A SHORT TIME THE WOMAN CALLED DOWN TO ME, KINDLY, “YOUNG LADY, WOULDN’T YOU LIKE TO COME HERE AND WAIT IN THE SHADE? THE BUS WON’T BE ALONG FOR AT LEAST ANOTHER 20 MINUTES. YOU JUST MISSED ONE.”

GRATEFULLY I WENT UP AND SAT ON THE TOP STEP OF THE PORCH. THE GENTLEMAN ASKED WHERE I WAS GOING AND I TOLD HIM, “TO HEAR SWAMI YOGANANDA.”

“THE COUPLE EXCHANGED KNOWING GLANCES AND THEN THE WOMAN LEANED TOWARD ME AND SAID CONFIDINGLY, “I WOULDN’T GO UP THERE IF I WERE YOU. THINGS ARE SAID ABOUT WHAT GOES ON UP THERE. NICE GIRLS JUST DON’T GO THERE.”

“I WAS SHAKEN BY THEIR COMMENT AND TRIED TO QUESTION THEM. THEY HAD NOTHING DEFINITE TO OFFER OTHER THAN, “STRANGE, MYSTERIOUS THINGS GO ON UP THERE. IT’S NOTHING A YOUNG GIRL LIKE YOU WOULD WANT TO GET INTO.”

“THEY WERE SO CONVINCING THAT I DECIDED TO FIND OUT MORE ABOUT IT BEFORE I ATTENDED MEETINGS THERE. I TOOK A BUS BACK HOME.

“EVENTUALLY I DID HEAR YOGANANDA WHEN HE HELD MEETINGS IN A DOWNTOWN BUILDING. IT MIGHT HAVE BEEN THAT SHADOW OF APPREHENSION CAST BY THE ELDERLY COUPLE, BUT I WATCHED AND LISTENED WITH CIRCUMSPECTION. (SUNDIAL, I COUNT THE SUNNY HOURS, LAUREL ELIZABETH KEYES, 1981, GENTLE PUBLISHING PUBLICATIONS, DENVER, COLORADO; PP. 99-100)

. . . Keyes describes it simply; "Differences grew between Yogananda and Dhirananda so that a separation took place. Dhirananda renounced his religious vocation, took his family name and went to University of Iowa where he earned his Ph. D. and became one of the pioneers in Electro-encephalogram research." (IBID.) Laurel had received Kriya initiation from Swami Dhiranandaji. In her gentle way Laurel describes what happened over the years: “IT ISN’T POSSIBLE TO DESCRIBE FRIENDSHIPS AND HOW THEY FORM. IT IS MORE LIKE ACCEPTING SOMETHING ALREADY EXISTING. TARA HAD SEEMED TO HAVE BEEN MY SISTER ALWAYS. WE STUDIED TOGETHER. WE ATTENDED LECTURE

TOGETHER AND WHEN IT WAS TIME FOR ME TO TAKE MY KRIYA INITIATION FROM DHIRANANDA, TARA WAS THERE. "LATER, THEY [THE FORMER DHIRANANDA AND EVA GLADYS WEBBER, AKA TARA] WERE MARRIED IN OUR HOME IN DENVER AND THEY REMAINED A PART OF MY FAMILY OVER THE YEARS. . . . "YOGANANDA'S NAME IS KNOWN AROUND THE WORLD FOR HIS AUTOBIOGRAPHY OF A YOGI. DR. BASU KUMAR BAGCHI, (FORMERLY DHIRANANDA) PROFESSOR EMERITUS AT UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN, IS PERHAPS AS WELL KNOWN IN THE FIELD OF BRAIN WAVE RESEARCH.

Castellano-Hoyt, Donald. *The Seventh Life: What I Learned Editing, Researching, and Republishing Yogananda's Praecepta* (p. 76). Amanuensis Press. Kindle Edition.