

Swami Atmasthanandaji Maharaj Passes Away

With deep sorrow we announce the passing away of Swami Atmasthanandaji, the 15th President of Ramakrishna Math and Ramakrishna Mission, on 18 June at 5:30 p.m. at Ramakrishna Mission Seva Pratishthan, Kolkata. He was 98. He had been hospitalized on 21 February 2015 for treatment of old-age ailments.

His cremation took place at Belur Math on 19 June.

Born on the holy Buddha Purnima day in May 1919, at Sabajpur, near Dhaka, he received *mantra dikshā* from Swami Vijnananandaji Maharaj (a disciple of Sri Ramakrishna) in 1938 and joined the Ramakrishna Order at Belur Math on 3 January 1941. In 1945, Swami Virajanandaji, the sixth President of the Order, gave him Brahmacharya vows, and in 1949, Sannyasa vows and the name Swami Atmasthananda.

After serving the Order at Belur Math and the branches at Deoghar (Vidyapith) and Mayavati (Advaita Ashrama), he got the opportunity to serve Swami Virajanandaji Maharaj, the then President of the Order, for a long time. He spent several years in his holy company at Shyamla Tal in the Himalayas. In 1952, he was posted to Ranchi TB Sanatorium branch as an Assistant Secretary. He worked hard to expand the Sanatorium's services in many ways. He was sent to Rangoon (Yangon) Sevashrama as its Secretary in 1958. He developed the Sevashrama hospital and it soon became the best hospital of Burma (Myanmar) at that time. When military rulers

took over Rangoon Sevashrama, he returned to India in 1965. He was posted to Rajkot branch as its head in 1966. The beautiful temple of Sri Ramakrishna there was built during his tenure on his initiative.

He was elected a Trustee of the Ramakrishna Math and Member of the Governing Body of the Ramakrishna Mission in 1973. In 1975, he was appointed an Assistant (General) Secretary of the twin organizations. Under his stewardship as



Relief Secretary, the Math and Mission conducted massive relief and rehabilitation operations in various parts of India, Nepal and Bangladesh. He became the General Secretary of the Math and Mission in 1992 and continued to be in that post till 1997 when he became a Vice-President of the Order. He was elected President on 3 December 2007.

Swami Atmasthanandaji travelled extensively in various parts of the country and visited many branches of the Order and some unaffiliated centres. In 1998, he visited USA, Canada, Japan and Singapore. He also went to Malaysia, Fiji, Sri Lanka and Bangladesh at different times. In all those places, he spread the message of Sri Ramakrishna, Sri Sarada Devi, Swami Vivekananda and Vedanta and also gave *mantra dikshā* to many spiritual seekers.

He was one of the key persons to organize Pallimangal (integrated rural development) activities in Kamarpukur and Jayrambati, a youth training centre at Saradapitha (Belur) and many other social service programmes. ■