

THE ALTERNATIVE TO SCIENTIFIC MATERIALISM AND RELIGIOUS PROVINCIALISM

The *Laughing Man*

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NOW WHAT?

Cults and
Cult-Snuffing

Conventional Christianity

Man as Hologram

The Perfect Practice

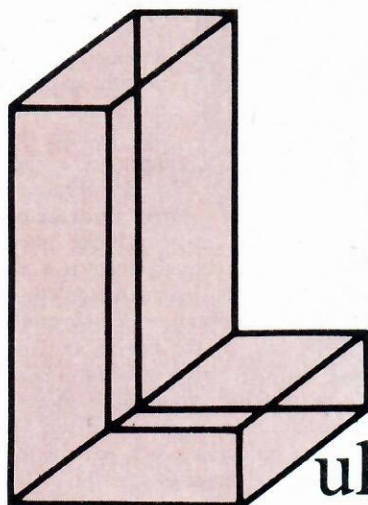
Crazy Adepts



MAN AS HOLOGRAM

A Perspective from the Life of
Sri Sri Thakur Anukulchandra

by Kerry Brace



uke Skywalker examines the canister-like robot, and when he happens to close the right circuit, it shoots out a beam of light projecting the form of Princess Leia in miniature. She is pleading desperately to someone named Obi-wan Kenobi for help. The image jolts Luke out of his narrow world and starts him on the grand adventure of "Star Wars."

This is probably the most widely familiar example of *holography*, the recording and projection of three-dimensional images. Holograms are found not only in science fiction, but in the real world also. The technology involved in making them has played a key role in inspiring a very important shift that is taking place in the scientific world-view—a change that allows science to encompass much more of what people have known as reality. And it happened as unexpectedly as did the opening of Luke Skywalker's horizons by the robot R2D2.

The world view inspired by holography is based on a principle which is quite simple, but awesome in its implications: that any part of a whole contains the whole within itself. The new perspective arose out of an attempt to understand how the brain functions in the act of remembering. And it seems to be appropriate for the age of expanded consciousness which many of us believe is now beginning.

For about ten years prior to reading about "the holographic world,"¹ I had been studying the life of a physician and counselor known as Sri Sri Thakur Anukulchandra, who lived in eastern India from 1888 to 1969. I was struck by the resemblance between the kind of world described hypothetically in the holographic theory and the kind of world that this extraordinary man seemed to inhabit in his day-to-day life. The example of the way he lived clarifies the meaning of this new perspective by bringing it out of the realm of abstraction and showing it as a concrete reality, and it is this that I want to focus on, after outlining the theory in its abstract form.

Life in a Hologram



technique using the specially organized light of lasers to project holograms, or "images in the round," was developed back in the sixties. It was not the hologram itself that turned out to be so significant for the development of a new world view, but a certain peculiarity in the holographic process. On the photographic plate that records the three-dimensional image there is a complex pattern formed by light waves, which has to be decoded by laser light in order to project the image. The surprising quality is in this pattern: the whole image of the original subject is present in any portion of it. You could break the photographic plate and use a small fragment to project the whole form.

1. The treatment of the holographic theory of mind and reality on which this outline is based appears in Marilyn Ferguson's *The Aquarian Conspiracy* (Los Angeles: J. P. Tarcher, Inc., 1980), pp. 177-87.

Imagine looking into someone's eye and seeing in the pupil an image of the person's whole body, and then seeing the same form if you could look into the pupil of that minute image. Likewise for any other spot on the person's form that you might choose to focus on: you would see the whole anywhere and everywhere. This would be analogous to what is present on the holographic plate.

When a scientist named Karl Pribram read about this extraordinary feature of laser-holography, he saw in it the answer to a question that he had long been pondering—and in doing so arrived at the holographic theory of mind and reality. Dr. Pribram, a noted neurosurgeon and researcher in the field of mind/brain phenomena, had helped to verify the fact that memories are not localized in certain parts of the brain. The same memories would persist even if the use of a portion of the brain were lost. The question that intrigued him was how this could be. How could any and all particular memories be sustained by just part of the brain? Something had to be going on other than what goes on in a computer, which has a particular bit of information encoded on a particular spot of plastic or tape.

Dr. Pribram's great hypothesis was that the brain might function in a way comparable to the making of a laser-hologram, using patterns of bioelectric impulses, instead of patterns of light waves, to form the "images" that we know as our consciousness. Thus, as the holographic plate records the whole image throughout all its portions, so also various portions of the brain could function to produce the same memories. When we live a certain experience—say recognizing the scent of a flower—the scent excites complicated frequencies along the nerve-cell fibers; what we know as the recognition of the scent is an interpretation of these frequencies. But the ability to perform this interpretation is not confined to a particular spot in the brain. Any part of the brain that has to do with memory could "project" into consciousness the whole array of a person's memories, just as any portion of the holographic plate could be used to project the whole image recorded on it.

In performing the functions that we know as our experience—perceiving, thinking, remembering, and so on—the brain with the rest of the nervous system utilizes an encoded pattern comparable to the pattern of lightwaves that encodes the laser-hologram image. But—staggering as the thought may seem—this encoded pattern encompasses the whole of reality, and is potentially capable of projecting any or all of it into awareness.

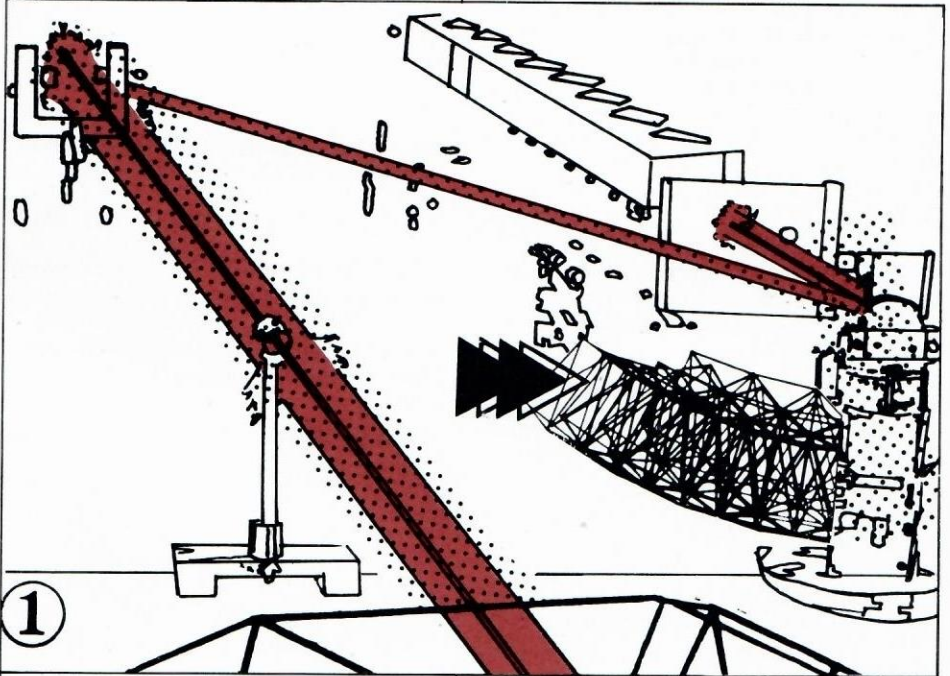
The universe, or the whole of reality, is the hologram; and we are the bits of it which contain the image of the whole. The same

patterning tendency which organizes the universe is at work in us as our minds construct our experience of reality. This patterning tendency is not something material; it exists outside the bounds of time and space. For this reason it is possible for us to reflect the whole, small as we are in comparison to it.

Probably the most significant thing about the holographic view of reality is that it allows science to encompass humanly important phenomena which previously it had to dismiss as meaningless. It extends the scope of science far beyond the bounds of strict materialism. For example, telepathic phenomena become understandable. If each one of us contains the whole, then any occurrence in the whole also occurs within

people the substratum of existence or experience has remained below the threshold of awareness, and the span of consciousness covers only a small fraction of the whole of reality which is supposed to be within us. But it isn't necessarily bound to remain so for any of us.

Sri Sri Thakur maintained that the fulfillment of human life involves becoming aware of "the uphold of existence" and acting in accord with it. He spoke out of direct experience, for by all evidence his own life was lived in constant awareness of the all-inclusive substratum, which according to the holographic outlook, is latent in everyone's consciousness. The very fact that one person of this nature did live supports the validity of the holographic theory. Further, it means



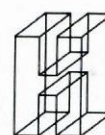
each of us. If it is something having to do with a person who figures prominently in the part of the holographic patterning which has reached the level of awareness for us, then no doubt we are more likely to notice it.

Another example is the experience, described by practitioners of spiritual disciplines, of the source of existence—or as Thakur defines it, "That which being developed, and becoming everything, yet remains the same."² Previously, a report of such an experience meant nothing in scientific terms. But if reality is considered to be holographic in nature, such experiences can be understood as the recognition by the individual of the all-inclusive patterning substratum within himself or herself.

In the past such insights have come only to exceptional individuals, and even to most of them only on rare occasions. For most

that we don't have to be content with abstract theory alone, but can observe directly how a human being can actually be all-encompassing. A concrete example such as this should be invaluable in clarifying this new view of reality.

The Sorrows of the World



his name was Anukulchandra Chakravorty, but those who came to learn from him quite early in his life began to call him Sri Sri Thakur, and persisted in it despite his objections to this reverential title. From 1888 to 1946 he lived in East Bengal in a remote village called Himaitpur. Then before the partition of India he moved to Deoghar in Bihar State, a town noted among the Hindus for its ancient temple, but

2. Sri Sri Thakur Anukulchandra, *Satyamasaran* (Bihar, India: Satsang Publishing House), p. 97.

off the track usually taken by Western travellers. There he stayed until his passing away in 1969.

There have already been at least ten biographies published in Bengali, Hindi, and English. His life was a vast wealth of incident, for he lived entirely with and for other people, providing solutions to their questions and problems, and guidance to foster their growth. He repeatedly said that he was only a foolish and unlearned man, and could answer only because the Supreme Father put the words in his mouth. But to answer was spontaneous and unavoidable for him. It would have to be for one who was living in a holographic world and felt directly the whole within himself. Others' predicaments were literally his own.

This kind of awareness was normal to him—he didn't go through any procedures or practices in order to achieve it. Throughout his childhood it was apparent that he made no differentiation between others' good and his own. If he saw someone in rags he would give them his clothes and return home naked. He would likewise dispose of money he'd been given for his own use; he gave away his examination fee to a classmate who had no money, so never got a high school diploma. The inward connection with his environment could have direct physical effects. Once as a young man he rode with someone in a carriage. The driver lashed his horse cruelly, and Thakur let out an anguished moan. Later his companion noticed a welt on his back, as if it were him that the whip had struck.

Or on the positive side, when the life of a goat kid intended for a sacrifice was saved, or when someone was freed of danger, Thakur would dance for joy. He said once, "Compassion is the thoroughfare of intelligence," and from his example it is clear that holographic consciousness is not just a dispassionate awareness of others' conditions.

If the world in fact is holographic in nature, then each of us has within us, at some level, everyone else's joys and sorrows. Generally we all have some awareness of this—the word "inhuman" is used for someone who denies it. But for Thakur apparently there was total identification with other's feelings.

The universe, or the whole of reality, is the hologram; and we are the bits of it which contain the image of the whole.

Once he said that what appeared to be acts of mercy on his part only showed him to be the most selfish of men, because he himself felt relief at the remedy of another's suffering. Once when one of his senior workers complained of feeling much depressed, he answered, "If you felt one millionth of the depression that I do, Kesto, you would be atomized."

These things highlight something that probably wouldn't be noticed if the holographic nature of the world remained nothing more to us than an abstract theory—the fact that in this kind of world, the individual must encompass all the negative along with all the positive. Even when we see that it would have to be so, it's hard to imagine the strength of personality that would be required to consciously bear so much. In the *Bhagavad-Gita*, Sri Krishna, ardently be-

seached by Arjuna, grants him the vision of Krishna's universal form. He lets Arjuna see that the whole universal process is going on within his own person—lets him see the hologram of reality in its dynamic aspect. The vision of creation and destruction turns out to be more than Arjuna can bear; he asks Sri Krishna to resume his human shape.

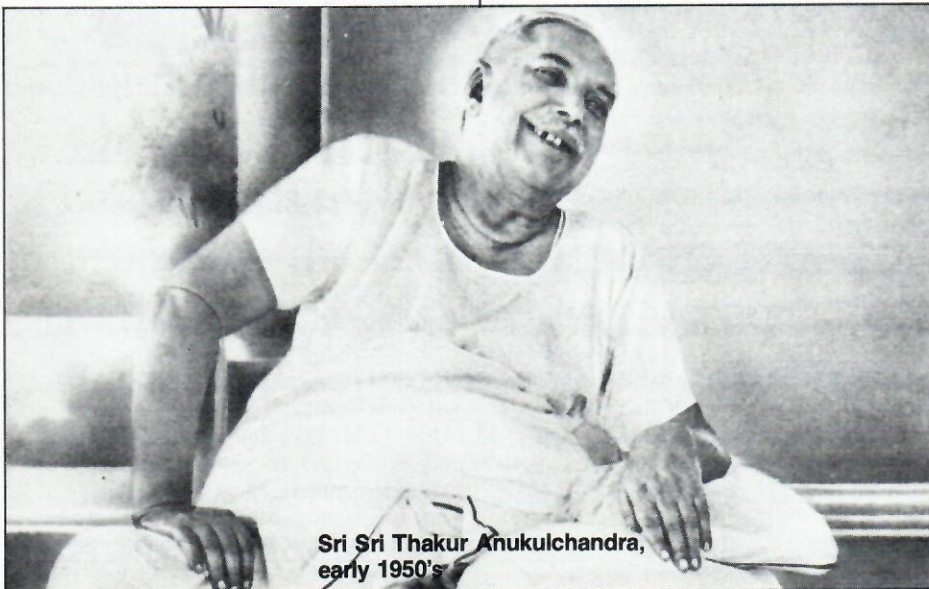
The All-Inclusive as Fulfiller

But on the other hand, the delight that can come in the consciousness of the all-inclusive far surpasses any other joy. According to Thakur, the basic human urge is to unify oneself with something or someone beyond oneself. In Sanskrit and Bengali the word for this urge is *surat*; and generally speaking, any joy comes from some kind of fulfillment of the *surat*, some kind of union—say with food, or work, or a marriage partner. But the real object of the *surat* is the substratum or source of existence, and the full meaning of joy and fulfillment dawns only when that comes into awareness.

From the various ways that Thakur referred to this source, it seems that he was speaking from experience about the non-temporal substratum which, in the holographic world view, is assumed to pattern out all the aspects of the universe. Consider, for instance, Thakur's already-quoted definition of Brahma (the source) as, "That which being developed and becoming everything, yet remains the same." In remaining the same it would be non-temporal, and in developing into everything it would pattern out all the aspects of the universe.

Thakur also referred to the source as Dharma, which according to its root meaning is "the uphold of existence." He saw practical validity in setting up a personal relation with Dharma, so that "it" would become "he." "The stay of all existence is Dharma, and he is the supreme fulfiller."³ Even on abstract or theoretical grounds it would seem likely enough that a conscious re-linking with what gives rise to our existence would be fulfilling. But to really understand it requires a direct experience.

There is in India an ancient form of singing and dancing known as the *kirtan*, which can produce a temporary state of attunement between the *surat*, the motive toward unity with something greater than self, and "the stay of all existence." Realizing that the environment of his native area was stagnating because of the lack of true elation, Thakur began in his twenties to en-



Sri Sri Thakur Anukulchandra, early 1950's

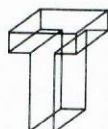
3. *Satyamasaran*, p. 23.

courage the practice of kirtan. He got the required instruments together, gathered people to go to the home of a musician who could lead the kirtan, and wrote songs to be performed. Gradually more and more people came to participate. And when Thakur joined in, the elating power of the kirtan began to swell so much that a new sense of life took hold in the environment. The intensity of the vibrations produced by the singing and dancing was so great that even animals would rush into the circle of dancers, and flying insects would knock into their bodies as if they were light sources.

It was during these kirtans that Thakur began to go into a unique kind of samadhi (a state of total absorption). First he would fall to the ground; then his body would move rapidly through series of hatha-yoga postures—though he had never previously practiced any such postures; then finally he would lie still. People saw a kind of radiance coming from his body, and it was found that his heart had stopped beating. In this state of

many people as possible a form of meditation by which they could accomplish this re-linking. Since his passing away also, the number of people who have received it has continued to grow, through the guidance of his eldest son, Borda.

Individual Distinctiveness



he trances attracted considerable attention, and people came from far and wide to witness them. Though Thakur never set himself up as a master, and went on living the normal life of a family man, people began coming to him seeking solutions to all kinds of problems. Eventually it became a steady stream of people, and his time was spent answering them. Many chose to settle in his native village, and out of his wish to fulfill their everyday needs, a

People saw a kind of radiance coming from his body, and it was found that his heart had stopped beating. In this state of suspended animation, words began to come from his mouth.

suspended animation, words began to come from his mouth. Once someone who thought this was a sham put a hot coal on his leg, and still his body remained motionless.

Some of what he said was in answer to unspoken problems troubling the minds of people there present. Generally Thakur didn't call attention to the fact that others' minds were within his own awareness, but in this condition there was no concealing it. Some of the sayings applied to everyone, and it became obvious that he was speaking from the source of existence. One example may give a hint of the nature of these sayings: "Wait a little, I'm coming. Here the lord of death has no authority—death has died. Here there is no darkness, no light, no peace, no distress. Only supreme love, only supreme love, only love. No fear—you come quickly—I'm waiting."⁴

This saying gives the impression of what it means in the realm of feeling when our urge for unification comes into consciousness of the source which can perfectly fulfill it. Clearly, in that state of consciousness, suffering would be wiped out. Knowing everyone's well-being as his own, Thakur sought throughout his life to pass on to as

progressive environment spontaneously was built up there, with a hospital, industries, schools, studios, laboratories, and so on.

In his early manhood, Thakur had worked as a physician; and the abilities that he demonstrated make it clear that holographic consciousness is not just a general awareness of the whole, but includes people's uniqueness in all its detail. He could see exactly what the disturbance was in a sick person, and would administer an exactly appropriate remedy. He was not confined to any particular school of healing, but would use anything that would be effective: allopathy, homeopathy, ayurveda, biochemical remedies, diet . . . anything. Once he had someone cure himself of asthma by chanting an ancient text, the "Tandaba Stotree."

Here is one oft-recounted incident that illustrates Thakur's insight in effecting a cure. Once he met a man walking down the road carrying some fish. He could tell by looking at him that he was suffering from a digestive disorder which could prove fatal if he should eat those fish, and the thought of a certain homeopathic medicine, *Veratrum Album*, came to him. He warned the man not to eat the fish, but the man replied that everyone has his time and that when Allah wills it, he would die. Within two hours,

having ignored the advice, the man was in the throes of severe diarrhea. He sent for the doctor he had passed on the way. Thakur came and saved him by administering *Veratrum Album*.

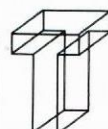
It was the same with the people who began coming to him for advice as it was with his patients: he would deal with each one according to his or her own distinct nature and problems. With the farmers he would talk about the crops; and he said that they could understand him better than the intellectuals because what he wanted for people was so simple. But when the noted physicist K. P. Bhattacharyya first came to him, the two of them stayed up into the night talking about subatomic particles. The scientist asked Thakur, "How can you talk of these things, of electrons, of quanta? Surely you have read of these things?"

Thakur answered, "No! From my childhood I sometimes see the universe all melting into a glow of ineffable light particles, and the light condenses and condenses into the material objects surrounding me."⁵

The thing about Thakur that really touched people and awakened love in them was his compassionate insight into the situations of their own lives. In the case of the physicist, the scientific talk led on to his baring a soul tortured by a feeling of emptiness. Then Thakur could show him how to become fulfilled.

This kind of thing happened not to just a few people, but to people in great numbers, each in a different way according to the distinctiveness of his or her individuality. This is the phenomenon in Thakur's life that matches so well the holographic theory that the timeless substratum of existence "contains" the patterning of all the varieties of the world. Thakur must have had the patterning of each individual available to his consciousness in order to respond in the distinct way that would lead each toward fulfillment.

Modus Operandi



here has been recorded in English at least one incident which led Thakur to give us a clue into how his awareness functioned:

"One dark rainy night Thakur was sitting in his hut by the River Padma. Kestoda and others were absorbed in discussion with him. Suddenly Thakur stopped talking. After three or four minutes of silence he acted like a child just awakened from a dream. 'What was I saying, Kestoda?' he asked. Kestoda referred to the topic and

4. Sri Sri Thakur Anukulchandra, *Punya-Punthi* (Bihar, India: Satsang Publishing House), p. 204.

5. K. P. Bhattacharyya, in his introduction to *The Message*, vol. 1, by Sri Sri Thakur (Bihar, India: Satsang Publishing House), p. 10.

remarked, 'You seemed suddenly unmindful and passive.'

"In reply Thakur asked, 'Have you not heard of the "ashantala" (movement of the seat) of Lord Krishna? Lord Krishna was just ready to take his dinner when he rose from his seat and said, "I am to forego dinner now. The five Pandava brothers are in great danger. Droupadi is crying from the core of her heart." It is said that he saved the Pandavas that day.'

"And was your absent-mindedness just now due to something of that sort?" asked Kestoda.

"Yes," said Thakur. 'A young mother is in her house alone. A man enters the compound and waits the whole night. When at last she comes out to answer the call of nature, the man seizes her. Her face goes rigid with terror, she screams for help. The man has a French moustache and is dressed like a gentleman. Golden spectacles hang from his ear. Seeing me, he flies away. His shawl has been torn on the thorns and his shoes are stuck in the mud. Oh, see, Kestoda, he is running away, leaving the mother . . .'

"It seemed as if Thakur were standing on the spot. Kestoda asked, 'Are all the world-events within your vision then? Various events are going on simultaneously. How is it possible to keep account of all of them from here?'

"Thakur answered, 'No two events happen simultaneously. The expansion of one event occurs at the stagnant period of the previous one, and the expansion of the third occurs at the stagnant period of the second. The third in its stagnant period witnesses the expansion of the fourth, and so on. This is how the world of events is going on.'

"Kestoda asked, 'If each and every event of the world is in the field of your vision, what is the significance of your particular attention to a particular person?'

"Thakur answered, 'Suppose you and I are talking side by side while riding a train. The trees, the paddy fields, and other things by the railroad are within our vision. We are deeply absorbed in our talk. Suddenly we see a house on fire. Our talk stops. Then and there our whole attention goes to the house. In the same manner a particular event of the world draws particular attention.'

"A few days later a lady came to the ashram. It was the young mother of the story, and she recounted the event exactly as Thakur had related it."⁶

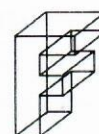
That it was possible for Thakur to be seen by people far from his physical location gives a further insight into the way that the "holographic man" has the whole within him. It's not that there is a small exact model of reality within his mind; rather, his mind must not be limited to his bodily form, but must reach out to encompass all of reality.

What Thakur said about the structure of time indicates that all existence is involved in one temporal flow. And apparently when the holographic nature of the mind is at a conscious level, it is possible to "see" the whole of it divided into very minute time intervals. (There is a saying of the Buddha also to the effect that thousands of events take place within the wink of an eye.) To conceive how this might be possible, it helps to remember that behind the temporal flow, or upholding it, there is available to consciousness the nontemporal patterning substratum described in the holographic theory. In the same way that the whole globe of earth comes into view at a sufficient distance out in space, perhaps the whole of time falls within the range of vision from the vantage point of a "place" outside of time.

6. Dr. Rebuti M. Biswas, *Sree Sree Thakur Anukul-chandra* (published by the author), pp. 98-102.

7. *Sayings of Buddha* (Peter Pauper Press, 1957).

Expansiveness



ully conscious identification of consciousness with "That which being developed and becoming everything yet remains the same" would put the man beyond the temporal flow, and constitute an encompassment of past, present, and future. (Jesus' saying, "Before Abraham was, I am," for example, would make perfect sense in this light.) If Thakur's consciousness or being encompassed the time that stretched ahead of him as it did his present, that would explain how it is possible that his inspiration has touched people in increasingly greater numbers since his departure. The pictures of the yearly gatherings in celebration of his birth anniversary may give some impression of the extent of this. The inspiration comes particularly through Borda. Thakur said that what he himself is, Borda is also. The pictures also show graphically that the opening which Thakur provides is not for just a select few, but for people in general. It couldn't be otherwise, since in full realization of the world-hologram, in a sense he *was* (is) everyone.

The inspiration, the feeling which turns people toward the source, is *ananda*—joy. This is what everyone wants and is seeking in one form or another in whatever they do. However, as Borda once pointed out, all joys tend to be followed by depression except for the joy of the Supreme Father. So for people to take to the means that brings unconditional joy is normal and inevitable—



Sri Sri Thakur's birth anniversary festival, Bhubaneswar, India, October, 1978.

though it may take some a long time to get around to it.

According to Thakur, ananda is "the expansiveness of all that expands." Joy is the way we feel when we grow; we take the pains required in order to grow for the sake of this feeling. Thakur maintains that the nature of reality is unlimited and that growth is something never-ending.

He made very clear what is meant by expansiveness: it is a matter of relationships, the individual's becoming related to an ever-increasing environment. Increasing relatedness involves both increasing range and depth of awareness of the beings around one, and increasing service to them. In terms of the holographic theory, growth would mean bringing to the level of awareness more and more of the world-knowledge which is already present in each of us. Thakur's insistence on the necessity of being active and serviceable draws attention to an important quality of this awareness: it would have to include a sense of appropriate

action—knowing what to do and when—because merely passive awareness is not complete, does not involve the whole being. Joseph Chilton Pearce, in his book *Magical Child*, showed the importance of the individual's physical interaction with his or her environment for bringing more and more of the world-hologram into awareness, or as he says, "de-blurring" it.⁸

The expansion of awareness into more of the hologram is the centrifugal (outward yet centered) aspect of growth; it comes spontaneously with the centripetal motion of centering on the source. "When love condenses, energy expands."⁹

As the means to this centering, and eventually as the centering itself, Thakur recommended the practice of the Satnam, that is, "the Name of Being," which he himself remembered from the time he was in

the womb. We come into existence through joyful union, and every cell of the body is a continuing joyful union of the parents' germ cells; hence the basic "color" of our existence as a whole is the urge to union.¹⁰ The Satnam stops the dissipation of the urge to unification and connects it to its fulfiller. This fulfiller is the one within whom is measured out both the universe and the human psyche which contains the universe. The linking goes by the name of love supreme, and as always it is well that this should be the final word.

10. Dr. Rebuti M. Biswas, *The New Light from the East* (Bihar, India: Alpha Publishing House), p. 97.

Note

The community that grew up around Sri Sri Thakur Anukulchandra is known as Satsang, and its central ashram is located at B.-Deoghar (S.P.) Bihar, India. There is much more to know about Thakur's life and teachings than could be indicated in this article, and the best way to learn further would be to go there. For information in the U.S.A., contact Satsang, 48 Valley View Dr., Farmington, CT 06032, phone (203) 678-1510.

8. Joseph Chilton Pearce, *Magical Child* (New York: Bantam, 1980), p. 7.

9. Sri Sri Thakur Anukulchandra, *The Message*, vol. III (Bihar, India: Satsang Publishing House), p. 113.