



The Kaivalyadhama campus in Lonavla, Maharashtra, India.

February 11, 2017

+ Out of India

Issue 2 from Lonavla

Three weeks have passed since our first newsletter. So it is time for some updates.

We left Goa on 29 January after a completely relaxing three weeks. Our time after morning meditation and yoga consisted most days in late breakfast, checking email, reading, walking to the Arabian Sea, walking another mile up the beach to Anthony's (see photo in the last email), and sitting, swimming, reading the afternoon away. After an early supper, we walked back to our room and got ready for the next busy day.

Kaivalyadhama



We left Goa for Kaivalyadhama (K'dham) in Lonavla, inland from Mumbai. We have

been here several times and enjoy the relaxing atmosphere. We are here three weeks doing practice, walking, and relaxing.

The Happy Swami



Adult students and the Happy Swami.

We have mentioned Swami Anubhavananda, the Happy Swami, before on our blog and the web page. We have learned a lot from him and enjoy listening to him. On a whim before leaving Goa, we checked his website and itinerary. To our surprise he was talking at K'dham our first week there. So

we spent that first week with lectures, meditation, and talks on Vedanta. Students from the yoga school and visiting adults attended.

Some of Swamiji's words: Stop reacting and start learning. ★ Every action is a spiritual lesson. ★ Do not entertain likes and dislikes. ★ All is in the mind. Do not be a slave of the mind. ★ Be like water and adapt effortlessly to the environment (container) you are in. ★ Remove "I" and "want" from "I want peace." And you are there. ★ The best speech therapy is the self-confidence you learn from chanting. ★ You can achieve, just try. ★ Do not let the child in you die. ★ Let the process of learning burn in you. ★ Meditation is not an action. It is an tool for experiencing the divine within. ★ We should be 24/7 in meditation. ★ Meditation is living at no desire level. ★ Meditation is freedom from body identification. ★ It doesn't matter how the world is, but how we are inside—simple and controlled.

We have two pages of Happy Swami pictures listed on our on our [India Index](#) page from when we were here in January, 2015.

Sri Narayani Temple

About a mile from here is the Sri Narayani Temple, a beautiful marble temple dedicated to the goddess Narayani, one of the wives of the god Krishna in the Hindu tradition. There are also altars to the elephant-headed god Ganesh and the monkey god Hanuman.

We walk there to the temple and hotel complex often to watch people and sit on chairs on the edge of that vast marble floor. It is always cool and breezy. It is a wonderful place to meditate.

During our time in India in 2013 and 2014, we posted several pictures of this Temple. You can see them on the [Lonavla II](#) and [Lonavla III](#) pages of our India pictures.

Republic day

The 26th of January was Republic Day, the day India got their independence from Britain in 1947, after a couple centuries of subjugation and exploitation. It's already 70 years ago. It was a surprisingly quite celebration. Though there were a lot of people taking the day and long weekend off, there were very few fireworks which noisily celebrate so many other Indian holidays.

Currency

The Indian currency situation remains somewhat restrained. Back in early November, India began to withdraw 1000 and 500 rupee notes from circulation to "combat the black market;" they were to be replaced with new bills. Everyone was to take their 1000s and 500s to the bank and exchange them. Beyond a certain amount they also had to pay tax. The logic being that half of India's economy is black market and if you had more than a certain amount you must have earned it on the black market and the government wanted its tax share. Once you turned in your money, you could get only 2000 rupees a day in the beginning—in 100 rupee notes. Planning and preparation was not perfect; there were no new 500 and 1000 notes yet.

New 500 rupee bills now join a new 2,000 rupee note. But neither is universally available yet. On top of that there is now a 4,500 rupee limit per transaction. That's about

\$66. When we got our first money at the local ATMs Goa, we got 100 rupee notes.

For our day-to-day operations we usually get three times 4,500 to avoid excessive visits to ATMs. We do a simple second transaction at the ATM to get around the 4,500-note restriction and it works. But in the end, for 9,000 rupees we had *ninety 100 rupee notes* to carry us through the next few days. That's a big stack of notes worth only \$1.50 each.

We brought backup dollars and euros in cash in case we couldn't get rupees as it was rumored. Dollars and Euros always work. Up to today we have not had to use them.

In the couple weeks the ATMs are giving out 2,000 and 500 notes so things are getting a bit back to normal. But the 4,500 rupee per transaction limit still seems to be there. We just do two or three transactions to get more.

Someone told us at the end of last month that India says all will be ok with the currency by April first. I didn't have the heart to tell that Indian what that day is in the US. Me thinks it will take longer.

Tea and Toast



We are keeping up an old tradition here at K'dham, *Tea and Toast*. Almost every late morning we walk out the front gate of K'dham and walk a block to the main road and the coffee shop at Kailash Parbat Café for tea and toast. K'dham is caffeine-free and we crave our caffeine now and then. So having our daily tea silences that craving ☺

Snow birds?

We are beginning feel we have in a way transformed from discoverers to snow birds. In past several visits (six?) to India we have been discovering different places around the country. We have lived in them. We know where to eat, where to stay, where the stores are, where to relax, and the general culture and goings-on of the people. So by now in Goa we already know Villa Malibu and Anne, the owner-operator. We already know Anty's restaurant and lounge on the Arabian Sea and its food and waiters. We know where to get groceries, water, and money. We know Malapalam, Goa.

The same is true for Kaivalyadhama in Lonavla, Sadhana Mandir in Rishikesh, Auroville in Tamil Nadu, and half a dozen other places scattered around the sub-continent.

We are no longer just discoverers. We are now truly visitors returning to familiar places, places where people know us we know people. We can viably think of staying the U.S. in the summer and India in the winter, being U.S.-Germany – India Snow Birds. We also remain internal pilgrims, here on an internal pilgrimage, for meditation and spiritual growth.

So goes our wanderings in India. We will be back with you in three weeks or so after we get established in Sadhana Mandir.

Peace and Joy,
Mike and Petra



A Lonavla Sunrise.



Sri Narayani Temple, Lonavla.