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# Briefly Noted

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## Briefly Noted

*Gauri Ma: A Monastic Disciple of Sri Ramakrishna.* Swami Shivatatvananda. Tr. Indra Makhija and Indu Sahasrabudhe. Fennville: Mothers Trust/Mothers Place, 1994, 85pp.

Gauri Ma (1859-1938), a disciple of Ramakrishna, was commissioned by him to address the plight of women. To this end she established the Sri Saradeshwari Ashram in Calcutta in 1895. Today some 200 nuns at the institution's three locations maintain a free girls' school, boarding for students, and accommodation for women as guests, or for women in need.

The Mothers Trust/Mothers Place, located in Ganges, Michigan, with connections to the Sri Saradeshwari Ashram, celebrated the centenary of the ashram with the publication of a biography of its founder, Gauri Ma.

The short biographical story appeared first in 1960 as a series of articles in the Marathi journal *Jivan Vihar*. This volume is the first English translation. It is a laudatory account of a woman whose high ideals and practice of devotion and service have inspired devotees in India, and now in North America.

*Seeing God Everywhere: A Practical Guide to Spiritual Living.* Swami Shraddhananda. Pravrajika Vrajaprana (Ed.). Hollywood, CA: Vedanta Press, 1996, x+216pp.

It is a pleasure to read a collection of papers that have been skilfully compiled and edited to do justice to their author. Such a book is *Seeing God Everywhere*, a representative collection of short discourses by Swami Shraddhananda which have been assembled from his prolific written output in both English and Bengali. It is a book of instruction for the lay reader who will find the concepts of Vedānta lucidly explained in the context of spiritual practice. The author, Swami Shraddhananda, was a monk of the

Ramakrishna Order who came to the United States in 1957. He served as head of the Vedānta Society of Sacramento from 1970 until his death in 1996.

The book is arranged in five parts, each of which contains several chapters that build upon a theme. Part I, "The Search", begins with concepts about God and the impediments that interfere with seeing God everywhere. The next section deals with overcoming these obstacles. Part II, "Understanding the Mind", covers levels of consciousness including individual mind and cosmic mind from the Vedānta perspective. Part IV is devoted to spiritual practices, chiefly mantra yoga. The last section, perhaps a bit sparse, on spiritual guidance, is drawn from letters and informal talks to devotees. Throughout Shraddhananda introduces concepts from the Upaniṣads, the Bhagavad Gita, and the works of Vivekananda. Clarifying footnotes and source references are supplied by the editor.

### Books Received for Review in Future Issues

Kumari Jayawardena, *The White Woman's Other Burden*, Routledge, 1995.

Sudir Kabar, *The Colors of Violence*, Chicago, 1996.

V. W. Deshpande, *The Impact of Ancient Indian Thought on Christianity*, APH Publishing, 1996.

James S. Cutsinger, *Advice to the Serious Seeker: Meditation on the Teaching of Frithjof Schuon*, SUNY Press, 1997.

James Massey, *Dalits in India: Religion as a Source of Bondage or Liberation with Special Reference to Christians*, Manohar, 1995.

Anne Hunt Overzee, *The Body Divine: The Symbol of the Body in the Works of Teilhard De Chardin and Ramanuja*, Cambridge, 1992.