

**Jane Wintermute Gille** first met Swami Aseshananda in 1968 and continued a 30-year association with him. In her volunteer work with seniors and hospice patients, Jane strives to remember Swami's example of always being as present as possible.

### **Serenity in Action: A thirty-year relationship with Swami Aseshananda**

In 1968, while a philosophy major at Portland State University, I noticed a listing for a class about Hindu philosophy given by Swami Aseshananda. When I first entered his classroom, it felt as if I were in the presence of a dear friend. I was 17 and knew nothing about Vedanta. Swami Aseshananda spoke about Hindu philosophy, the Vedas, and non-duality. He was open to questions and clear in his answers—and always gave us his full attention. Often he included a question or two of his own. Swami would bring something to eat which he shared with his eight students at the end of class.

After the course ended I felt so close to Swami and comfortable with him that I began visiting him three or four times a year, wherever he lived. Swami was always welcoming and if he was busy, I would wait until he was available. Our visits began in 1968 and continued until his death at age 97 in 1996. I was not initiated by him, and it never came up in our talks together. We did not talk about God per se, but instead had “life sharings.” Mainly there was total acceptance of each other as we were, without any agenda. As Swami shared his awareness with me, I became a more conscious human being.

What turned out to be my last visit with him took place upstairs in his room at the temple. Although Swami was not very responsive, upon entering his room, I could feel him as present as always. We did not speak, but when we made eye contact, his face visibly relaxed.

Several days later, I was alone on Mt. Hood at dusk, in a beautiful forest near a flowing river. Suddenly I felt a presence and experienced Swami. His message to me was, “All will be well.” I felt great peace as if he were on his way somewhere and had just stopped to say goodbye. The next day I was told he had passed away. Over the years and decades, I had the privilege of being close to several of his initiated disciples.

Swami Aseshananda made a huge impact on my life from the very first meeting with him. He accepted me in a way I had not previously experienced in life. I looked upon him as a friend and a powerful mentor and will always hold in my heart fondest memories which cannot be put into words.

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