

Mother Teresa of Hyderabad.

I came to India and Hyderabad for the first time in August 1974.

Hyderabad was much different from today.

There were no houses around the Radha Kishan Homes, and only little traffic.

Cars were nearly all Ambassadors, which can still be seen.

At that time, I had only visited other European countries and USA.

Therefore Hyderabad was a dramatic difference to what I had seen before.

My wife Jytte and I had already adopted one Indian girl. She was from Mumbai, and at that time nearly 3½ year. We loved her so much, that we wished to get a sister for her.

During one year we had every month been promised that the new sister, Purnima, would come very soon from Radha Kishan Homes.

We had received a picture of her, and felt that she was our daughter already.

One day, we said to ourselves. If she is not here on the 1st of August we will go to India and see if she is still alive.

When the day occurred I bought a ticket.

The only thing I knew about India was, that I should be patient and wait.

I landed in Chennai, at that time Madras, because I was told, that the passport for Purnima was there. I was also told, that Lufthansa should handle the ticket and at the same time get the passport. I went to the Lufthansa office, and stayed there more than 7 hours. I am later been told, that they didn't know, what they should do with me.

At last they said, that if I went to Hyderabad next morning, they would get the passport for me.

The next morning my shaver was missing. Therefore I had to be shaved in the street in Hyderabad O, what a difference.

With a shaved face I later the same day, went to the home.

Luckily, Purnima was there.

At the same time I met Mrs. Dhage for the first time.

What a great thing to meet her.

She stood there in front of me, not high by nature, but with an aura around her.

I could see that the children loved her, and she loved them.

Later I was told the story about her life, and I know from the very beginning that she was Mother Theresa of Hyderabad.

My wife and I were allowed to have one more child besides Nilima and Purnima.

Mrs Dhage said: "Who do you want", and showed me 17 babies.

It was difficult.

At that time a girl, a little older than Purnima, came and hold my hand many times.

I selected her, and she came to our home 3 month later.

Her name was Radhika

At the home there was another 3 girls for adoption.

Their parents had been waiting as long time as we had. I was asked to bring them with me back home to Denmark, and said yes.

Suddenly passports were ready at the Lufthansa office in Madras, and Lufthansa tickets too.

And after 5 days tour to India I returned to Denmark with 4 girls.

I believe that you as I once in your life have had a very special good experience.

Such one I had when I left Hyderabad.

On the last day Mrs. Dhage came to me.

We were alone.

Then she laid her head against my chest, I can still feel where it was near my heart.

I believe she had never done so to other foreigners before or after.

Quietly she said: "Mr Finn Petersen, we have so much red tape here in India, and it is difficult for me to get enough money for the home. Will you help me when you are back in Denmark".

I said yes to her, and when I came back to Denmark my wife and I started Hyderabadfonden.

During the 36 years since the visit, we have been glad to send millions of rupees to the home.

We love India, people of India, Hyderabad, the Homes, and especially that the Homes are still run in the spirit of Mrs. Dhage.

Both my wife and I together with our 3 daughters, had the pleasure to meet Mrs. Dhage in the following years, and she was glad to see her girls growing up well.

One more thing about Mrs. Dhage is still in my mind.

We were at the home during Devali. The children burnt a lot of firework, and they had more to use.

I was close to Mrs. Dhage and I hinted to her if it was necessary to use so much money for that purpose.

Then she said to me: "Mr. Finn Petersen, she always called me that way, my children shall live like other children."

She was right, and we never again asked, what the money from the sponsors in Denmark are used for.

For us it is enough to see the great advantage at the home every time we go there, because of good management, Dinoo Khanna, Jeny Gupta and all the people working at the home.

For my wife and me it is a pleasure to send money from Denmark, and help underprivileged children in the world.

Congratulations with the 60-years to all of you still running the home in the spirit of Mother Teresa of Hyderabad, Mrs. Dhage.

Jytte and Finn Ortved Petersen
Denmark