



us. Whether they served in the temple or on the ladies' *sankirtan* party under the able leadership of Kamadhuk, they were invariably enthusiastic and charming. We began holding kirtans and classes in Srila Prabhupada's quarters, lovingly and immaculately cared for by Sarva Mangala. Even in my increasingly ill state, these were cherished moments, and Yamuna and I often felt nostalgia over the years for those too short periods of calm before the storm.

### Meadow Cottage—An Ashram in Hertfordshire

Drawing on her own difficult experiences as a woman in ISKCON, Yamuna always retained a heartfelt desire to encourage and nurture women in Krishna Consciousness. Often devotees were surprised at how approachable and welcoming she was, then and always. Devoid of pride in her own position and achievements, she made each person she connected with, whether male or female, feel as if their problems and concerns were her own. I never remember a time when she did not see it as a duty and privilege to enthuse others with what Srila Prabhupada had given her in Krishna Consciousness; and she did it with a graciousness, patience and love that deeply touched the lives of so many.

**Kamadhuk devi:** No matter what was going on, Yamuna was a star in ISKCON. She had been for many, many years. Ever since I had joined, the name "Yamuna" was partnered with high society, and she had been so close to Srila Prabhupada, but she was always humble and modest, and she never wanted any fuss or bother or to be in the limelight, and even way back in those days, she would prefer to be at home with her Deities, with her close associates. She never really liked to come out and be the center of attention, so that was something that was always Yamuna's identity—as low key as possible. I think that mystery made people want to spend time with her even more, because no one could quite believe that someone could be so famous and actually so humble and modest about everything; it was so appealing. Everyone was attracted to that, and everyone wanted to spend time with

her. It was more to make them happy than to make her happy a lot of the time. It was what every one of us needed, more than what she needed, because she was happy in her own right. 🌸

It had always been our intention on coming to England to have an *ashram* for women along the lines of our Oregon conception. Jayatirtha had enthusiastically encouraged such a program, and within months of arriving we began looking for a facility to lease. Even in 1980 any detached mid-to-large home in the area surrounding London was financially exorbitant, so we went further out into Hertfordshire to the town of Berkhamsted, where we found an oddly-shaped, private and beautifully situated home with the quaint address of Meadow Cottage, Gravel Path.

To share the costs, we initially moved in with two other ladies, Gangamayi, who Yamuna knew from Vrindavan, and Anada. We all wore white, and I was reminded of the time in Los Angeles when Yamuna, Palika and I were lined up as Srila Prabhupada walked by, and he said, "Oh, here are my women in white." Then he asked Yamuna if she had read *The Woman in White*. Yamuna replied in the negative, but we were immediately curious to find this book that Prabhupada spoke of. Eventually we found it in a library—a classic epistolary novel written in 1859 by Wilkie Collins, a protégé of Charles Dickens. We speculated that Srila Prabhupada may have read it while in college.

After Gangamayi and Anada left, we found it financially difficult to maintain the *ashram*, but again arrangements were made by Jayatirtha to engage the ladies' *sankirtan* party directly in the service of Sri Sri Radha-Banabehari.

**Kamadhuk devi:** After Ganga and Anada left, Manjuali and Jayatirtha really protected Yamuna and Dinatarini as family members. At that stage the

