



Maanandamayi Memorial 12<sup>th</sup> grade

Namaste friend,

My name is Oinak and I am 17 years old. I have lived in Ramana's Garden for 16 years now. I was born in Nepal in a very poor village and I came to Ramana's Garden when I was 1 year old. My family was very poor and illiterate and never had the opportunity to go to school. Life in Nepal was very hard for my parents and they were married when my mother was 14 years old and my father was 19 years old. I was born 6 years after they married. My parents had an arranged marriage. In Nepal at that time there was a civil war between the King's supporters and the Maoists who were taking all the small boys away to join them.

After some time my uncle who was working with Prabha Ji at Ramana's told us all about it and what she was doing and what the place was about and then he brought us here. In the first few years it was very difficult for my parents to be in a different country where they didn't know the language. They work here as staff now. When I was four my sister was born in Ramana's and a second sister when I was 7.

When I got to Ramana's Garden I got one of the highest standards of education. I don't really remember the first few years but I feel very lucky and am very thankful and grateful to be here. I started school when I was 3 years old. Ramana's Garden has given me a lot, not just a place to live, food to eat and a place to live, but I learned a lot here. Ramana's Garden is children's home and a free English medium school for students from Ramana's Garden and for local underprivileged families. The school teaches classes from LKG to eighth grade. There is no caste system here. I love this place, which has provided me with all my needs and I don't think I could have gotten anything better than this. Ramana's Garden is such a powerful place which nurtures children. Kids are the future.

We all are one big family here. It's not necessary for someone to be an orphan to live in Ramana's Garden. Children at risk are also brought here to save them from terrible things either in the home or on the streets and provides a healthy and loving environment in which they can heal, grow and learn. Ramana's provides a home and the security of an extended family, in addition to the education and training they need to become independent and functioning adults. People from all over the world come here as volunteers and teach us a lot of things. They take care of the kids and help them overcome their problems, both psychologically and physically. Because they come from all over the world, they have many different things to offer.

Ramana's has taught me that it doesn't matter where you are from and who you are and which caste you belong to. We all are one and we love and care for each other. At Ramana's we learn that human relationships are fundamental to all learning. We learn to be creative and independent, and to be responsible for ourselves and each other. We learn what we love to do and how to make it better.

Every child has his own bank account and make money we earn through dancing at a nearby resort, working in the café, selling jewellery and cards we make goes into that bank account for our future. I love to work in the café and I am there as much as possible because I meet many people from all over the world and learn something from all of them. Working in the café has also given me confidence that I will be able to use in my future work. I also make jewellery and design new things from my own imagination and try new things rather than just doing the same things all the time.

I am heartily thankful to Prabha Ji who has gotten me where I am today. Without her no such thing would be possible. It's not easy for anyone to sacrifice his/her life in another country especially like India where everything is so difficult to start a project like this. It is very inspiring what Prabha Ji has done. She is very pure and I don't have any words to describe how much I love her and everything she does in her way in most inspiring.

I just started 12<sup>th</sup> grade and am studying accounting, commerce and economics as my main subjects. I go to an English medium school which is an hour away. After this year I would like to go to university and study business. After graduating from university I would like to work for a global company and gain experience about how the business world works. Then I hope to start my own business in the technology field because it is one of the fastest growing and most important sectors of the Indian economy.

When my company becomes successful, I would like to use some of my profits to help other young people to have a bright future that they would not otherwise have. I would like to help others the same way people have been helping me. I would like to come back to Ramana's as a volunteer and also to sponsor some children to give them a bright future.

Thank you.