

THE SACRED ARCHIVES OF ADIDAM

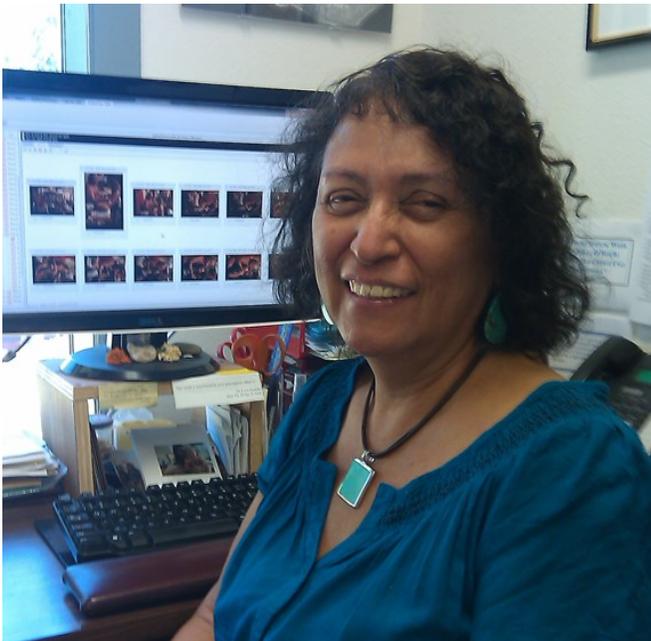
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An Interview with Linda Perez

Long-time Archivist and member of the Digital Preservation Project Team

By Claire Murdoch



This interview is the final installment of a three-part overview of Adidam's Sacred Archives Photographic Preservation Project.

Linda Perez is a long-time devotee of Adi Da Samraj and has served the Sacred Archives in every aspect for many years. So she brings a great deal of training and experience to her service there.

Q: Linda, thank you for taking the time to talk with us. Tell me, what brought you to Adi Da Samraj?

Linda: I found The Knee of Listening by Avatar Adi Da Samraj in 1973 and went to Los Angeles where the Ashram was located at that time and became a devotee there. Upon reading The Knee of Listening Adi Da spoke to my heart immediately. I instantly recognized that what He was saying was the Real Truth and it resonated with my heart. And that's why I came to Him as Sat-Guru.

Q: 1973, that's a long time ago. And did you moved from Los Angeles to the Mountain of Attention when Adi Da Samraj relocated up there?

Linda: The community of devotees relocated to San Francisco from Los Angeles. The Mountain of Attention was established in January 1974. I was invited to move to the Mountain of Attention in April, 1974 which I did, but, my first household was in San Francisco.

Q: When did you start to serve the Sacred Archives of Adidam?

Linda: My first service in the Sacred Archives was as a transcriber of the talks that Adi Da gave. And that was in 1974. We typed on Selectric typewriters and we had to duplicate all the tapes so as not to use originals and potentially damage them. In 1974 we were using cassette tapes, which, as I said, we would transcribe them after making copies of the originals. I've served in the Sacred Archives 3 different times - once in 1974, once in the mid '80s and then again in 1995, where I've been serving the Archives since then for the past 18 years.

Q: So you really know the Archives!

Linda: I know the Archives very well! And what's interesting about the Sacred Archives is that it takes years to get to know the collections and to learn how to relate to all the different empowered objects and artifacts housed there. There is a very wide range of things that we serve in the Sacred Archives.

Q: Relative to this process of converting all the photographic slides into a digital format, what part do you play in that process?

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Linda: The main work I do is with the database. This is something that has been developed that has made a huge difference in our ability to serve the Sacred Archives and to make the materials in the Sacred Archives more available to various of the Adidam entities, plus to devotees who might need to use items from the Archives for a special project. What I basically do, is after the photo slides are scanned and put into the server, I go through and organize them into categories. For example, I might open the year 1989 in the month of July and there might be 2000 slides. And in order to make it more accessible and usable, even at a glance, I will create a sub-category that will say, for example "Adi Da Samraj Grants Darshan at Da Love-Ananda Mahal" or perhaps I will say "Adi Da Samraj at Fear-No-More Zoo at the Mountain Of Attention". And this enables me to take a thousand slides and organize them into more bite-sized categories, so that people can use them more easily. I also make sure to label or identify each site, so that if Bhagavan is at Da Love-Ananda Mahal, or if He is in a public place or if He is at any of the other Sanctuaries, I will put down the location so that in the future, anyone can come in and say, I want to see all the photographs of when Adi Da Samraj first arrived at the Mountain Of Attention and gave Darshan in Temple Eleutherios.

I also include as much detail of the slides as possible. I do a lot of Sacred History research, for example, when we first moved to the Mountain Of Attention there were vehicles all over the property. I was able to capture the photo of each vehicle and say if it came with the property that was then Seigler Springs. Or I'll be able make a note about the large bell that used to be in front of Great Food Dish and has since been relocated to a different part of the Sanctuary. I will identify buildings and write something specific about that building. Another example is when we first moved to the Mountain Of Attention, there was a building that was called Mound Builder. It doesn't exist any longer because it was torn down. However, the history behind Mound Builder is now in the database. Additionally, I personally had first-hand knowledge as I happened to be at the Mountain Of Attention at the time. So that's basically what I do, I put the fullest information or Sacred History of places, things, even people, into the database in a usable format.

Q: Do you put information on each slide about what it's about? I know that you started out doing that.

Linda: I used to do that; on each slide. However, because we have about 250,000 slides to go through, it would take too long to go through every slide and make an individual comment on it. So I'll group similar slides together and will write a history of those groupings. This way every slide is in a sub-category and will have information attached to it. In the beginning, I started out by doing individual slides and would even list every person's name that was in that photograph. Over time, we felt that would take much too long to continue with that model. I'd still be working on 1973 right now. At this time by creating sub-categories, I'm already working at the end of 1989.

So I don't do as much detail as I did originally, and instead create sub-categories, unless there are specific things of note. For example, when Adi Da Samraj empowered the Holy Site Earth-Fire Temple at the Mountain Of Attention it went through many different configurations. It started out as a tepee. Then a structure was built. Then that structure was embellished and changed. I attached photographs of all the changes over a period of several years so that the present time Earth Fire Temple carries all its years of development. I also was able to speak to

the various priests of Earth-Fire Temple over a span of many years and get their stories of service and attach all that information to that specific sub-category in great detail. All of this is done so that the Sacred History of Earth-Fire Temple will be available in the present and long into the future from devotees who have had first-hand knowledge and hands-on experience of that Holy Site from its inception. So I will write as much sacred history about any slide as possible and where it will be most useful. To that end, I make use of as many devotees who may have familiarity or hands-on knowledge of any content that appears in the slides.

There are times when we put in great detail such as with the slides from when Bhagavan went to India with Gerald Sheinfeld in 1973. Gerald came into the Sacred Archives and sat down with me and went over, slide by slide, and explained every detail of the slide's content including who the people were. There was an unknown man in several of the slides which Gerald was able to identify as Professor Jain. Now we know who

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Professor Jain is and what he looks like and I've detailed that. In the end though, I do add as much Sacred History as I can with each slide.

Q: And over time, can more information be added to the database so that it can be cross-referenced with documents and other archive collections?

Linda: It can, and there have been times when I have attached a document to enhance the background of a specific slide or like-groups of slides. Someone may send me an account of what is happening in a photograph because I will have asked them to write about a certain photograph that they were in. Recently I got a story from Annie Rogers about the time when she shaved Bhagavan's head in 1983. And I've attached that account to those slides so that we have the story of that event.

Q: How does having this database make these collections more available to people?

Linda: It allows us to research directly without having to go to the physical item. And that's the most beneficial thing, for example, if an editor from the Dawn Horse Press is working on a book and they need photographs from a specific period of time, like a certain empowerment of a Holy Site at Adidam Samrajashram, they can just put in key words and locate the photographs they are looking for. Or they can also sit down at the computer and go through the slides, and because they are sub-categorized, they don't have to look through photographs of other events which may have nothing to do with their subject of interest. This can save a great deal of time. So that's the main thing. It readily allows people to have very direct access to the photographs that they need or are interested in.

Q: So how has serving here helped your relationship to Bhagavan Adi Da?

Linda: I would have to say that the most primary thing is continual contemplation of Bhagavan. And many, many times throughout the day I actually feel like I'm receiving His Darshan. And there is a spiritual transmission that comes from all the things that have been either created by Him or documented about Him or things that He physically used during His lifetime, and it just continually opens my heart and continually shows me the living relationship to Him and that's the biggest gift of being able to serve here.

Q: Thank you Linda for all your service. It means so much.

If you are inspired by the work that Linda Perez and others are doing at the Sacred Archives of Adidam, please consider making a monthly donation. Every dollar you donate will go directly to fund this all-important Digital Preservation Project.

Even \$5 or \$10 a month will help

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