

Ganeshpuri is a small spiritual village located along the banks of the Tansa River, a two hour drive north of Mumbai. Ganeshpuri is famous for its ancient temples, hot springs and scenic beauty. It was transformed into a spiritual center by the saint Bhagavan Nityananda that settled here and made it his home in 1936.

Nityananda traveled all over India in his earlier years and it is thought that the natural therapeutic hot springs in the surrounding area was the reason why Nityananda decided to stay. He initially lived in a small hut near the Shiva Temple and eventually a town arose around him.

The name “Nityananda” means Eternal Bliss. Bhagavan Nityananda was considered an Avadhoot, the perfect image of detachment and inner absorption which is the highest state that a human being could attain. He manifests divine love and universal embrace. To simply contemplate his physical image, is to be put in touch with the experience of God. Nityananda led a simple life, bathing before dawn in the hot springs, he ate very little and was usually deeply immersed in Divine Consciousness with eyes closed and a smile on his face.

Nityananda gained a reputation for creating miracles and wonderful cures. His reputation attracted people from all over the area. He never took credit for any miracles, and said “anything that happens, happens automatically by the will of God”. With knowledge in 7 languages, although mostly in silence, he guided seekers along different paths according to their capacity. Sometimes he answered earnest seekers questions with a few simple words expounding deep truth. Devotees coming into his presence found peace and had a complete sense of satisfaction. Many people were relieved of their anxiety, distress, illness and misery after visiting Nityananda. Joy and peace overpowered the devotees and arose spontaneously inside them. Just by his presence, he touched their divinity with his own and started their upward journey to the Divine.

A female devotee named Tulsamma wrote down some of his teachings and answers to her specific queries. These notes were compiled and published in a text known as The Chidakasha Geeta.

Nityananda set up a school, food and medical care for the local Adivasis (indigenous people). As the visitors and followers increased, Nityananda eventually had an ashram built in which he lived. Nityanand Ashram Kailas

Niwas is one of the oldest temples around the area and believed to have been visited by other enlightened personalities like Sai Baba.

Nityananda left his physical body in 1961 and his Samadhi (remains of his body) is still in Ganeshpuri, entombed in the Samadhi Mandir. Ganeshpuri has turned into a great pilgrimage town and Bhagavans mission is growing with greater strength. For his devotees and the Ganeshpuri villagers his spiritual power is completely present and available even now. Sitting there, you can feel his dynamic power, uncoiling itself, overcoming obstacles and blocks, readying itself for another dynamic movement.

Before Nityananda left his body he instructed one of his devotees by the name of Swami Muktananda to build another ashram in Ganeshpuri and to bring the teachings to the world. This ashram is known as the Gurudev Siddha Peeth. People from all over the world visit to do their sadhana and although closed to outside visitors daily, it is open to all on Sunday mornings to chant the Guru Gita. It is well worth waking up early for this special treat! The ashram also has a lovely book store open daily and visitors are able to visit the Muktananda Samadhi for daily aarti and meditation.

Muktananda was one of the most prominent Eastern teachers to come to the west. If Bhagavan Nityananda was the unmoving Shiva, then Baba Muktananda was his Shakti. He traveled around the world giving teachings, publishing books, giving Shaktipat. One of his most famous books is "The Play of Consciousness".

Amarjyothi, the leader and teacher of this retreat, has been a devoted student of Mukunda Stiles who was a devotee of Baba Muktananda. Mukunda lived in this Ashram in Ganeshpuri for many years. Amarjyothi is continuing the teachings of this lineage that can be traced down to the source.

Baba Muktanandas devotees have since founded ashrams and meditation centers across the United States and Europe. Today, tens of thousands of people are students of Muktanandas successor, Swami Chidvilasananda. Known as Gurumayi, she guides students all over the world in spiritual practice and study.

Ganeshpuri and the surrounding village has several other shrines and temples dedicated to various gods and goddesses such as Shiva, Bhadrakali, Hanuman, Durga, Krishna. There is a Ganesha Temple complex consisting of

a hillside hike past 8 small Ganesha shrines to a large white marble Ganesh Mandir at the top of the hill overlooking Ganeshpuri. This is lovely to visit at sunrise.

Three main services are available daily at Nityananda Samadhi Mandir including abishek and aarti. Priests are available for private pujas daily. There is a museum at the ashram Kailas Niwas, and visitors are also welcome daily at Bangalorewala where there is a shrine and lovely meditation space.

Nearby, the Vajreshwari Temple is dedicated to goddess Vajreshwari, who is an incarnation of goddess Parvati. Vajreshwari means 'lady of vajra or thunderbolt'. This temple sits high on a hill with great views of the countryside and is open daily.

Many shops in Ganeshpuri sell a wide variety of local clothing, shawls, jewelry, puja items and memorabilia. Tailors are available to quickly make inexpensive made-to-measure Indian style clothing. There are also a few restaurants and chai stalls. Ganeshpuri has an ATM machine although you should not plan on it working all the time, sometimes it is out of currency. There is a post office where you can send letters and postcards, Parcels need to be sent out of Vasai or Mumbai.