



# **Borikén Florece by Acarya Vimaleshánanda Avadhuta**

It is already 6 weeks that I am in Puerto Rico and in the colorful language of the people living on the island “Comenzan a aparecer las manchas de platano”. In English it can be translated as “The spots of the banana are starting to come out (on the skin)”. Those little black spots that indicates that the banana is ripe, or overripe in some places. It is just an expression that indicates that a person started to adjust to the climate and customs of the tropical island.

Borikén is the native name given by the Taínos to the Island of Puerto Rico. Borikén Florece or Borikén is flowering is the name and slogan that has been adopted for a street festival in Mayaguez, the third largest city in Puerto Rico. It has been launched as a reaction to the depression caused by Hurricane Maria. In such a dreadful event causing so much suffering and loss the people of Puerto Rico have reacted positively doing what was in their capacity to resurrect. And

indeed even without water and electricity they have been able to support each other and feel more united. Nobody blame those who have been compelled to leave the island due to circumstantial pressure but those who have remained to struggle overcoming sorrow and despair have been shining as great examples of true heroic spirit.

“I am Boriqua” was telling proudly a bare breast man in the mountains of Las Marias when we visited the area for distributing food, solar lamps and other supplies. In the area of Las Marias we found a school closed just before the hurricane . In Agnasco Playa where we did as AMURT and AMURTEL together with the Institute of Community development of the University of Mayaguez three weeks of all-round service the local school is also closed. In the whole island hundreds of schools are closing or are already closed. Local people feel that the reasons given by the Government are excuses for a process of privatization that is not in the interest of the people. They decided to occupy the Ministry of education.

Today is Yoga Class for the mentors of the Institute of Community Development lead by Luisa Sejgo Maldonato. From the first time I saw her in the Institute she requested me to lead a Yoga Class for those students who goes to the individual community and represent the Institute in the delicate process of community development. We don't have the physical space for doing asanas and we have been doing more guided meditation and internal practices. “Yoga is not competition”. This was what my first yoga teacher told me in 1985 when I started. Till today I feel it is worth remembering it. Everything happens by the grace of the Almighty. A Hurricane can be a blessing if it is possible to capture the positive aspects of a process of transformation which is so powerful and dramatic.

This morning I spent the morning trying to raise a fallen coconut tree in the farm where I am guest in the locality of San German. It is actually three days that I am struggling with that single tree. And in the night new solutions come to mind and eventually fail. It is just a coconut tree but for me it is more than that. Puerto Rico has a very fertile land. Locals told me that it is possible to get four harvests in a year. Leo is an Anthropologist who works the land since fifteen years growing all kinds of vegetables. He showed me the tiny little plants which give ginger roots. They are for a Institute in Aguata which teaches a raw food diet. Here I learned how to open a coconut by removing the skin. Tomey living on the farm as a tenant taught me to use the strength of the body and not of the hands. Nature is so

important for human beings and here in Puerto Rico I enjoy fully that simple contact everyday. Two more weeks till the flight to new York will bring me back to mainland United States. But the work of AMURT and AMURTEL is still on with one container of goods waiting to be shipped to Puerto Rico. Volunteers are coming and the relief activities are still going on in several communities. I believe that in Puerto Rico there is a great opportunity for a model society. And I hope to keep that vision long enough to see it materialize with the help of all.

