



Relief work on Kalobari (Black house),
Santiniketan

‘At first, Nandababu didn’t show much enthusiasm for works in gravel and cement. He used to say clay and cow dung are the best. Then one day, Kantesh won a football match and went up to the *Buddha* to express his joy. He then suddenly jumped up and hugged the statue around the neck. In an instant, the clay *Buddha*’s head was severed.

‘Nandababu himself said, “Sculpt the *Buddha* in concrete; that would be best.”

‘That’s when this *Buddha* was built. The clay *Buddha* sat facing the east. Manjusree, a Buddhist monk, saw that and advised that wasn’t the correct direction for the *Buddha*. He said an east-facing *Buddha* spells prosperity, but can lead to annihilation in the end. I said, “*Arre*, let me at least do some work to address my deficit, even if I have to get annihilated in the end.” But that was not to be; as per Manjusree’s directive, the *Buddha* had to be seated facing the south.

‘Concrete work can be of two types.

‘The first one saw me initially making the statue in clay. Thereafter, I would make a mould and cast it in concrete. The second method is to directly do it. No frills, just straightforward work. The first one is rather complicated. Involves double the