

## Feb 2011 Edition Volume 6 No 1\_PART 2

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## "DYNAMIC STABILITY"

It is 4pm Friday afternoon and all over Brisbane city, Australians are already cutting loose and winding down on this coast-garlanded sunshine state, with its remnants of monsoon humidity and the sweet fragrance of early spring blossoms in the air. But the "de-stressing" is already taking place at Indooroopilly's Riverglenn's Conference Centre, where more than three dozen aspiring Yoga Sadhaks were walking around smiling, some in bare feet and traditional Indian garments gathered for the Gitananda Yoga Association of Australia 'intensive' retreat, with our honoured Dr. Ananda and Devasena as dear guests and speakers.

Our large ensemble was welcomed with a delightful dinner buffet, vegetarian cuisine, "à-la-Oz". The atmosphere was a warm-energy mix of Aussies from all over the east coast, including Tassie and our southern neighbours from the land of the long white cloud, New Zealand.

The very first time I met Dr. Ananda was in the chilly Melbourne autumn of 2009, over a year and a half ago, at an intensive Yoga workshop held by Yogacharini Niraimathi, the International Secretary of Gitananda Yoga Association of Australia who is currently residing in England.

Even in the frosty morning at 5.30am, I recall a man bearing a warm countenance, thoughtful introspective eyes that illuminated during his many light hearted reveries with a

laugh that could disarm any stranger. He was not the long bearded, silvery haired Yogi or Swami that I imagined to meet then. A modern Yogi, he has been called, which for a period of time was an oxymoron as I preconceived most Yogi's to be living in caves, far secluded and disinterested from modern life. Little had I known that this Universe, that God had placed a Dharmic teacher, an incarnation, a descendent of a lineage of Yoga Masters and Rishis into my life.

This year, with the topic of Yoga "From distress to de-stress" as the main theme of this workshop, Dr. Ananda detailed physiological stress ('resting' autonomic functions that sustains life), what is known as "eustress", and actual pathological stress/tension which leads ultimately to imbalance and disease. In our contemporary, materialistic culture, continuous random 'traumas', large and small, often thwarts the flow of natural existence. There is chaos induced by media, urbanization and technology, the world is 'smaller', yet faster, louder and harder than it ever has been. The mind, this *chitta vrtti*, is besieged with so many stimulants. Bombarded with adverse stimuli, pleasant stimuli, artificial stimuli, unnatural stimuli, the *chitta vrtti* thus becomes a live 'whirlpool'. It quivers, sifts, soars and oscillates in all directions! It suffers elation and disappointment. Drained, exhausted and stressed, it forgets, or as the Aussies like to say, it "loses the plot". It becomes *unconscious*. Or rather the self becomes unconscious and the pressure and hurry of little things often crushes out of sight the great moments of the soul's life. Dr Ananda reminded us that pursuing a true Yogic life is not about running, escaping or forgetting the world, 'renouncing' it in a cave, but all about being *conscious* of it. And consciousness cannot occur without 'stopping', without quietness, without the relaxation in effort/activity- *Nispanda*, without creating a "gap" or "space" within the stretching of ourselves in response to stress.

That 'space', Dr. Ananda explained on the first evening Satsang, refers to the place where *Dharma* resides. It refers to the gap between the rising and falling of thought (Patanjali). It is the place where *dynamic stability* occurs. It is dynamic, as stability requires constant adjustment and discernment, it requires *conscious* action. "In life, every single situation requires us to ACT. Most of us *re-act*." Dr Ananda shared quintessential Yogic methods to not only help Sadhaks understand *Dharma* as a whole, but even cellular *Dharma* and 'mind-ful' (manaskā) *Dharma*, to create health, happiness and well-being. The teachings were a reflection of Swamiji's wisdom of how Yoga is a four-fold awareness- of the body, the emotions, the mind, and of being aware itself!

Morning Hatha Yoga sessions were infused with a series of Surya Namaskars to slowly awaken our limbs until it resembled rubber, giving thanks to the new day as solar energy began to ripple through our limbs like waves. Spinal stretches, Kriyas, Pranayama, Mantras, Mudras, AUM chanting (guided by Sri Bala Ratnam, founder of Vibrational Breath Therapy, a long term student of Swamiji); and Yoga

relaxation practices were covered to re-harmonise the psycho-neuro and psychosomatic pathways in our system. The critical importance of performing asanas in sync with the breath to create psychosomatic harmony was emphasized. “Spaces” were created in our tissues and muscles to increase oxygen, nutrient and Prana exchange, thus enhancing cellular dharma! Drawing on wisdom from the Yoga Sutras of Patanjali and profound verses from the Bhagavad Gita, Dr. Ananda explains how disease and destruction is linked to thought and attachment, thus detailing *Dharma* in thought and emotions.

*-When a man dwells on the pleasures of the sense, attraction for them arises in him. From attraction arise desire, the lust of possession, and this leads to passion, to anger.*

*-From passion comes confusion of mind, then loss of remembrance, the forgetting of duty. From this loss comes the ruin of reason, and the ruin of reason leads man to destruction.*

*-But the soul that moves in the world of the senses and yet keeps the senses in harmony, free from attraction and aversion, finds rest in quietness.*

*-In this quietness falls down the burden of all her sorrows, for when the heart has found quietness, wisdom has also found peace.*

*-There is no wisdom for a man without harmony, and without harmony there is no contemplation. Without contemplation, there can be no peace, and without peace can there be joy?*

**Bhagavad Gita, chapter 2, v62-66.**

### **Dynamic stability Consciousness**

“Stress is the result of ‘overreacting’ to a certain stimuli”, says Dr. Ananda. Stress entails work, and work is necessary to the growth of the soul, and at all times within our power (*Karma* and *Dharma*). “The onus of your health, wellbeing and evolution is in your hands”. When work becomes the *puja* which Man offers to the Universal life force which manifests as nature, he is learning to renounce the “fruits of his actions.” He is learning to see beyond duality and embrace universality, thus dissolving stress. Swamiji used to speak of the three “Gives”: “give up” one’s own attachment to things which causes us stress; “give in” to the dictates of higher consciousness, and “give over” the control of the higher mind to the higher self. In “giving”, we enter a quiet space where an exquisite sense of peace abides, a sense of completeness, a truth, a consciousness that nothing can touch. “Being in the world but not of the world”, as Ammaji has often said, is a beautiful description. This is dynamic stability. This is Yoga.

By the conclusion of the weekend on Sunday, many Sadhaks confirmed how revitalizing, rejuvenated and replenished they felt. On the final evening, we were even treated with a small “taste of India,” from Devasena with a special Bharat Natyam dance performance accompanied by Carnatic vocals from Dr. Ananda. It was beautiful and radiant to behold. Adorned in bright costume, her gestures pulsed with vibrant spirit, colour and fine sharp details, illustrating the elaborate sensibility and culture of India where Yoga came from. “Health is like music”, says Dr. Ananda, ‘it is about living in tune’. For Selwyn Williams from NZ, this splendid performance was received as an extra bonus birthday treat!

The whole weekend was a blessed event for all Sadhaks to meet our extended Yoga Sambandan in Australia- from fresh new faces to ‘senior’ ones (in wisdom!), like Sri Bala, Margo, June, Ziggy, Murali, Gita and many other Sadhaks that have

personally trained with Swamiji! Anecdotes and stories of Swamiji provided from our “elders” were embellished and priceless in their recollections. New to the Gitananda Yoga Association is Girish Raniga of NSW, testifying that Dr. Ananda’s pure energy, spirit and character re-opened his interest in Yoga, in spite being “put-off” many years ago through other experiences.

In the past several years, the Gitananda Yoga Association of Australia has grown significantly to feature so many dedicated Sadhaks and that claims true diverse cultural backgrounds covering all corners of the globe, from South Africa to Poland, England to Canada to Vietnam and India, Australia and New Zealand. We come from all ages and backgrounds, but would all agree that Dr. Ananda’s knowledge and teachings “to be of the highest integrity and a very rich source of the true teachings of Yoga” (sincere words spoken by Yogacharini Niraimathi two years ago, that convinced me to visit Ananda Ashram and participate in the six months Residential Yoga Teachers Training).

The Brisbane 2010 Gitananda Yoga Australian meet was indeed a gathering to “find our way home” (towards *sukha stānam*); it was a small flight into openness and humility, inspired with the clear vision, creativity and insight of Rishiculture Yoga that comes from Dr. Ananda.

### **Yoga**

Universality

Dharma

Vairagya

Nispanda



### **Stress**

Duality

Karma

Abhyasa

Spanda

~ By Yogacharini Shantha

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Mahatma Gandhi's quote in action  
~Photo by Darcy Grant

**“Be the change you want to see in the world”**

**~Mahatma Gandhi**

Gitananda Association Retreat 2010 @ The Riverglenn, Brisbane, Australia 24<sup>th</sup> to 26<sup>th</sup> of September 2010.

This weekend **Gitananda** Gathering incorporated both Aussies and Kiwis from across the Tasman Sea. The group was honoured on this auspicious occasion to have the fabulous and astounding Yogacharya Dr Ananda Balayogi Bhavanani and his beautiful wife (**dharmapathni**) Yogacharini Devasena Bhavanani, **Bharatanatyam** dancer and teacher. We were also fortunate enough to have some of Yogamaharishi Dr Swami Gitananda Giri Guru Maharaj's (**Swamiji's**) pioneering **chelas** to enlighten and brighten up the weekend by offering and sharing their experiences and anecdotes. This provided a special intimacy and insight into Swamiji, Ammaji and Dr Anandaji.

Dr. Ananda opened the retreat with a welcome blessing followed by everyone joining in to “**Om Tat Sat Krishna Arpanamastu**” **mantra** before dinner, uniting and creating a warm sense of togetherness amongst the diversity of **sadhakas**.

The evening **satsangha** delivered by Dr. Ananda introduced the Gitananda Retreat's topic “**Yoga: Moving from Distress to De-stress**” highlighting the importance of **Yoga** in maintaining stability in everyday life. Dr. Ananda gave us a clear insight into **Yoga** and Stress in Light of the **Yoga Sutras** and **Bhagavad Gita**. He began by outlining the physiology of stress and how essential it is in keeping us alive, the fright/flight/fight response. Dr. Ananda clarified how stress is necessary for motivating and moving us to reach a state of **sukha-sathanam** (being comfortable/stable with yourself regardless of external stimuli). Yoga is perfection in this asana of **sukha-sathanam**, regardless of any circumstance and being able to respond to life events and people in an appropriate manner (equanimity) rather than react.

This was further developed when Dr. Ananda described the Stress-Response process and how everything requires an Act or Action. Thus, referring us to the **Bhagavad Gita** where **Lord Krishna** tells **Arjuna** to get up and fight, do his **Dharma**. Dr Ananda poignantly reminded us to do your action and not care about the fruits of your action. Leading us to the true meaning of **Yoga**: Skill in Action, to just “do your best and leave the rest”, as **Swamiji** perfectly put it.

Dr. Ananda elaborated by explaining the negative affects of the Stress- Response. This process that begins with a single thought creates attachment and leads to desire, rage, delusion, loss of memory, loss of ability to reason and thus leads to the ultimate destruction of the very being. This leads to a total surrender to the “**SHAT RIPU**”- the six enemies of the spirit. These are **Kama** (uncontrolled passion), **Krodha** (Senseless Anger), **Lobha** (Greed), **Moha** (Blind infatuation), **Mada** (Mas-sive Ego) and **Matsarya** (Malice, envy, jealousy).

This brings us to the essence of Yoga and the importance of looking for **yoga** inside yourself. Developing **Santosham** – A sense of Contentment (the second **Ni-yama**) and **Vairagya** (detachment). Learning to practically analyse situations with objectivity in order to analyse subjective experiences. In other words, having the ability to step back and look at yourself as well as developing the art of stilling the whirlpools of the mind, as according to **Patanjali**, who codified the **Yoga Sutra's**, “**Yoga Chitta Vritti Nirodha**”.

Dr. Ananda discussed and illustrated the importance of stress **EUSTRESS** - the good stress and **DISTRESS** - the bad stress. **Eustress** breaks our inertia and gets us moving, enabling us to do our best and reach our optimum performance. **Eustress** is a dynamic steady state of balance and equilibrium. There is a limit to this peak point of performance and like everything in life requires moderation. Past this point, continued maximum effort and stress leads to Distress, where an excess of stress inhibits performance, affecting the immune system, and state of well-being. The difference between **Eustress** and **Distress** is a fine juggling act.

Dr. Ananda elaborated on this fine balance in relation to the sympathetic and parasympathetic nervous systems and the **Nadis** (energy flows). Where **Pingala Nadi** flows up the right side of the body representing the masculine. Conversely, the **Ida Nadi** flows down the left side of the body representing femininity.

We investigated the origins of stress where a separation between the Mind and Body creates a duality, this ‘duality’ creates a state of dis-ease, potentially leading to psychosomatic disorders. The moment this duality occurs a division is created, unleashing the **Stress – Response**. Dr. Ananda directed us to the **Yoga Vasishta** by identifying the highest aspect of the mind as **Adhi**, the root cause or starting point, whereby disorders can originate from a single thought. Leading to the lowest physical aspects of the body or **Vyadhi**, where diseases manifest.

The higher aspect of the mind or **Adhija** (means giving birth to a thought) can be subdivided into **Samanya** (ordinary or common psychosomatic disorders) and **Sara**



(the relentless disease of being born again and again). The anecdote for this birth-death cycle is "*knowing thyself*" (**Atma Jnana**). It is therefore essential that **prana** flows freely through the **kosha's** to prevent instability and disharmony between the Mind and the Body. Negative thoughts in the **Adhi** creates mental agitation disrupting the flow of **Prana** through the **Nadis**. These imbalances cause a malfunction of the digestion system.

- 1) **Ajeeranatvam** - lack of proper digestion
- 2) **Atijeeranatvam** – over worked digestion
- 3) **Kujeeranatvam** – malfunctions of metabolic processes

The **Yogic** viewpoint of psychosomatic diseases is that this cycle appears to progress through the 4 distinct phases; the psychic stage, psychosomatic stage, somatic stage and lastly the organic stage, where the organs themselves are ultimately attacked and eventually die.

The retreat involved a busy but comprehensive schedule of morning and evening **Aartis**, **Hatha Yoga** practices for Managing Stress, Discourses on the Physiology of Stress, **Pranayamas** for Prevention and Management of Stress, the Annual Gitananda Association of Australia Meeting, **Mantras** to Calm and Focus the Mind and some Chanting of **Patanjali's Yoga Sutras**.

The Saturday evening highlight involved Dr. Ananda's delightful and soulful singing as well as Devasena's angelic **Bharatanatayam** dancing, first time experience for many and a delight for all to witness. The talented team shared and spread their love and skills enlightening and illuminating the venue, de-stressing and re-energizing all beings. It was truly a marvel to behold.

As Sunday arrived so did the conclusion of the retreat with **Hatha Yoga** and **Jnana Yoga** relaxation practices. Dr. Ananda spoke about the 4 folds of relaxation 1) Letting Down 2) Giving Up 3) Giving In and 4) Giving Over we all practiced **Spandha-Nispandha Kriya** and in particular the **Kaya Kriya**, all reaping the benefits and the delights, refreshing the practices and concepts learnt.

Time was allocated for Questions and Answers, coupled with a hilarious **Siamese Kriya** led by Margo Hutchison making everybody laugh, followed by an introduction to Vibrational Breath Therapy led by the honourable Sri Bala Ratnam himself, whom Dr Ananda respects highly for his dedication to Swamiji's teachings. Dr Ananda also spoke about the controversial issue of all the various **Yoga** schools and their beliefs, receiving a roar of laughter by saying, "Respect their traditions and teachings within their framework and then they'll respect yours. **Now that I've said that My Path is the Only Path!**"

The closing ceremony involved certificate distribution to all **Gitananda** Members with many shared gratitude's, thank-yous, blessings and until next unitings. Overall the retreat proved to be a marvelous opportunity for all to benefit from the teachings of **Yoga** as codified by **Yogamaharishi** Dr. **Swami Gitananda Giri Guru Maharaj**. The general feeling of being physically, emotionally and spiritually nourished, as well as being happy, satisfied, content (santosham) and hopefully well equipped to continue in this world full of stress.

## **Don't stress but Eustress Stress Less – Eustress**

**Yoga** is a Way of Life: The regular practice of **Yoga** as a Way of Life helps reduce the levels of physical, mental and emotional stress. This **Yogic** 'Way of Life' lays emphasis on "Right Thought", "Right Action", "Right Reaction", and "Right Attitude".

Many warm, heart filled gratitude's and thank-yous are required for the Marvelous Margo, Mindful Murali and all the Glorious Gitananda members. This would not have happened without your Divine presence. And of course the honourable Dr. Sir Ananda Balayogi Bhavanani himself and his delightful wife Devasena whom we all look forward to welcoming back in the hemisphere down under again in the not so distant future!

**Hari Om tat sat**

May all beings be happy!

~ By Yogacharini Janani and Yogacharini Gargi



Photo by Zigi Georges

## **From Distress to De-Stress**

**Weekend retreat with Dr. Ananda and Devasena  
in Brisbane.**

Friday 24th to Sunday 26th September 2010

This event incorporated the A.G.M. and annual get together of Gitananda Ass. of Australia' which had been held at Gita's holiday home in Southport, Gold Coast for the past few years. The same members were present except for Dawn Williams but numbers were vastly increased with teachers and students from all over Australia and New Zealand. This get together was a truly exciting and inspiring development in the cause of Gitananda Yoga in Australia and New Zealand.



Dr. Ananda and Devasena's awesome presentations reminded me of one of the Ashram's axioms i.e. rhythm, regularity and repetition. The rhythm and timing in Ananda's hatha yoga practices was calming and invigorating in itself. On Saturday we were fortunate to experience a full day program as practiced at Ananda Ashram. This daily routine demonstrates the three 'r's' very clearly. Even when a listed event threatened to disturb the peace and rhythm, Dr. Ananda was able to seamlessly allow all a break, which enabled the full, busy program to proceed without a hitch. Undoubtedly Dr. Ananda's sense of timing and rhythm is a result of a lifelong study and practice of Indian classical music and dance.

We were given comprehensive explanations of the physiology and pathology of stress and stress disorders. And as is the yogic way we then experienced the de-stressing results from selected Hatha Yoga practices, which included jnana yoga and yoga relaxation techniques.

There was time for renewing old acquaintances and making new friends. We were treated to a beautiful bharat natyam performance by Devasena. Chanting the yoga sutras and mantras, holding the A.G.M. for Gitananda Yoga Ass. of Australia, question and answer time and free time to explore the environment were all part of the very full program. Sri Bala Ratnam led us in a chakra meditation using the vibrational therapy which he has developed over the many years since he studied with Dr. Swami Gitananda. This was a wonderfully relaxing and enlightening experience.

There were many senior sadhaks there, including the wonderful Sri Bala, in his 90th year, and June and Ziggy, Gita and Margo and Murali. It was gratifying to see these venerable and respected elders recognised by special presentations in the closing ceremony.

I hope our future reunions in Gitananda Yoga in Australia and New Zealand may be as productive and inspiring as this 2010 experience held in Brisbane.

by Yogacharini Gowri (Wendy Snape)



#### **Gitananda Yoga Brisbane Retreat September 2010** **Account ~ by Kancha Rao**

This September we had a delightful weekend in Brisbane with Dr. Ananda and Devasena at the Gitananda

Yoga retreat. For many of us it was a piece of India brought alive right here in Australia with the knowledge, culture and warmth that exuded from this divine couple.

Dr..Ananda 's talks were filled with wisdom and humour that was unpretentious and authentic. He threaded together many ideas with ease and there was a flow to the whole weekend. What stood out for me was the opposite pairs and how they allow balance which is alive and moving.

The principle of Abinivesha, fear of losing oneself or self preservation was explored first. Dr. Ananda described this is fear of a drop of water having to merge with the ocean. It feels limited and finite hence the apprehension.

Amma is said to have stated that nobody is perfect, so somebody has to become 'nobody' to be perfect.

Dr. Ananda spoke in depth about the need for Yoga to be understood as dynamic stability. The state of well being at all levels must be dynamic and constantly finding its equilibrium in the changing environment .It is not a static or passive state. Opposing forces of nature and mind, like Raga/Dvesha or desire/ repulsion are two sides of the same coin. Both take you away from Sukha Sthana in either direction. It is a fine balance. This is why Santosha (contentment) is a dynamic state.

Dr. Ananda explored strength in the ability to act, not react. Similarly Krishna tells Arjuna to claim the rights to action, not the results.

Vairagya usually known as detachment was defined beautifully by Swamiji as the right distance, at the right time for the right thing. So Abhyasa (practice or sadhana) is the equal and opposite partner of Vairagya. He suggests that if we practice this we can then objectively analyse subjective experience.

He described the wheel of Samskara.

Thought---→attachment---→breeds desire(Kama)---→incites rage(Krodha)(Moha)----→gives rise to delusion(Smrithi)-→Loss of reason(Buddhi)-----→eventually can lead to Destruction of being.

In this cycle we see the six enemies of the spirit present. Dr. Ananda suggests we be grateful to those who kick us out of the cycle even if it is unpleasant! This enables us to still the mind and live according to Patanjali's sutra "Yoga chitta vritti nirodah". Swamiji's description of Chitta Vrittis is whirlpools of subconscious and unconscious mind. They are waiting to pull you down from your Sukha Sthana.

One way to avoid the pulls is to practice Prathipksha bavanam or practicing the attitude of contrary nature. This allows us to STOP sign the mental loop we can fall

into by consciously replacing the negative with the positive. It requires consciousness to prevent miseries before they occur (Ayam Dukham Anadanam).

**Eustress and Distress** Ideal stress, which allows us to function in an alert and active state is useful as long as it helps us perform and act. It is in fact essential but when the optimal stress point is crossed it becomes distress and it does us disservice. Immunity is also a good example of this Dr. Ananda stated. If we are sick it shows our immune system is functioning! Too much or too little of the same shows imbalance. Like the string of a bow has to have the right tautness to give it correct aim, we have to use stress to our advantage by fine tuning its levels.

The Autonomic Nervous System again has pairs that perform opposing functions. The Sympathetic and Parasympathetic align themselves to the two main Nadis in Yogic science, Pingala and Ida or the Right and left pathways. The Sympathetic system is catabolic, it builds us up whilst the Parasympathetic Nervous System is anabolic, breaks down.

So in the fight or flight response we see all systems in the body ready to act for the action as perceived by the mind. If we perceive threat our heart rate increases, more blood flows to the muscles, less energy is diverted to digestion, more oxygen is consumed, blood pressure increases, eyes dilate and you stay awake!

So this cycle can lead to build up of Stress.

1. Alarm (fight or flight response)
2. Resistance (takes from other requirements of the body)
3. Exhaustion

The Parasympathetic system does the exact opposite. Hence Asana practice interspersed with stillness in resting poses and Shavasana in the end train our systems to shift gears without strain. In practicing Spanda (tension/contraction) and Nishpanda (relaxation/expansion) we create deeper rest and clearer action by way of contrast.

This also allows us to ascertain what is required in a situation with awareness. Most importantly it tackles the fact that Stress is 'Perception'. Rather than being subjective to external circumstances and our automatic and unconscious reactions to them we can use it as an empowering tool as we choose it to be.

Dr. Ananda pointed out that Yoga is the original Mind Body Medicine. Though we tend to see it used for symptomatic relief ideally we address the root cause. We have different tools to address the different koshas. A

beautiful example was that of a babushka doll, all different sheaths are to be in alignment for optimal well being.

#### 4 Stages of Relaxation

- 1 Letting down. Prejudices about people, places and ideas.
2. Giving up. Give up stresses and strains consciously.
3. Give in. To the dictates of the higher consciousness.
4. Giving over. Control of higher mind to the higher self.

We went through the responses to relaxation and Kaya Kriya. Morning Yoga sessions were educational and gentle, allowing all of us from different abilities and age groups to enjoy and participate. Sri Bala guided us through Pranayama session which was an enjoyable experience especially done in a group.

#### Mantra

We had a wonderful evening session on Mantra with chanting. Here Dr. Ananda told us how intention was important after which meaning is relevant. Where the mind goes there the Prana flows was a good quote! In chanting or uttering mantras we are trying to get close to universal vibrations. When we dedicate to the param-paraya (lineage) we can tap into the pragnya or universal wisdom/knowledge that flows.

#### Arts

We were treated to classical Carnatic singing and Bharatanatyam by Devansena. It was wonderful to see them perform together, to songs and choreography created by Dr. Ananda.

#### Summary

Once again it was great to have Dr Ananda in Australia, this time accompanied by Devasena. Each year it is apparent that his own knowledge is deepening and his ability to expound the Yogic truths is flowering. We will all look back at this Satsangh weekend fondly and have benefitted immensely.

~ by Kancha Rao





*Mother Nature in full force-Brisbane, Jan 2011*

*~Photo source; unknown*

## FEEDBACK FROM DR. ANANDA AND DEVASENA'S AUSTRALIA TOUR 2010

Namas te,

Thank you for your email and your very gracious words. I am glad Devasena and yourself enjoyed the IYTA Convention and I hope you will continue to feel even more at home each time you visit Australia. It has certainly been a memorable event for all of us as well, so I speak for office bearers and IYTA delegates alike when I say we feel very fortunate to have had you both present. I would like to thank you again for your invaluable contribution to the success of the Convention with your generous sharing of your knowledge and your joyous presence.

Please make sure that Murali lets us know your plans for next year so that we may invite you again to visit the IYTA in Sydney.

In the light of Yoga love and fellowship

Patricia Wigley

President IYTA & Editor International Light Journal

Dear Dr. Ananda

Thank you for your email, and I am glad you are now safely returned home. Your beautiful children must have loved seeing you both again. Your contribution to the IYTA World Yoga Congress made it a most successful and what felt like transformative time for many. Thank you for bringing your wealth of knowledge and wisdom with you - and humour!

One thing I would have loved to talk more of with you was about the 12 chakras. I have taught these myself since 2006, and would have loved to know more. Can you recommend a text that you use?

I know that we will meet again, maybe in France!!!!!!

Blessings of love

Wendy

Divine Ananda and Devasena,

Thank you for delivering such a wonderful retreat. It was truly a yogic gathering in the highest sense. It was such a pleasure to meet you Devasena and to have the privilege to see you dance. I have come away feeling physically, emotionally and spiritually nourished.

Yours in yoga and in deep gratitude,

Cathryn Dornekamp

Dear Dr. Ananda,

I would like to add another personal thank you to you and Devasena for your extraordinary presence at our wonderful IYTA Convention. It was a great honour and a huge pleasure to meet you both, and to directly experience the joy that overflows from you both, in so many beautiful ways. I felt privileged

indeed, especially to be sitting next to you at the Gala Dinner, and to see Devasena performing her wonderful dances – including her every toe playing its individual part! WOW!!!

I have been spending a beautiful day writing up my key learnings from the Convention, and from your wondrous presentations. Right from your first words, it was a thrill and a total inspiration to listen to you. I know you are a vehicle, but such a wonderful vehicle – a true Rolls Royce indeed!!

Much of the time, I felt as if you were speaking directly to me, your words were so deeply resonant, and so affirming of what I experience and aspire to in 'being' Yoga. I felt this so strongly that I even found myself wondering at times why everyone else was there!! I suspect they felt the same way as me.



*Thousands of volunteers turn up to help clean up Brisbane's neighbourhoods*

*~Photo by Darcy Grant*



So THANK YOU once again for your inspiration, joy, and immense clarity on our beautiful

and so practical Yoga. My experience of Yoga, which was already wonderful, has been enhanced even further.

Namaste,  
Mary Shellens

---

Dear Doctor Ananda

Having just returned from Brisbane to New Zealand, I reflected that one of the many things I enjoy about you is your yoga sessions can be both serious and playful. Your playfulness appears spontaneously innate but as you often mention it also comes from the experience of what works with children.

This I can relate to very well, as I spent many years coaching children of various ages in sport.

I was pleased to hear your considered view that working with children is of primary importance, with the ability to shape young hearts, mind, body and spirits. When I was actively working with children, I was similarly inspired by Howie Tamiti, a New Zealand Maori Rugby League Coach, who said that when we work with children, we are not only producing athletes, we are producing New Zealand citizens. I am similarly inspired by your message, though I feel you were suggesting, at the very least, we are producing the world's future citizens.

People first, winning second -- and to have fun -- is not the only thing kids taught me.

I'm sure Indian children are almost always perfectly behaved, but in one team I coached I had a boy who was becoming more and more disruptive. I'm not sure if it is karma in action, for as a child at one stage of my life I used to enjoy disrupting classes and batted in the ensuing attention.

Of course as a qualified coach and teacher I had been taught well how to deal with disruptive children, so that my attention was kept on the bulk of the children who were putting their all into the session. But I did feel sorry for Greg, for that was the boy's name, who spent a lot of time in 'time-out'.

Underneath it all I really liked Greg. He was a great team player, superb athlete, clever, funny, and he would always give his all. I was also aware he was having a difficult time at home, and this reflected in his increasingly disruptive behaviour, and indeed he was undergoing 'counselling' for his behaviour. However I had the other children to think of and I was seriously thinking of replacing him - in other words kicking him out of the team.

One day, talking it over with my manager friend Harry Walker, I mentioned the dilemma. Harry asked me, have you told him what you think of him? I said no, and that started me thinking. At the next training session, Greg soon began his disruptive behaviour. I

responded with the usual time-out, sending him to the corner to sit out the practice.

Once I had a moment, I went across to talk to him. He looked ready for a lecture, a cheeky half-smile on his face. Instead I told him I had always liked him; how I thought of him as one of the team's most valuable players, with his great skill, never say die attitude, his 100% loyalty, great athleticism, and friendliness to everyone, and that I would always have him in my team. He looked bemused, not really sure, as if now waiting for the but - but I said nothing more and turned and walked away, trusting the rest to him. From that day on, I never had any behaviour problems from Greg, he became a very responsible team member.

Dear Dr. Ananda, you may be at this stage confused as to what the message of my story is; it's not that I'm suggesting in any way you are naughty, though I understand from those who knew your Father you each have different temperaments, though I'm sure much in common too; I would respectfully say I respond better to your boyishness, good humour and open heartedness, any day.

As you pointed out, the least expected person or thing can be your guru -- and the lesson I learnt from Harry and Greg, is that if you like someone, tell them. So, Dr. Ananda, I have to say: I REALLY LIKE YOU. Not only this, I have so much respect for what you are doing, and for what you have taught me in yoga - for you have reified many aspects of yoga, and helped me to relate yoga principles to other parts of my life, which unbeknown to me have had a yogic aspect. Most of all you have touched my heart and made me think. Thus you have touched my life, and indirectly those around me, and for this we are forever grateful.

Kind Regards

Anthony (Tony) Britton

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*Families of volunteers getting mucky while cleaning up and loving it!*

*~ Photo source unknown*



Hi Ananda

Enjoyed this weekend's Gitananda Association Weekend Retreat Moving from Distress to De-Stress tremendously and especially all the yogic fun we had. My heartfelt thanks for the generosity of your spirit and the precious teachings you shared with us. I found the teachings beneficial and will use some of these techniques learnt to enhance teaching my own yoga classes.

During the yoga week-end I mentioned Dr. Craig Hassed and the wonderful work he does with medical students in the Medical Faculty of Monash University, Melbourne. I attach his paper which might be of interest which outlines and evaluates the Monash Health Enhancement Program. Craig's book, The Essence of Health, is the text for the Health Enhancement Program as the HEP is based on the Essence model.

Let me know if you have any questions and look forward to seeing you again in the future.

Yours in Yoga, Suzanne Derok

---

**Dear Dr. Ananda**

***It was our great pleasure to meet you again and attend your workshop which was very uplifting. It was lovely to see the enthusiasm and passion with which you teach and give of yourself.***

***It was also wonderful to see the respect and reverence that both you and your lovely wife share with each other and we can all learn from this.***

***Thank you once again for a wonderful weekend.***

***With much love and affection.***

***Girish & Raniga***



Residents help out with sand bagging near the Murray River in Swan Hill, Victoria

~Photo source Unknown

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*Thank you both for such a wonderful time my heart sings with joy. We are truly blessed that you take the time to share these teachings on such a personal level.*

*Bernadette Hearn*

---

Thanks again for all of your warmth and wisdom this week-end – we were all truly so blessed to have you in our company.

Diana Timmins

---

Very Good Morning Bala,

I thought that I would share with you what thoughts have percolated to the surface resulting from our northern safari:

1. I was exceedingly impressed with Dr. Ananda, a very fine and capable man. He has surpassed my very high regard that I had for my first teacher Vijay Yogendra.
2. The weekend has re-awakened the joy of feeling part of something worthwhile with like-minded souls, a sense of fellowship and a touch of enlightenment.
3. It has re-focused and reinforced about the power of the mind in the practices and in living. Likewise, on sifting out and being the true self.
4. The need to start the day early.
5. The relative importance of Kiya Kriya as Dr. Ananda uses it for most patients because it addresses the psycho-somatic aspect. However, your method of incorporating rhythmic breath and chanting AUM can only deepen the process.
6. Also, doing Rhythmic Breath in shava asana, which was more relaxing than doing it in the sitting position, led me to think that in the 81 day course RB could naturally transmute into KK from the second session on and easily provide the benefits of both in the program (ie. providing 4 practices instead of 3).
7. In both RB and KK, Dr. Ananda said to be aware of any tensions that may have surfaced and to shake them out then and there, not let them fester.
8. The neck exercise using the chant A-U-E-M is very compatible with the VBT ethos.
9. The benefits of sipping water while doing the practices, and throughout the day, is noteworthy and perhaps should be included in "Points To Remember".
10. After chanting AUM, directing your awareness to the vibrations occurring in the particular section of the lung and exploring what's happening seemed to encourage the mind to participate more. He talked about both the power of the mind and the intelligence of the cells a few times and so suggesting /leading the student into this activity struck me as helpful rather than hoping that they experience something.
11. With the very solid response that you have received from experienced practitioners /teachers, I think that you need to concentrate your time on reaching this group (the "wholesale market") rather than teaching novices (the "retail market"). You need to conserve your precious energies to do the broadbrush on the bigger picture and leave the individual /group healing to your qualified therapists. On this point the pre-conditions to teach-



ing should be re-defined giving due recognition to those who have the runs on the board already.

12. There is a need for an Introductory VBT Course and whilst I agree that the Chakra Healing workshop methodology should provide the foundation, I would be inclined to re-model it to half the time, say 40 minutes. It worked yesterday in a very abbreviated form (admittedly to an experienced audience) but should provide a sampler that's simple, not too long so as to turn people off, but sufficient to give a taste of the benefit (and come back for more hopefully!)

I woke this morning with a natural joy that I haven't noticed for sometime. I hope you too have got much from the experience as you must feel very proud of the well-deserved tributes that you received. Please take time to rest (don't forget a DVD a day keeps the doctor away!) as I think the best is yet to come !!

Love Alex

---



*"King Wally ready for the floods!"  
~ photo by Brad Marsellos*

---

Thank you very much Dr. Ananda....it was truly a wonderful weekend...it's an amazing experience to be in the presence of such a master as yourself....to be uplifted and have one's life state enhanced by people such as you is an absolute privilege.....safe journey home....until next time...

Julia Ballinger

---

Hello Dr. Ananda

Thank you for such an inspirational weekend, looking forward to the next one already!! and joining your face book...Light & Laughter

Wendy Brabazon

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*"Thank You Ananda for the FANTAS-TIC Yoga Retreat this week end in Brisbane! I am so filled up with Love:))) Many Blessings, "*

*Lyn Moes*

---

Namaste Ammaji

Greetings from Dunedin, I had a wonderful time in Brisbane at the Australian Gitananda gathering. It was great to see Dr. Ananda and Devasena again. I especially enjoyed seeing some of my friends (especially Janani and Shantha), and meeting new people, especially the Kiwi contingency. Janani and I helped Cathrine from the Lotus Centre get dressed in one of my sari's, and she looked perfect in it. Her first opportunity to wear a sari! The weekend at Riverglenn turn out to be a great opportunity to meet more of the Rishi Culture Ashtanga yoga family, especially nice was meeting some of Swami Gitananda's original students, listening to some of their stories, they enhanced the weekend by bringing Swami Gitananda's energy in to the present moment.

I will be teaching yoga again at the Red Retreats, which will be a three day event, the Brisbane retreat has renewed and inspired me. I'm also doing a drop in class here in Dunedin soon, and feel excited about teaching there.

Looking forward to hearing from you!

Om shanti, Gargi

Dear Dr. Ananda,

Thank you for your wonderful contribution to the Sydney Yoga Convention and for the positive impact you have made to all aspiring yogi's and teachers. Much Love and Gratitude also to your amazing wife and her entertainment skills. I enjoyed myself immensely. Love and Best Wishes for you both

Julie Robinson

---

Blessings to you Dr. Ananda and your family. I attended the IYTA conference in Manly and was moved by your teachings, it has inspired me in many ways. Not the least to revisit and study the Yamas and Niyamas more closely, and be more diligent with spiritual practices such as Pranayama. It has inspired me to enquire within myself and to be more conscious of how I live and interact with others.

I would love to come to the ICYER ashram for the ten day course you run in the August 2011. I have completed the Yoga Teacher Training with IYTA, It would be a blessing for me to have the opportunity to learn from not only your teachings but those of your Mother.

With Love and Light

Namaste

Mary Hropic

---

Bring on the next Visit Dr. Ananda ...this one was fantastic

Lesleigh Camm

---





Dear Ananda,  
Many thanks, and also for the Rishiculture group email.  
And most of all, thank you from my heart for your teachings in both Sydney and Brisbane. You have given me, and many others, so much to work on and work with, and to try to share with others.

I have just stopped my work as a barrister and do not yet know what the future will bring – but it will include a lot of yoga!  
Love and gratitude  
Phil

---



*A message that brought tears to many locals  
~ Photo Source unknown*

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Anandaji,  
It was certainly a wonderful blessing to share time and spirit with you again and I look forward to future opportunities. While I understand that much of your teaching has been beautifully underpinned by your Swamiji's and Ammaji's wisdom, I believe that you bring your own special wisdom to the teaching of the Yoga Darshana and the humility your use in acknowledging the source, is another indicator of your worthiness to be regarded as a leader in Yoga in your own right.  
Salutation, Namaste, Subhamastu,  
Leigh Blashki

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Hari Om Dr. Ananda  
I read something today that reminded me of what we talked about was it Saturday about thought and response. This was from Victor Frankl that said "Between stimulus and thought there is a space. In that space is our power to choose our response. In our response lies our growth and freedom."  
I thank you for sharing this time with us in Brisbane. I appreciated your wisdom and generosity of spirit. Namaste,  
Yogatma (Deanne Whittaker)

-----

Namaste,  
This is chiefly to inform you that I arrived home safe and sound thanks to the care of my good friend and dedicated student Alex. The flight was delayed by four hours and by that time I reached home and went to sleep it was 1 am.

It was most gratifying being and interacting with you. You are bringing us close to each other and giving us a new direction to our lives in our thinking and acting in the service of fellow man.



I was equally happy that Devasena accompanied you in this trip and graced the various events of the weekend. It was most reassuring seeing her speak so well with confidence and competence. I'm only sorry I could not wait long enough to listen to her in full, as I had to rush to the Airport. It augurs well for you.

I'm equally happy Dhivya and Anandraj have already joined you in sharing your workload and helping you to fulfil your mission in establishing a better understanding among the various traditions in Yoga, revealing the essence of the concepts in our ancient scriptures and their relevance even today, and the need for the practice of Yoga complementing medicine in the treatment of stress-related and immune-deficient conditions.

Thank you for giving me an opportunity to convey my understanding of Pranava AUM. I was not in the best of shape to do justice to the subject, but thank God for helping me to present it.

Please convey my respects to Ammaji and Madanmohanji. I shall await their observations on my handiwork. It should be our challenge to make VBT evidence based early.

Have a safe trip back with the satisfaction you did an excellent job of all your assignments. I shall await your information of the proposed visit to Melbourne in April 2011. When you do, please spell out what you wish to be done. God willing, it will be done.

Love, Sri Bala



*Sandbag love heart-Brisbane Floods-Jan 2011  
~ Photo source unknown*



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wendysnape@westnet.com.au

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bodywise1@bigpond.com.au

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devaki@gitananda-australia.net

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