

Gitananda Yoga Association

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TO OUR NZ SADHAKS FROM GYA AUSTRALIA

I feel sure I can say on behalf of all our GYA members, that our thoughts are with you all in the aftermath of the tragic events in Christchurch. Words are not enough to express the feelings that arise in relation to it. New Zealand is such a lovely and previously peaceful country where anyone would have felt safe and now...? These things change the way things are done and this inevitably affects the lives of everyone, not just in New Zealand but all around the world and we can only shake our heads in dismay at the frighteningly disturbing trends that have changed our lives in our lifetime and wonder how it will be for our children.

MEMBERSHIP FEES

Membership fees are due at the beginning of April 2019; if you have not renewed, you can fill in the Membership form online, pay by EFT and email the form with your payment details to Murali.

<http://www.gitananda-australia.org/memberform.pdf>

- \$30 for Associate membership which is open to any person interested in Gitananda Yoga
- \$50 for ICYER certified members who wish to be listed on the ICYER/GYA Website

Non-Members: If you are not a member but have attended a GYA retreat with Dr. Ananda in the past, your name is on our data base and the eNewsletter will continue to be emailed to you unless you request to be unsubscribed. We hope that it will inspire you to rejoin our small but dedicated group of members in the Southern Hemisphere who continue to revere our beloved Ammaji and Dr. Ananda and promote the teachings of our Guru, Yogamaharishi Dr. Swami Gitananda Giri Guru Maharaj.

ASHRAM NEWS

- Ananda's teaching schedule for 2019-2020 means Ananda will not be joining us Down Under in 2019.
- However GYA financial members can join Ananda at ICYER for the February 2020 Yantra Course. Further details are on the Course page of our website <http://www.gitananda-australia.org/courses.html>. Click on "Dr Ananda's Yantra Course in the left side bar.
- Members interested in accessing Ananda's Teaching on YouTube can subscribe to:
 - www.youtube.com/user/CYTER2010 and www.youtube.com/user/yognat2001
- Members can join Dr Ananda's Google group for Rishiculture at <http://www.gitananda-australia.org/links.html> but will require their own personal Gmail account to sign in.
- Alternately they can join the Yahoo Group for Rishiculture at <https://groups.yahoo.com/neo/groups/rishiculture/info>
- Our contacts page has been updated for 2019-2020 <http://www.gitananda-australia.org/members.html>
- More photos of Yantra 2019 can be found on the Gallery Page <http://www.gitananda-australia.org/gallery001e.html>
- The Association email address is gitanandaaustralia@gmail.com

FROM AMMAJI:

The days flutter down from the calendar, like white birds alighting to roost for the night. Aptly so, as the days fly by! We open eyes and gaze at the world in amazement, awed by the fact that it still exists and then begin our first steps into the dawn! When we live in the now, time stands still. Movement is a tense, past or future, but the now is a gift, the present. Today, some say it is Sunday, others declare it is the full moon, still others declare it a holiday, a holy day!

Whatever it is, it carries us on its shoulders to our eventual destination. This particular day 20th January was marked by three significant "markers". A lovely group of about 75 persons gathered at Kambliswamy Madam to felicitate Dr. Ananda during the weekly Pooja for the honour he recently received – that of a Doctorate of Science! Well and truly received! The second "marker" was the third wedding anniversary of Dr Balaji and his wife Shamali. The third marker was the award of Government of India Certificate to all members of Team 50 for their outstanding speeches at the 25th Annual International Yoga festival this year January 4th to 7th - 2019. So! A big day all around.

It was all the more delightful as it came unsought. On its own accord, a social and professional recognition of Dr. Ananda life's work at the age of 46. The felicitation today at the madam was an "uplifting time" as all came together in harmony, even though only for a short time to express their appreciation in the presence of the Guru. Some "treats" accompanied the Prasad – extra vegetable rice offered by a student made at home, to all, special sweets etc. A spirit of oneness! How amazingly friendly and cheerful all were with a heartily dose of love and respect – shawls, flowers, fruits, sweets and traditional songs to mark the occasion. This moment was memorable! The Doctorate was bestowed by SVYASA

University, Bangalore and had the power to “displace” old negative memories – slowly we build our edifice of Anandam, Anandam Sat Chit - Anandam drop by drop and brick by brick.

A Doctorate in Science by SVYASA University in Bangalore for his outstanding work in Yoga Research and Propagation was an unexpected honour which struck him out of the blue but one for which he was both highly honoured and deeply humbled. Usually this honour is bestowed only on senior researchers, so at the relatively junior age of 46, he now carries the title D.Sc. (Doctorate of Science). The award was bestowed with great ceremony at the University on 20th January. Convocation ceremony attended by hundreds in a most decorous way in Bangalore!

The Guru's work goes on and on... Dr Ananda took his wife and two children on a four-day trip to Bangalore for the occasion, and they also visited the Art of Living Foundation of Sri Ravi Shankar as VIP guests. It was a plane ride from Puducherry to Bangalore and then back again! So, not only do the days fly but also the family flies! Now I will fly away and allow you to be with your own thoughts!

2019 YANTRA IMMERSION COURSE AT ICYER

In February, Murali took a small group to India for the 2019 Yantra Immersion Course. This was an opportunity to meet like-minded sadhaks from around the world and to experience India, some for the first time. After overnight stops in Singapore and Mahabalipuram we arrived in Pondicherry on Saturday in time for lunch and which gave us time to go shopping later for essentials. After checking in at ICYER Col Louise and Jo settled into their comfortable guest house in the local fishing village nearby overlooking the bay of Bengal.

The Yantra course is always inaugurated on the 3rd February, the birthday of Swami Kanananda by an address given by Ammaji. This precedes all night, non-stop “AUM” chanting from 10:00 pm to 5:00 am. At Sunrise a Homa is held in the east garden followed by prasadam. The Yantra course begins at 4:00 pm that same afternoon.

On arrival at the Ashram, preparations were under way for the annual all-night “AUM” chanting. This year there were 17 participants; the “Team 50” Teacher Training students, led by Cathy Davis (UK) and assisted by Kalavathi Devi's Yantra group from UK and Murali's Australian Yantra group.

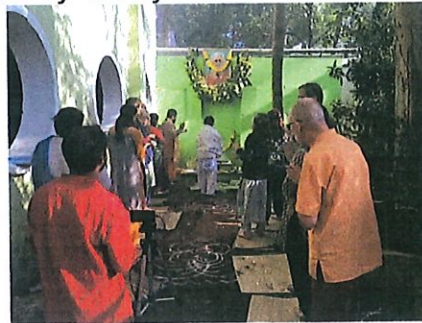
This made for a very International mix. Senior teachers: Cathy Davis (UK), Kalavathi Devi (UK), Muralidharan (Sydney) and Yantra students and teacher trainees: Jo (Adelaide); Col & Louise (Brisbane); Eugene (Australia); Cornelia (Switzerland), , Zoe, Annie, Bryony, Shulah and Adele from UK; Sam (Slovakia Republika); Amba (China); Vrinda (Bombay) and Kiaan (teacher in residence from India). All took meals together and participated in the regular ashram routine.

Morning Yoga Classes

5am: The morning Hatha yoga classes for the Yantra Course Members were taken by Kalavathi, except on Thursday and Friday when Yantra Members joined Teacher Trainees for a combined class taken by Cathy



Hathenas with Kalavathi.



Prasadam

Pranayama Classes

11am: Pranayama - Breath measurements into Low, Mid and High Lobes of lungs were taken in the first class with follow up measurements taken a week later. Not surprisingly everyone's breath measurements had increased as well as their lobe capacity, which had become more evenly distributed into low mid and high lobes, showing that everyone was using their lungs more efficiently after a just week of Hathenas.

Evenings

On some evenings we had Bhajans and Satsanga with Ammaji on various aspects of Prana and on other evenings the whole group participated in Bhajan singing class with Ananda's wife Devasena.

Kambliswamy Madam

On Sundays we attended Kambliswamy Madam - offering malas to Ammaji, then Swamiji then paying respect to the line of Gurus of this Lineage.

Yantra Classes

The Yantra classes were held in the Patanjali kutir or hut each evening and were taught by Dr Ananda assisted by Murali who did revision during the day. We were shown how to construct the principle "Triangles" of Sri Yantra Mandala in which 4 male principle triangles point up and 5 female principle triangles point down - totalling 9 principle triangles, giving us the form or Rupa aspect of Yantra. Sri Yantra Mandala represents the *Totality of Existence*. We learnt how our Birth-path - yearly, monthly, daily and hourly cycles were calculated. We "Invoked" the essence of our name [Nama] thereby "evoking" the best potential of our name - so that our name "resonates" with our Birth-path

Meals

The meals at the Ashram are prepared by Shanti, Amma's long time cook and her cooking, as usual, was excellent. Shanti works miracles in her small kitchen; with a minimum of fuss and few appliances she manages to provide wonderful vegetarian meals for many hungry students and staff

One Thursday we all went on a day trip to Chidambaram Shiva Temple - guided by Pandit Ganesh and his Son.



Group at a Shiva temple



Lord Ganesha in all his glory

Special Mention:

On Friday 22nd Feb we attended a Cultural evening and Valedictory function at City Centre - Yoganjali Natyalayam and were entertained with Bharat Natyam and asana demonstrations by the children and were presented with our Yantra Immersion Certificates. The three senior teachers were honoured for their many long years of service to the Ashram; including Murali who was presented with the prestigious title of **Yoga Chemmal** = Best, Premier. **Congratulations Murali!** Overall the Yantra Immersion 2019 tour was a great success, due to the early planning and preparation, in liaison with Amma and Ananda at ICYER who encouraged and supported us with organisation.

A YANTRA EXPERIENCE - Louise Sharman

Col and I (from Brisbane) went to Pondicherry in India in February 2019 for the Yantra Course with Dr Ananda. We met Jo Bishop (Adelaide) and Murali (Sydney) in Singapore where we spent one night in a lovely little hotel in Little India. The other Yantra visitors were Kalavathi, Shula, Annie and Adele from the UK, Vrinda from Bombay and Amba (Annie) from China. Some of us stayed in a nice guest house in the local fishing village and the rest stayed in Ananda Ashram. We joined Team 50 who are nearly through the 6 months teacher training course and who made us very welcome.

Dr Ananda with Murali's assistance, took the three-week course on Yantra, the Science of Number, Name and Form. Previously this course has been taught by Dr Jonn Mumford also with Murali's help. Even after three solid weeks, I find it difficult to briefly tell someone what Yantra is. "Yogic numerology" is an easy but completely incorrect answer. Yantra was originally taught to Swamiji by his guru Swami Kanakananda. *"Yantra is a tool to study the interconnectivity of the universe, the matrix of life itself and its natural cycles. It covers the power of numbers, sounds and form."*

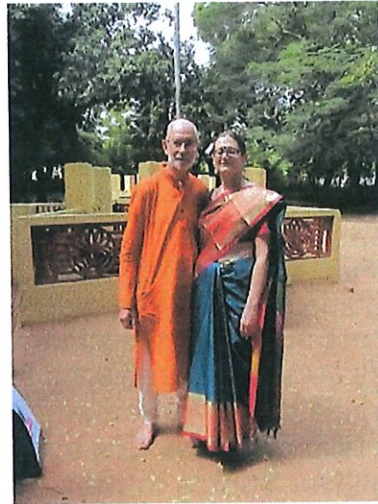
Dr Ananda spent three very intense weeks explaining the concepts to us. We studied the implications of our birth cycles, annual cycles and even down to monthly, daily and hourly cycles and the interaction with the sounds (vibrations) inherent in our names. But none of this is locked in. We use this to identify our

bigger purpose in life, challenges and weaknesses and how with awareness, correct attitude and use of yoga techniques we can best live our lives and overcome difficulties.

We were also lucky enough to have the opportunity to visit some temples. Two of these were very significant Shiva temples, both many thousands of years old, as well as local temples devoted to Kali and Ganesh. Many thanks to everyone for making us welcome. Especial thanks to Murali for all his help in organising the trip, helping, encouraging us and supporting us. Also for his friendship and good humour. It was an amazing experience and one we will never forget.



Gorgeous malas in the market



Col & Louise at the Madam

A CHRISTMAS ADVENTURE - Gowri (Wendy Snape)

Rising rivers.

The wet season arrived early in Cooktown this year, coinciding with the joys of Christmas. We usually visit our family in Cairns for Christmas day, which is normally a 4hr drive away, however this year we were prevented from joining in festivities with them due to flooded rivers. The road is excellent except in a heavy wet season when several rivers can become impassable. We set off on Christmas morning in our little Subaru Forester as usual, and travelled 30km to the Little Anna river crossing. We were surprised to find another Subaru waiting at the crossing because about 1/2metre of water was flowing over the road. The couple in the car were from Canberra and had never experienced such an incident before. They were anxious to get across and didn't know how long they would have to wait so we invited them back to our place, where we had coffee and Christmas treats whilst we waited. Later that day we drove back to the Little Anna and to our dismay found a huge rainforest tree lodged on the bridge, so Jaya and Inoka (from Canberra) went back to their motel and we went home hoping for a good sleep before tackling the journey next day (boxing day).

Another attempt...

We met Jaya and Inoka next day on our way to check road conditions and passed a large front-end loader making its way to the Little Annan. By this time there were about 20 vehicles waiting to cross. A great cheer went up as the loader nudged the tree off the bridge to continue its journey downstream. Jaya and

Inoka then drove through, but we had not packed so had to collect the Christmas presents and Christmas fare before commencing the journey to Cairns. The trip went well until we reached the McLeod river, about 250km down the track where a long queue of traffic was waiting to get through the rising water. Jaya and Inoka were lucky to have got through about 1/2hr. before. After discussion with several locals we decided to return the 250km home again. The next day (27th Dec.) we packed everything into an old 1985 Toyota Hilux diesel utility and reached the McLeod river again to find it at the same depth as the day before, but this time our vehicle was high enough to go through. Two vehicles followed in the shallow water made by our wake. We finally arrived in Cairns and we're able to share a sumptuous seafood meal at a restaurant at the pier complex in Cairns. Then we caught up with our eldest son's family in Innisfail, 2 1/2hrs south of Cairns. We went home on 29th Dec. and made it as far as the Little Annan where the water was roaring through at a depth coming to just below the knees. After testing the crossing by walking across carefully watching every step we took, a couple of friends plus our old utility made the crossing together once again.

Not all bad.

We arrived home exhausted but inspired, that finding ourselves along with others in the same adverse circumstances, we were able to make new friends, and be encouraged and supported by old friends. To me this proved the truth of the old English saying, '*it's an I'll wind that blows nobody some good*'. i.e. something good can result when people are brought together in difficult and trying circumstances.

FROM THE LOTUS YOGA CENTRE NZ

Cathryn Doornekamp

We are pleased to report that the New Year has got off to a good start, with classes well attended during the holiday season.

This year is shaping up to be one of transformation. Visitors to the Lotus Yoga Centre will have noticed some changes within the grounds in recent weeks. Keith Bullock Contracting Ltd have been contracted to do the earthworks for the roading and put in the services to the new yoga Centre that is to be built further up the property to the community centre and sites for 25 eco houses that will form the Lotus Eco Village. To learn more about the project and to view the site plan and plans for the new yoga Centre please refer to the following website: www.lotusecovillage.nz

Classes, courses and other services held in the old homestead will continue as usual during the coming changes.

REFLECTIONS ON THE PAST

By Eric Doornekamp

The early archives of the Lotus Yoga Centre and Retreat Incorporated (1972) make interesting reading. A group of enthusiastic "hippies" lived as a community at 129 Aro Street, Wellington. It soon expanded to four large rented properties.

Here Raja Yoga classes were held to train yoga teachers. Organic gardens and a food co-operative supplied most of the vegetables. During the weekends, meetings saw invited guests, members and friends come together.

Public classes took place at the YMCA in Willis Street and in the Cuba Mall, Wellington. Part of the Centre's growth was the publishing of books on health and yoga. This led to a countrywide demand of literature in New Zealand. The Amrita Vegetarian Restaurant and cook book contributed to its overall success.

There was a growing demand for yoga seminars in various localities. Several swamis visited us in the mid-1970s, notably Dr. Swami Gitananda and his wife Meenakshi from Ananda Ashram in Pondicherry, South India.

Meanwhile we began to look for a retreat up country. The idea was to set up a yoga and health village. It was to be a communal residence based on spiritual principles. It was envisaged that those residing at the retreat would lead a simple life of meditation, Raja Yoga, Karma Yoga, and Bhakti Yoga. The intention was to live as naturally as possible, using bullocks instead of tractors, and yet there were to be such modern amenities as electricity and telephone.



When the retreat was established it was thought that growing food and making crafts would be the main sources of income for residents, but in the early stages, outside work would be necessary.

Our first effort to apply for a block of land, was made available under the Ohu Scheme in 1976. The area covered 150 acres in the hills behind Shannon. However, it did not come to anything, due to the cancelling of Ohu schemes by the then Prime Minister (Norman Kirk having previously died in office). He was not sympathetic to "hippies" settling in the hills on crown land. Well, he won the day, though he lost the election!

Ironically, in later years a big earthquake caused major damage to the land. Perhaps it was not suitable for establishing a retreat in the area after all!

Instead we found a place on the Kapiti Coast in 1985, where the Centre currently operates from an old colonial villa, known as Whare Ora, "Home of Wellbeing".

Serendipitously, our latest venture in community living on our present site is also involving us using bullocks, this time with a capital B, who are our civil engineering contractors.



THE ESSENTIAL GANDHI - IN HIS OWN WORDS

Selected quotes from **THE ESSENTIAL GANDHI** - *An anthology of his writings on his life, work and ideas*. Edited by Louis Fischer 1962 and selected by Margo Hutchison.

Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi was born on **2 October 1869**. He was a unique person, a great person, perhaps the greatest figure of the last 1900 years. He was an idealist who believed in Truth and regarded secrecy as the enemy of freedom. His organisation became known as *Satyagraha*. Truth (*Satya*) implies Love, and Firmness (*Agraha*) serves as a synonym for force.... The Force which is born of Truth and Love or Non-violence... Throughout his life he wrote prolifically and exposed his personal, private innermost thoughts in his writings and speeches from which the following selections have been selected. He was a man ahead of his time and it is interesting to reflect on his words in the light of current world affairs.

On Religion:

All religions are more or less true. All proceed from the same God, but all are imperfect because they come down to us through imperfect human instrumentality... I came to the conclusion long ago, after prayerful search and study and discussion with as many people as I could meet that all religions were true, and also that all had some error in them and whilst I hold my own (dear) I should hold others as dear as Hinduism... So we can only pray as Hindus ..., not that a Christian should become a Hindu, or if we are Moslems, not that a Hindu or a Christian should become Moslem, nor... that anyone should be converted, but ... that a Hindu should be a better Hindu, a Moslem a better Moslem and a Christian a better Christian ... I broaden my Hinduism by loving other religions as my own ...

I disbelieve in the conversion of one person by another. My effort should never be to undermine another's faith but to make him a better follower of his own faith. This implies the belief in the truth of all religions and respect for them... Hinduism leaves the individual absolutely free to do what he or she likes for the sake of self-realization for which and which alone he or she is born.

I do not believe in the exclusive divinity of the Vedas. I believe the Bible and the Koran to be as much divinely inspired as the Vedas... Religions are different roads converging to the same point. What does it matter that we take different

roads so long as we reach the same goal? In reality there are as many religions as there are individuals.

True religion being the greatest thing in life and in the world, it has been exploited the most. And those who have seen the exploiters and the exploitation and missed the reality naturally get disgusted with the thing itself. But religion is after all a matter for each individual, and then too a matter of the heart, call it then by whatever name you like, that which gives one the greatest solace in the midst of the severest fire is God...

There is no such thing as religion overriding morality. Man, for instance, cannot be untruthful, cruel and incontinent and claim to have God on his side. (1921) ... No doubt religion has to answer for some of the most terrible crimes in history. But that is the fault not of religion but of the ungovernable brute in man...

There is not a single offense which does not, directly or indirectly, affect many others besides the actual offender. Hence, whether an individual is good or bad is not merely his own concern but really the concern of the whole community, nay, of the whole world. Our desires and motives may be divided into two classes - selfish and unselfish. All selfish desires are immoral, while the desire to improve ourselves for the sake of doing good to others is truly moral. The highest moral laws that we should unremittingly work for the good of mankind.

Rationalists are admirable beings, rationalism is a hideous monster when it claims for itself omnipotence. Attribution of omnipotence to reason is as bad a piece of idolatry as is worship of stock and stone, believing it to be God.

Whilst everything around me is ever changing, ever dying, there is, underlying all that change, a living power that is changeless, that holds all together, that creates, dissolves and recreates. That informing power or spirit is God... And is this power benevolent or malevolent? I see it as purely benevolent.... For I can see that in the midst of death life persists, in the midst of untruth truth persists, in the midst of darkness light persists. Hence, I gather that God is Life, Truth, Light. He is Love. He is the supreme Good.

The purpose of life is undoubtedly to know oneself. We cannot do it unless we learn to identify ourselves with all that lives. The sum-total of that life is God. ... The instrument of this knowledge is boundless, selfless service. (1932)

On Love versus war and dictators

There have been cataclysmic changes in the world. So I still adhere to my faith in Truth and Non-violence? Has not the atom bomb exploded that faith? Not only has it not done so but it has clearly demonstrated to me that the twins (Truth and Non-violence) constitute the mightiest force in the world. Before them, the atom bomb is of no effect. The opposing forces are wholly different in kind, the one moral and spiritual, the other physical and material. The one is infinitely superior to the other, which by its very nature has an end. The force of the spirit is ever progressive and endless. Its full expression makes it unconquerable in the world... What is more, that force resides in everybody, man, woman and child, irrespective of the colour of the skin. Only in many it lies dormant, but it is capable of being awakened by judicious training.

In this great country of ours there is room for all.... The condition of keeping me in your midst is that all communities in India live at peace with one another, not by force of arms but that of love, which there is no better cement to be found in

the world. *[Prayer speech, January 19, 1948, the day after Gandhi broke his final fast].*

If someone killed me and I died with prayer for the assassin on my lips and God's remembrance and consciousness of His living presence in the sanctuary of my heart, then alone would I be said to have had the non-violence of the brave. *[Prayer speech, June 16, 1947]*

Gandhi's prayer meeting on **January 30, 1948**, had an unusually heavy attendance. Gandhi was pleased. Nathuram Godse was in the front row of the congregation and wished him well and bowed to him in reverence. In response... Gandhi touched his palms together, smiled and blessed them. At that moment Godse pulled the trigger. Gandhi fell, and died with a murmur. "Oh, God".

Nathuram Vinayak Godse was thirty-five and the editor and publisher of a Hindu Mahasabha weekly in Poona, he was also a high-degree Brahman. "I sat brooding intensely on the atrocities perpetrated on Hinduism and its dark and deadly future if left to face Islam outside and Gandhi inside.... And I decided all of a sudden to take the extreme step.

Prime Minister Nehru told the country

"The light has gone out of our lives and there is darkness everywhere and I do not quite know what to tell you and how to say it. Our beloved leader, Bapu as we call him, the father of our nation, is no more. ... The light has gone, I said, and yet I was wrong. For the light that shone in this country was no ordinary light. The light that has illuminated this country for these many years will illumine this country for many more years, and a thousand years later that light will still be seen in this country, and the world will see it and it will give solace to innumerable hearts...

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## LINKS FOR GITANANDA YOGA WORLDWIDE

Those interested in getting regular updates can join

Dr Ananda's YouTube Teachings

[YOGNAT](#) and [CYTER](#)

Register on Dr Ananda's online groups for regular communication.

[Rishiculture Yahoo Group](#)

[Rishiculture Google Group](#)

International Centre for Yoga Education and Research (ICYER)

India

[www.icyer.com](http://www.icyer.com)

[ICYER at Ananda Ashram on Facebook](#)

Yoganjali Natyalayam

India

[www.rishiculture.in](http://www.rishiculture.in)

[YOGNAT on Facebook](#)

**Contributions** are welcome for our next eNewsletter, if you have a favourite practice, a meditation, a recipe, an anecdote, an interesting story or something you could share with us all. Please email it to me Margo Hutchison [margosyoga@hotmail.com](mailto:margosyoga@hotmail.com) for the next edition in July 2019.