

Gitananda Yoga Association

eNews: Volume7: December 2021

NAMASTE! And Christmas greetings to you all.

Who would have imagined back in December 2019, when signs of a pandemic were only just being recognised, that the world would still be coping with it in December 2021! Even the best models of emerging infections are struggling to give accurate forecasts. Vaccine makers have recently said they think the pandemic will finally end in 2022 and a lead scientist behind AstraZeneca's vaccine predicted that the coronavirus will likely become similar to the common cold.

The wonderful thing about being part of the Gitananda Yoga family during this dark period in history, is the fantastic connection to our worldwide community that has been developed via technology by our wonderful Yogacharya Dr Anandaji and his team of helpers.

With the three 'D's: Dedication, Determination and Devotion, and the three 'R's: Regularity, Repetition, and Rhythm; he and his team have designed and developed numerous programmes in varied formats to bring Swamiji's teachings to us to enable us all to understand the deeper aspects of the traditions of our Paramparai. **How blessed we all are!**

The September 2021 edition of Yoga Life celebrated the 78th birthday of our beloved Ammaji, and in this edition of eNews we have included the birthday tributes from some of our Australian GYA members

GLORY TO THE MOTHER! GLORY TO AMMAJI

Murali

In the ashtanga yoga of Patanjali Swamiji informs us "The Yogi does not believe that the senses must be dulled, rather, sharpened instead" by controlling the correct part of our mind the Neo Cortex How better to sharpen the mind than with sacred invocation and pujas at Kambliswamy Madam, recharging our spiritual battery. Amma told us these pujas are a form of concentration, as we focus intently on these external Murtis or Deities our mind withdraws from indriyas-senses instead offering these senses to the Divine. We participated in these culturally stimulating practises including all night AUM chanting to Kanakananda as well as Shiva Ratri, imbibing these high ideals that 'what we value, we become.'

We practised hatha yoga at sunrise balancing the Sun – Ha, and Moon – Tha, currents in our Nadis. We practised Pranayama consisting of four principal functions of Yama, which means control of prana:

- Puraka: inspiration of breath as we require a good "oxygen debt" for vibrant living.
- Kumbhaka: held in breath charging our lungs with prana.
- Rechaka: expiration of breath - cleansing part of breath.
- Shunyaka: held out breath allowing arousal of the shakti.

Our diet was healthy vegetarian food, and we were encouraged to sip water absorbing the prana. In the evening we sang bhajans followed by Satsangha given by Amma; listening to and studying spiritual truths enabling us to better understand reality - in Yoga called Sanatana Dharma allowing an individual to align themselves with cosmic law -Dharma Rai.

In yantra our initiated name/nama is balanced with our birth path creating a flow of consciousness so we can achieve balance/harmony/potential with our Vijyanamaya and Anandamaya Koshas. It was Amma who initiated me into namakarana as Muralidharan Giri.

I am forever grateful to our spiritual mother Amma who wins our Olympic Gold Medal for Spirituality

MEENAKSHI – THE Goddess

The goddess Meenakshi in her third incarnation is The Mother of the Cosmos, “Adi Shakti” (the original source of energy), the divine consort of Lord Shiva, “Sundareshwara” “Meenakshi, meaning fish eyed” from the words “meena, meaning fish” and “akshii meaning eyes “Her eyes are large and brilliant like that of a fish.

*She who has the auspiciousness and glory of Lakshmi
with beautiful eyes which look like fish in the pond of her face.*

Fish never close their eyes and are said to look after and protect their young with their eyes, similarly the goddess never stops watching over her devotees. Just by her one look, one glance our miseries disappear.

MEENAKSHI – The Warrior Queen

Margo

The King and Queen of Madurai were desperate for an heir, so they performed a special ceremony to the gods to obtain a son. They were astonished to be given instead, a three-year-old girl-child with three breasts. However, the gods advised them to treat her as if she were their son and said that when she met her husband, she would lose the third breast.

Meenakshi becomes a powerful Pandya ruler; gentle and kind but a fierce warrior queen who leads an army of women to battle and defeats all who threaten her. She finally comes to Mount Kailash, where she confronts her equal in battle - Siva as Sundareshwara, the beautiful Lord. Meenakshi's third breast falls off — a sign that he is her destined husband. This is a battle that ends in love and marriage and not in blood and war.

Every year the Chitirai Festival in Madurai commemorates the marriage of Meenakshi and Sundareshwara, and a young girl is chosen to represent the beautiful, young warrior princess Meenakshi in the procession. What an honour it must be to be chosen to represent her in this festival. The goddess Meenakshi is a wonderful example of female power, strength and beauty. A role model for girls and women to aspire to and be the best they can be ... and (of course) leave the rest!



Meenakshi is the epitome of wisdom, beauty, courage, compassion and efficiency, completely emanating divinity on Earth.

Radiating her motherly compassion to everyone.

She captures the hearts of her devotees with her miraculous healing powers.

A WOMAN OF STRENGTH © Maryanne Pale, 2007

The following poem was written by Maryanne Pale as a gift for her mother, Sinai Pale
 “She is a true inspiration in my life. I am grateful for the example that she is and the
 life of faith that she continues to lead.”

My thoughts went to Ammaji when I first read it.

(AMMAJI)

She rejoices in God with a grateful heart and a joyful spirit
 She possesses the ability to genuinely say to another woman:
 “I admire your qualities and attributes”

She is blessed with the gift of giving and a willingness to help others
 She consoles others even though she too is hurting.

She learns from her mistakes and acknowledges that she too is not perfect,
 She speaks with words of wisdom and not malice.

From the mouths of destruction, her smile remains unshaken
 She lifts her head and continues to walk in the midst of turmoil.

She inspires other women to be the best they can be.
 With her life experiences, she touches the lives of a multitude.
 She remains determined to be the best person SHE can be
 She smiles every time she says “I LOVE YOU”

She has the courage to take the fall for another
 She is not too proud to say “I need you”
 When her tears fall, she prays faithfully
 When others turn their back on her, she still continues to pray faithfully.

She is humble enough to admit when she is wrong
 Through betrayal and talk, she remains secure in knowing who she is
 She is loving enough to say “I forgive you”
 She is at peace with herself without having the need to prove herself to anyone

She values her self-worth and reminds other women of theirs
 She is not pretentious but instead she presents herself just as she is...

A WOMAN OF STRENGTH!



BEING THE BEST! Meenakshi Devi Bhavanani

Why do we need to “be the best” at whatever we do?

The best student, the best worker, the best actor, the best dancer... there are zillions of competitions to determine “The Best” in a zillion way.

What does it mean? Good, better, best...! All evaluation is based on comparison. In the land of the blind, the one-eyed man is king.

Compared to a caterpillar, a butterfly is better. But... the caterpillar is destined to become the butterfly... so who is the best?

Humans are addicted to that feeling! “I am better than you!” We often sang a song as children: “Anything you can do I can do better! “What an adrenalin rush we enjoy when we feel we are better than someone else!

That “I” of ours may have collected many identities in its meandering through various incarnations. My religion, my race, my family, my country, my social status, my bank balance, my house, my profession, my beautiful body, my intelligent mind, my sports skills, my dancing or singing ability, my caste, my (perfect) Asana, my discipline, my lifestyle my children, my parents...everything which is preceded by the possessive pronoun “my” or “mine” is better than anything of “yours”. Therefore “My I” is better than “Your I”! “I am the best”.

Or in the words of Mohammed Ali, the American boxing champion, “I is the greatest!”

What a laugh all this is! What a cosmic joke! We spend a lifetime collecting trophies certifying our “best –ness.” But in the end, all is ashes, only ashes! All emperors leave this world empty-handed! We can take only one thing with us to the after world- the result of all our thoughts, words and deeds, whether good (Punya) or evil (Papa).

Our knapsack at departure from this physical body will only be an intangible one filled with good-bad karmas! The word Karma can be broken down into “kar” which means “actions” and “ma” which means “my”. So, “Karma means “my actions”!

When we fully realize this down in every one of our trillions of cells, we will be freed of the urge to be “the best.” we will replace that intention with “I will be the best human being I can possibly be.” We will no longer compete with others or measure ourselves against another.

We will strive to know our own potential, with all our limitations and strengths, and work to fulfill our own Swadharma, our own destiny, whether it be a humble destiny as a sweeper or an exalted destiny as a ruler of Worlds.

We will simply be “our best” and leave the rest! And that is The Best!



SRI MATAJI MEENAKSHI DEVI CENTRE FOR YOGIC LITERATURE.
Yogasadhaki Malini Nath,

Although Ammaji and I have not yet met, I feel a bond with her. Firstly, it is that her being radiates the beauty of a Mother in every sense of the word. Bearing witness from afar through my connection with the Gitananda World Family of Dr Anandaji, Yogacharini Devasena Bhavanani, Anandraj and Dhivya Priya Bhavanani. Seeing Ammaji pictured with her late Guru husband Yogamaharishi Dr Swami Gitananda Giri, it is to witness the manifestation of a truly divine family. It is as though the greatness of Swami Gitananda Giri and Ammaji is passed onto Dr Ananda Balayogi with his beautiful wife, who is herself a manifestation of Devi, and through them to both children. It is astonishing and rare to see three generations of Yogic perfection and it is all due to the power of Ammaji to bring into the world a son who would hold the responsibilities of his late Guru father with exceptional dignity and grace.

Many of us are ordinary mothers and we strive to raise humane human beings. To raise divine humane human beings is another dimension beyond this. All whilst being the Shakti, the energy and power behind a man known as the Lion of Pondicherry who simply fills the entire consciousness of anyone who is in his presence, even as it is for us far away, vicariously. It was an incredibly demanding role to play, considering the fact that Ammaji was also the shishya of her Guru husband. Bearing this obligation, whilst doing her own sadhana, coordinating the activities of the ashram, editing Yoga Life, heading up the ICYER research institute and teaching and running the Yoganjali Natalayam school, it is almost incomprehensible achievement for one individual. Add to this her publications which include an encyclopaedic work in two volumes on the History of Yoga, which is today, despite the treacherous domain of yoga studies, a path breaking and comprehensive contribution to scholarship.

Ammaji says that she is not a scholar, although she is brilliant, and her writing is warm, sensitive and a pure pleasure to disappear within. Surely this method is more likely to reach the hearts and minds of the world, with a combination of traditional storytelling, scriptural referencing and history, filled with her loving, wholehearted and divine use of words:

I am both a lover and a doer of Yoga. Yoga to me is a whole way of life, a life lived intensely, one breath at a time, with conscious awareness. The real purpose behind every thought, word and deed is conscious evolution. Every endeavour is an opportunity to grow in spirit and consciousness. My ultimate purpose, like the disciple of the Upanishadic Rishis, is to 'comprehend the universe'.

Beginning with the primary focus of her life in this paragraph, wherein her own universe is lived each breath at a time consciously, we are taken full circle, to her purpose of

comprehending the universe, and Ammaji creates this effect of bija, expansion and drawing the egg around her ideas to make them a small gift of something immensely powerful and transformative the whole time. We are drawn in like proverbial moths: what is Mataji revealing to us? The entire story of Yoga in a nutshell, beginning with herself as the emulator and manifestation, and ending with everything. I can see her hand stretched out to me, with a tiny grain of rice in it like a calling: Listen, read, learn, take the advice and grow.

For me, as a researcher, writer, and lover of Yoga, Ammaji is a role model. She is the example that reminds us all that there is a higher authority in the living yoga tradition that brought the whole tradition into her hands as she crafted its story:

Trying to solve The Riddle of Yoga has led me where angels fear to tread. But what majestic vistas have unfolded before my eyes...The great elation at finding how beautifully a piece fits into another and the emerging of a larger picture as the years rolled on, was a source of quiet excitement. An article here, a phrase there, a passage from a book, a talk by a scholar or a Swamiji – the pieces seemed to be magnetically attracted to my hands.

For others, Ammaji is many things. For me, I am her reader, a listener and someone who feels deep love for her without understanding why. And I really do not like to listen or read anything about Yoga unless it has a very fine and clear ring of truth. Amma is my Guru of writing, researching, of expressing her profound insights in simple, poetic, and sparkling words. This is far from the scholarship of the academy where each word seems pressed out of a machine. This is the art of writing on Yoga, as a practice of Yoga and which is Yoga, the truth of Yoga.

Ammaji is always going to live with me in the books that, just like for Amma, the universe has placed into my hands. I feel an incredible responsibility as a sadhaka and writer to speak truthfully, to cut away the briar and to learn to listen more to the chorus of masters along the lines of our great traditions. Her contribution to my knowledge is something that I will have to take piece by piece, like her jigsaw puzzle, and continue this learning for life. What it does bring to mind is the necessity for disciplinary reform on academic scholarship and yoga. In that context Ammaji is a trailblazer. In her honour it would be a great blessing if there was a **Sri Mataji Meenakshi Devi Centre for Yogic Literature**.

In her History of Yoga, Ammaji is the voice of the writer. In the future, when a new chapter is to be written, Ammaji will be in the History of Yoga as a great Yogini. My pranams and deep gratitude for the existence of Yogacharini Kalaimamani Ammaji, Smt Meenakshi Devi Bhavanani for everything she has done, every small chain reaction that has come due to her work, her life and art of giving, and most of all, from this small heart, for her writing.

Jai Mataji Meenakshi Devi, the Lioness of Pondicherry.

ANNUAL GITANANDA YOGA SATSANG - 2022
MERMAID BEACH -GOLD COAST

5 nights

- Wednesday 16th February 2022 to Monday 21st February 2022 (Inclusive)

We have found our spiritual retreat venue on the Gold Coast.

Open to all current financial members

You are invited to join us

and take a yoga session at Mermaid Beach.

Swamiji encourages us all to be creative and share these excellent Yoga practises
and this is the perfect time.

- Contact Yogacharya Muralidharan for further details

muralidharan33@yahoo.com.au

At our Satsang we will have our AGM for 2021-2022 and the current committee will be re-elected provided they are financial.

Committee members are advised to notify Murali if they do not wish to be re-elected or if there are changes to their details listed below.

COMMITTEE CONTACTS 2021-2022

Treasurer
Public Officer
New Zealand Secretary
Australian Secretary
Chairperson
International Ambassador
Yantra Consultant
eNewsletter Editor
STEP-BY-STEP - Correspondence Course
Mentor

MURALIDHARAN
JEAN-MICHEL RUFFIER (DEVIDASAN GIRI)
[CATHRYN DOORNEKAMP](#)
[MARGO HUTCHISON](#)
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SPECIAL OFFER TO ALL GYA FINANCIAL MEMBERS.

Current financial members are now entitled to receive a **10% discount** on the Euro cost of any of Dr. Ananda's Online Courses. <http://www.icyer.com/Online%20Courses.htm>

- Please contact ananda@icyer.com for pricing or to register in upcoming sessions and/or to purchase a complete set of recordings of these earlier Zoom sessions.



MEMBERSHIP FEES 2022-2023

Membership of our Association for 2022-23
will be due for renewal by 30 March 2022.

To renew or update your membership please pay:

- Account: 498 569 383 - BSB: 015 025
- Kindly email Murali when fees are paid via EFT.
- **\$30 for Associate membership**
- **\$50 for ICYER Accredited or Teaching members** – whose details are listed on the Accredited page of our website <http://www.gitananda-australia.org/>
- Your ongoing financial support is very much appreciated, Gitananda Yoga Australia responded to Ananda's request for financial support for ICYER with \$1,162.00 via International Money Transfer. GYA will continue to Support ICYER financially.

Contributions are welcome for our next eNewsletter, have you 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 margosyoga@hotmail.com for the next edition in March 2022.

A Meditation for Christmas

Shanti Gowans (Dec 1996)

*From behind closed eyelids, just lift your eyes and meditate upon the astral star within you.
Imagine the star in between both eyebrows on your forehead.*

*Let its silver white radiance stream forth in all directions ... upwards towards the heavens ...
outwards towards nature ... and penetrating you, like the emanations from the third eye, the
Ajna Chakra of God.*

*Create a land of everlasting Christmas within you ...
from the pinnacle star where radiance emerges, just allow your own Christmas tree to flow
forth. And decorate this tree.*

*Prepare gifts of calmness, forgiveness, service, devotion, understanding ... heart gifts ...
Each wrapped in a golden covering of goodwill and
bound with a silver cord of sincerity and commitment.*

*If the cradle of your consciousness is now cobwebby, stained, rusty with selfishness, anger,
indifference, greed ...
clean and remodel it with dazzling soul qualities of love, humility, faith, willpower, self-
control, unselfishness, that you may fittingly celebrate the mystical advent.*

*Celebrate being born again,
Celebrate stilling the storms in the sea of your life
Celebrate renewed sight in lapses of mental blindness,
Celebrate the spring to your step, of a lame will.*

*If you feel a glow of happiness at Christmas time.
Understand that there is a special significance for this.
On the birthdays of special ones, such as Jesus, there is a tremendous rejoicing in heaven.
Vibrations of that celestial joy penetrate our atmospheres.
The more you let go, relax and leave your heart open, the easier it is to participate in this
divine celebration.*

*On the Christmas morning of your spiritual awakening – deliver these precious packages of
divine qualities, ... your heart offerings, sealed with tears of joy, and bound with cords of love
... to your beloved ones, the special people and animals in your life ...
Let your beloveds gather around the Christmas tree of your inner awakening,
to celebrate the festivity and joyousness ... in accepting your ultimate Christmas gift:
yourself.*

*Yes, totally let go ...
Meditate upon the Astral star with you.
And let it lead you to your love, peace, joy, light.*