

Sahaja Yoga

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Australian Newsletter

Jai Shri Mataji!

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"All art is a prayer for spiritual strength. If we could be pure dancers in spirit we would never be afraid to love, and we would love with strength and wisdom. We would not be afraid of speech, and we would be serene with silence. We would learn to live beyond words, among the highest things. We wouldn't need words. Our smile, our silences would be sufficient. Our creations and the beauty of our functions would be enough. Our giving would be our perpetual gift."

"...We should return to pure contemplation, to sweet meditation, to the peace of silent loving, the serenity of deep faith, to the stillness of deep waters. We should sit still in our deep selves and dream good new things for humanity. We should try and make these dreams real. We should keep trying to raise higher the conditions and possibilities of this world. Then maybe one day, after much striving, we might well begin to create a world justice and a new light on this earth that could inspire a ten-second silence of wonder – even in heaven."

Ben Okri, "Birds of Heaven"



NATIONAL NEWS

A prayer was made to Shri Mataji on behalf of all the Australian Sahaj Yogis on 5th May 2000 which read as follows: *"Shri Mataji, we bow to you, thank you, and surrender to you on this special occasion of 30th anniversary of Sahastrara Day. We thank you for your divine incarnation and allowing us to be your children. Shri Mataji, we pray at your lotus feet that the whole of the humanity can recognise you, come to your feet and that the glory of your leela resound in the whole of your creation"*

Shri Mataji has conveyed her love and blessings to all the Sahaj yogis on the 9th of May by telephone.

1 National Seminar (5-7 may 2000)

A great leap forward in our national collectivity. A giant leap forward in re-establishing the sahaj culture and expression of our love and devotion for Shri Mataji.

2 Nirmala (NGO for Youth in Australia)

Shri Mataji has expressed desire to save the youth of Australia through a non-government, registered charity called "Nirmala". The trustee of the charity will be a company limited by guarantee called as "Shri Nirmala Devi Prasanna Ltd" (meaning "may goddess Nirmala always be pleased with us"). All the paperwork is complete and an application has been made for it be registered as a charity and that any donations made to it be tax deductible. Shri Mataji is very pleased with the outcome and has conveyed her blessings..

3 Vishwa Nirmala Dharma

Shri Mataji has suggested that Vishwa Nirmala Dharma be registered as a religion in Australia and New Zealand. The process has started and would be completed hopefully before the Adi Shakti puja.

4 National Finance

It is agreed that all state trusts would be dissolved and that only one registration for GST purposes be made for national trust. All the states would act as branches for accounting purposes, and the state trustees would be referred to as state management committees. A standard accounting software will be used for all the states.

5 Marriage Forms

Anyone desirous of marriage either at Adi Shakti Puja, or Ganesha Puja should forward the form to me through the respective state leaders by 5 June 2000.

6 Ganesha Puja

Any ideas for cultural evening, music, play or souvenirs etc for Ganesha Puja? Please ring me.

7 New Zealand

Shri Mataji has expressed her happiness and blessings for the growth of Sahaja Yyoga in New Zealand under Jeff Platford.

Jai Shri Mataji

Avinash Nickkawde

STATE NEWS

Cairns News

Post Grand-Alignment News

Our usual week of five public programs was spontaneously increased to six when Josina made a slip of the tongue at her school assembly announcement about the planetary alignment. Josina was encouraging her students to come to her usual Wednesday lunchtime program when she mistakenly announced that there would be a Friday program at noon. She must have had Sahastrara Day on her mind! Forty students attended, bringing the total of newcomers to our programs to 100 for the week.

We are hoping that our massive letterbox drop will continue to bless with seekers.

Our Puja after the Friday Cairns Library program was wonderful, with some yogis staying overnight to attend the usual collective Saturday morning meditation.

We trust that our Yuva Shakti representatives currently in Sydney are busy promoting the joys of Sahaja Life in Far North Queensland! Do come and visit this winter and enjoy the sunshine in this Tropical Paradise.

After doing two radio interviews last week the collective are considering beginning a Sahaja Cairns Radio program.

Beverley Budgen

Perth News

Sahaja Yoga Programs

It was really an amazing week, with Shri Mataji sending us some very deep seekers. We started our country programs during the week leading up to Sahastrara Puja, after having 'coincidentally' organised them to start at this important time.

A group of about 12 yogis drove in 4 vehicles to Toodyay for the first program. Shri Mataji sent such a deep seeker to the program. Her name is Sharon, and within the space of one week she has given realisation to her husband Rudi (who is practising Sahaja meditation daily with her), her next door neighbour and a friend who came to visit.

We followed up the first program by doing some more posterings in Toodyay, last Saturday and took a drive to her place. A friend, Lauren, was visiting and so we carried out another program (a few of us) in her home, giving Lauren realisation and helping Sharon to deepen. She offered also to help us with the posterings not only in Toodyay, but in the town of Northam as well. It is amazing how things can happen so seemingly quickly!

Another couple, Frank and Gail, who attended the first Northam program, have also since (in the same week) driven here to Gidgegannup and followed up their initial experience and are hungry for more. The first time Frank sat in front of Shri Mataji's photograph he saw **"Shri Krishna and an elephant"**.

Added to this, 15 people attended the new Friday morning program in Mundaring on Friday (before we had Puja) which has just started, and again Mother sent some people who were so open and ready.

Then later in the day, during Mother's talk in the puja, a couple arrived out of nowhere, and said they had run out of petrol. The same yogini who had run the morning program in Mundaring ended up giving a mini-program to these people, sitting outside, dressed in her sari, bindi etc. The two people were very open and their eyes sparkled as she told them about Sahaja Yoga. The gentleman in particular was such a strong seeker, and was already aware of the chakras and about kundalini. Suffice to say, a kind yogi got them some petrol and they were on their way again.

Also, no sooner had puja finished than the phone rang and it was the teacher of a young yogini who had been attending the local school, but had since gone to Dharamshala. She had seen a Sahaja Yoga poster up in Mundaring and was enquiring about the program, speaking to the mother of the ex-pupil.

New Ashram Starting Up

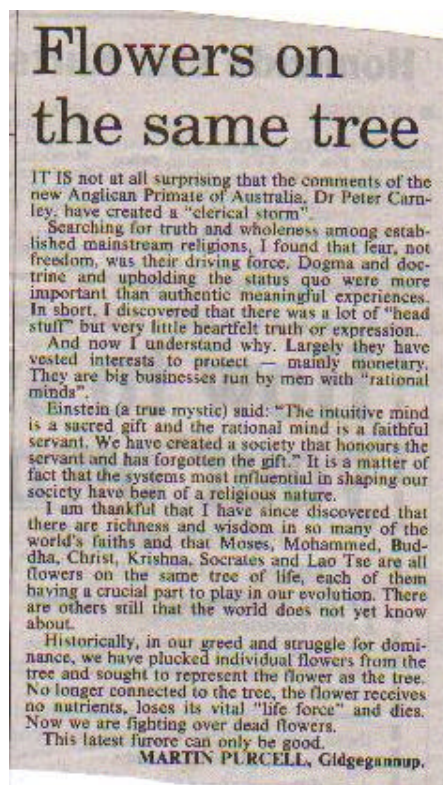
A family and two Yuva Shakti are moving into a new ashram this weekend, in a place called Noranda. It is a very warm and inviting 2-storey building in a nice quiet location, close to nice parks and amenities. We are blessed to have the opportunity of spreading this Maha Yoga in this area.

Craig & Lorenzo in Sydney

We are waiting to hear all the news from Craig and Lorenzo's time in Sydney, and are eager with anticipation to read Lorenzo's 40-page report on the Yuva Shakti Conference, that he promised he would produce, when we agreed to sponsor him!

Article in WA News

Thanks for the quote of Einstein's 2 issues ago. It gave me the inspiration to write this article to the *Letters to the Editor* column, in light of the furore over Dr Peter Carnley's comments.



A Quote from Socrates

"Until all philosophers are kings, or the kings and princes of this world have the spirit and power of philosophy, and political greatness and wisdom meet in one, and those commoner natures who pursue either to the exclusion of the other are compelled to stand aside, cities (states) will never have rest from their evils — no, nor the human race"

Martin Purcell

NSW News

Celebrations commemorating the 30th Anniversary of the Opening of the Sahasrara

The time of the Sahasrara was at hand, when we presented Sahaja Yoga in all its many facets to the Public of Sydney, beginning with the Music of Joy concert on Sunday April 30th, through to the two Public Programs, and ending with the National Sahasrara Puja at Balmoral Village.

This is the first occasion when a week-long celebration has been held, and full advantage was taken to present the many and varied aspects of Sahaja Yoga. During the time leading to the programs many Yogis displayed an open and generous heart was displayed and is the Sahaj way and the manner in which all things are accomplished; the time was at hand when many came together and actualised our collective potential.

We would like to thank the many hard working Yogis without whose vision, foresight, passion, enthusiasm, dedication and unfaltering commitment the National Seminar and programs could not have possible.

National Yuva Shakti Seminar Balmoral Village April 29th - 30th

The events organised to mark the celebration of this historic event began most appropriately with the National Yuva Shakti seminar held at Balmoral Village. We commend the Yuva Shakti for hosting the inaugural Australian National Yuva Shakti Seminar held at Balmoral April 29th to 30th.

Although they have only recently come together over a year ago, many may have viewed the Yuva Shakti as still within their formative stages. During their Seminar our youth have clearly demonstrated a commitment to the spirit of collectivity, a unity of purpose and a vision for the promotion of Sahaja Yoga that has matured well beyond their years.

Young Sahaja Yogis throughout our vast country had grasped the importance of coming together and deepening their understanding of Sahaja Yoga. They have understood that we could all do very much more to demonstrate the kind of Sahaja collective commitment that we should aspire towards, and which is needed to realise Shri Mataji's vision to transform the Earth.

From all coasts and corners of our Nation our young sons and daughters had gathered to forge the bonds of brotherhood and sisterhood which will come to sustain them as they travel the path of enlightenment for years to come.

Before our eyes we have witnessed a vital, dazzling and luminous Spirit being reborn, one which many of us experienced many years ago when Sahaja Yoga first began in our country. During that time Sahaja Yoga was the whole and total rationale of our lives, the meaning for which we had sought, and the goal towards which we strove. That moral fibre and strength of purpose which perhaps has dimmed over the years, has found new meaning and expression within the Yuva Shakti.

The future of Sahaja Yoga is in good hands and is safely assured when the committed youth and flower of our Nation have so brilliantly risen above the maya and materialism of our society, and the majority of their fellow peers.

The Yuva Shakti have set their eyes and vision upon higher, more elevated goals, which is beyond the comprehension and understanding of most of the youth of our nation, and which will take them to pristine and exalted spiritual heights.

In years to come they will go beyond us, and demonstrate what a truly united and committed collective can accomplish.

**Music of Joy & World Music Concert
Eugene Goosens Hall (at the ABC)
Sunday April 30th.**

The Music concert proved a most fitting beginning to the week-long celebrations. The venue was a state-of-the-art theatre and proved a most appropriate and fitting setting for the creation of music of the highest quality and worth.

The concert was promoted on the handbills and posters as well as a targeted mail-out to a list of people interested in world music. We were encouraged with almost a full house, around 280 people, with Sahaja Yogis comprising less than half of the audience.

The evening began with a riveting and entrancing performance by a group known as *Global Roots*, a collection of world music artists including two Sahaja Yogis. The group promotes 'music from the soul of the world' and features Australia's most awarded and acclaimed West African artist, Epizo Bangoura. His music displayed a beat, pace, tempo that served to create an infectious and entralling rhythm, and which served to mesmerise and enthrall the audience.

Time seemed to slip away as the music unfolded creating a spellbinding mood amongst the audience. The first half of the performance was concluded with two well-received African spiritual pieces presented by *Music of Joy*.

Intermission was spent enjoying tea and cake provided by the Sahaja Yogis as the Music of Joy group prepared to take the stage.

After the break they performed a number of traditional bhajans, which were interspersed with uplifting comments to explain the link between music and the awakening of the spirit. The concert was brought to a joyous conclusion by *Sahaja Qawwal* who ably performed Sufi Qawwali music with its roots in the spiritual traditions of Islam.

This ended what was both a captivating and inspiring musical journey around the world, where harmonies from many varied traditions were skilfully utilised to reach out and awaken the spirit of the audience. The concert was a most encouraging beginning to series of programs organised for the week.

**Youth Meditation Program
Glebe Town Hall, Monday, May 1st.**

The Youth program was organised and run by the Yuva Shakti. The program was held at a central venue in one of the inner city suburbs of Sydney with a high concentration of students who attend one of the two local Universities. The Youth program was promoted through posters and letterboxing as well as hand-billing within the local area.

This was one of the first programs to be totally managed by the Yuva Shakti. They selected and booked the venue, arranged for its promotion, and were responsible for all aspects of its staging and execution. A few of the more fossilised Yogis also attended the program and enjoyed the experience of relaxing in the background and watching the Yuva Shakti rise to the occasion.

About 40 new people attended who were also mostly young people. It was most appropriate to be able to watch our Youth presenting Sahaja Yoga to their peers. The program went very well, with the vibrations lifting noticeably as the program commenced. Two of the Yuva Shakti introduced Sahaja Yoga and spoke with great confidence and conviction about their experiences with meditation and Sahaja Yoga.

Most of the audience received their realisation and were able to experience the beginnings of vibratory awareness. The program concluded with the Yuva Shakti working with the new people to help establish the awakening of the Kundalini.

It was a most rewarding evening to support and witness first hand the Yuva Shakti in action. We offer them our congratulations and offer our support going forward in all their ventures and activities.

**Sydney Town Hall, Tuesday, May 2nd
'Sahaja Yoga comes to Town'**

May 2nd was the day when the celebrated alignment of the planets began, and it also witnessed an alignment of a totally different nature when the people of Sydney assembled for their self-realisation.

Originally the venue for the program was to be the Lower Hall, which is on the floor beneath the main Hall. The venue holds about 700 people and incurs less than

half the cost of the main hall. However, when composing our advertising we decided to promote the Venue as the Sydney Town Hall, rather than identifying the less-prestigious Lower Town Hall. We thought on the night we would just redirect attendees downstairs.

A few days before the program the staff from the Sydney Town Hall contacted us to say that there was a morning program in the main hall and all the chairs would already be setup for a lecture. Surprisingly, no other event had been booked for the Hall that evening (it was booked for most other nights for corporate functions running up to the Olympics).

Rather than moving all the chairs downstairs for our program we were asked if we would consider moving our program into the much larger main hall, for no additional cost. "Yes!" was our immediate response. All our advertisements appeared to have foretold the future course of events, for indeed we were to use the Main Hall, which would cater for 1100 people.

Promotion of the program was mainly through grass roots advertising, 5,000 posters and 50,000 handbills distributed to the suburbs within the immediate vicinity of the program. Other channels of promotion were through free local community distribution channels such as libraries, community noticeboards; shopping centres and community announcements in newspapers, magazines, community television and radio. Only four paid advertisements were placed in the main daily newspaper.

The desire of many Yogis to promote the programs was certainly engaged and Shri Mataji blessed us with the largest attendance we have enjoyed without Her physical presence: around 1000 people attended.

The Sydney Town Hall is a vastly impressive auditorium, built upon a grand scale. The main stage area occupies a substantial space and it was felt that appropriate staging would be necessary to present a program befitting the venue. The centrepiece of the presentation was a hefty Video screen, approximately two storeys in size, which was to present a truly glorious image of Shri Mataji both in scope and clarity.

The program began with a presentation of bhajans as the auditorium was nearly filled to capacity; there was no hint of a disruption of any kind. Perhaps it was the auspicious influence of the upcoming Puja, or the coming confluence of the planets, there was almost total silence as the attention of the audience seemed solely focused upon the program.

Following the introductory speeches, self-realisation was imparted and the attention of the audience seemed to settle upon the Spirit as everyone enjoyed an effortless and profound meditation. The vibrations seemed to build throughout the program lifting the awareness of the audience towards the silence of the Spirit. The *Visions* video, which is a presentation of the life of Shri Mataji and the work of Sahaja Yoga, was then shown on the MegaScreen. The vibrations present lifted us all to higher levels as the radiant image of Shri Mataji filled the Hall. The program ended with a short meditation and bhajans.

It was a fabulous and extraordinary evening whereby Sahaja Yoga was presented to the Public of Sydney in a manner most fitting with the significance and magnitude of Shri Mataji's vision for Mankind. In a sense we established that we can successfully convene programs on a significant scale, as we would if Shri Mataji were to attend in person.

Parramatta Town Hall Wednesday, May 3rd 'Sahaja Yoga goes West'

May 3rd was the day when the when Sahaja Yoga was presented to the people of Western regions of Sydney. It was thought that since we were distributing posters and handbills it was not too much more effort to place an additional venue on the posters. In this way, two programs are promoted in a sense for the price of one.

The program build team from the previous evening's program swung into action and re-assembled the stage and setup from the Sydney Town Hall. A smaller video was used, as the one from the Sydney Town Hall would have filled the entire Parramatta Town Hall.

The Western areas of Sydney are now home to some of the largest population centres, so it was felt appropriate to bring Sahaja Yoga to the regions with

large concentrations of people. The evening was well attended and the itinerary was along similar lines to the previous evening, bhajans and music to begin the program, introductory talk, followed by a brief explanation of meditation then the experience of self-realisation.

Following meditation the *Visions* video was shown followed by an introduction to balancing techniques and a further meditation, ending with the program music.

The program again flowed effortlessly. Attending Yogis commented that it was a pleasure to attend programs which provided seekers with a powerful experience of their Spirit.

Meditation Stress-Buster Wednesday May 3rd & May 8th Royal Hospital for Women

The Royal Hospital for Women hosted two inaugural Meditation 'stress buster' seminars at the Women's Health Institute Lecture Theatre located at the hospital. The hospital has come to appreciate that very few doctors have the skills to cope with their own stress let alone adequately counsel their patients, also stress-related issues feature strongly in a large proportion of problems that they are called upon to deal with. The hospital has acknowledged that meditation is one of the most ideal techniques available to combat stress, and its long-term effects on our physical, mental and spiritual health and has turned to Sahaja Yoga to host two seminars to help equip doctors and health professionals with a simple form of meditation which is effective at reducing stress and improving one's sense of well-being.

The Natural Therapies Unit of the Royal Hospital for Women has employed Dr Ramesh to institute a Meditation Research program with the aim of scientifically evaluating the role of meditation and its potential for primary health care. It should be of no surprise that Ramesh has selected Sahaja Yoga as the meditation technique of choice and has conducted a number of clinical trials as well as a number of case studies which have begun to demonstrate that Sahaja Yoga can clinically reduce stress and improve psychological well being.

The Meditation seminars were aimed at introducing Sahaja Yoga to the medical fraternity, giving self-realisation and en-

hancing an understanding of the 'mind-body' connection. Through meditation and Sahaja Yoga, doctors can experience for themselves the manner with which their lifestyles, state of mind and well being improve.

Admission to the seminars was free, but due to limited seating in the theatre prior booking was arranged. Both seminars attracted one hundred and forty health professionals, with remaining thirty seats being taken by the Yogis. The seminars began with talk about how Sahaja Yoga meditation can improve physical, mental and spiritual well being and health which was followed by a process of self-realisation and meditation. There was a short tea break followed by a practical workshop and meditation. The programs held with the support of the mainstream health institute were well-supported, and promoted Sahaja Yoga to a professional audience whom we may not normally attract to our public programs.

Sahasrara Seminar, Balmoral Friday 5th – Sunday 7th.

The Sahaja Yogis of NSW and the ACT as hosts for the Puja weekend and the associated events were keenly looking forward to welcoming Yogis from around the country for the National Seminar at Balmoral. Preparations were made for hosting the event - the time was now at hand to worship our Creator and to enjoy our time together.

When speaking about the once-in-six-hundred-year alignment of the planets on May 5th, Shri Mataji was to comment: **"if the planets can align themselves on this day why not the Sahaja Yogis as well."**

An open invitation had been extended to all Sahaja Yogis of Australia and New Zealand to join us in the celebration of the first National Puja for the new millennium. The call had been made, and what a joy it was to witness the manner with which it was answered, and to observe the alignment of the Yogis.

It was during Shivaratri Puja in India this year when the idea was first discussed, of each State playing a role in hosting a National Puja. From that point to the hosting of the Sahasrara Puja had been only a few months, but it has felt as if a great distance has been covered, and much has been achieved both individually and collectively.

The facilities at Balmoral may not have been comfortable, but there was much collective strength and depth which was gained through everyone making the effort to gather together for an elevated purpose. Many Yogis came together to stay for the weekend at Balmoral. As always, with everyone's co-operation everything come together for the weekend.

We celebrated the 30th Sahasrara Puja beginning in the afternoon of the 5th of May. The Puja was begun with the following prayer:

"Shri Mataji on this day, the celebration of the 30th Sahasrara Day, we Your children commit to stand up and to take on the responsibilities of Your work, Sahaja Yoga, and to pledge to shed off those things which prevent us from assuming our role as instruments of the Divine, created to express Your will for the beautification of the Universe.

"Shri Mataji on this Sahasrara day we thank You from our heart for our realisation and for allowing us to live our dreams; to walk upon the clouds; to experience the joy and to look into the blissful vision of the opened Sahasrara.

"Shri Mataji we thank you for allowing us to gather far from the turbulent space; to sleep under the stars; to enjoy the freedom of saints, and we take heart: for no longer is it a matter of time before the sun rises upon the dawn of the Golden Age; the time is well nigh when all Nations of the World will become lands of peerless bliss; and will proclaim Your name far and wide.

"Shri Mataji on this day we thank You for saving each one of us, for the world is full of people who have lost all hope: yesterday was just a memory; tomorrow is full of enlightened promise when a new age will dawn; when all our highest spiritual aspirations shall be met.

"Shri Mataji on this first Sahasrara day of the new Millennium we thank You for saving Mankind from his own doom and for teaching us a new way; for setting us upon the pathway untrodden; the path of justice, glory and spiritual brother and sisterhood; and for allowing us to gaze into Your face, our Creator; to listen to Your words; and with a open heart, allowing us to worship You.

"Shri Mataji, on this day we remember You, and for all eternity we Your children shall remember the love that beams from Your Being, and we shall live in a world where life is full of Your love; in deep prayer and with humility we thank You and we Worship You.

Jai Shri Mataji"

The 30th Sahasrara Puja will be a watershed for our collective in the strength and power of the vibrations experienced, and the level of joy attained and shared by all the collective.

This was only possible through the grace of Shri Mataji, however in some small way reflected the level of commitment and the aspirations manifested by Yogis in attendance.

Many commented that it felt like a Puja in Cabella or Ganapatipule, such was the open-hearted expression of joy, and Shri Mataji's clear presence, which was felt pervading all around.

Following the Puja the music played broke new ground, and together with the vibrations lifted us to that dimension where everyone danced with joy; it did not matter the steps we followed, or how we may have appeared: all that mattered was that Shri Mataji was being praised.

In this instance words utterly fail to convey anything of the feeling, or the spirit that abounded that night, all that could be said is that it was the kind of experience upon which our motivation for our spiritual Sahaja life is founded.

During the ensuing Seminar there were programs organised for the weekend: Havans and a further joyous concert night. There were also discussions concerning the spreading Sahaja Yoga in our States; miracle stories and our experiences with Shri Mataji; how to deepen our understanding and experience of Sahaja Yoga. Leaders and yogis alike addressed us: everyone spoke from their heart with the hope of supporting the uplifting atmosphere which had been generated through the Puja.

The Sahasrara seminar enabled each one of us, together with Sahaja Yogis from all around the country, to explore our individual commitment to our spiritual life. This was a truly significant event

which supported, rejuvenated, strengthened and invigorated each Yogi who attended. There may have been all sorts of reasons that come before us that could have served to have prevented our attendance at the Puja. There were many good reasons why it would have been difficult to make the journey to Balmoral, but do these compare to the blessings and the experience of being there?

Many appreciated that it is how deeply each one of us believes in, and feels the commitment towards Sahaja Yoga and our spiritual life which gives meaning to our life. It is collective occasions such as this when each of us commits the time to come in worship of our Divine Mother, and to spend time with the wider collective which become the very foundations of our divine life, and which leads to a reinvigoration of our desire to pursue our spiritual aspirations.

We were provided with an unique occasion for introspection and to experience a level of joy, bliss, unity and harmony that is rarely reached in our country.

A distinct and powerful National spirit has been reborn, one which was kindled within the hearts and minds of all Sahaja Yogis, and with Shri Mataji's blessings we will proceed to lift ourselves, our fellow Yogis, and the whole nation, as one, to never-before dreamed-of regions.

We would like to thank all the interstate visitors who travelled great distances and attended in great numbers.

In the time leading up to the weekend it was a revelation to witness many Yogis making a full effort to utilise the powers they have been given, and maintaining a high level of commitment needed to ensure the success of all the programs and seminar.

There was much that was needed to be done and to there were many who were fully involved, we would also like to thank everyone whose tireless effort helped ensure the success of all the programs, the Puja and Seminar weekend.

Chris Kyriacou

Ashram Opportunity

Due to some fairly intense desire, the flat attached to the house we are renting at Carlingford is about to become vacant. The house we are in is three bedrooms with a small rumpus room (or large bedroom). It has a two-bedroom flat underneath and an adjoining door. We have been theorising for the last three months that if the current tenants move out, the house and flat combined would make a great ashram. Once combined, it would have six bedrooms, two large living spaces (Lounge room and Meditation room), two kitchens, two bathrooms and two laundries. For those who have not been to the house it is in a very quiet setting backing into a large bush reserve (the bush comes right to the back of the house) complete with whip birds, rain-bow lorikeets and king parrots.

The only thing we need to complete the dream of the house becoming an ashram is some yogis who could move in. We need to hear fairly quickly from any potential ashramees so we can ask the real estate agent not to advertise the vacancy.

If you are interested or would like more information ring *Paul Stainsby* on 98904535 or 0411 013358.

Batemans Bay Magic Seven

Seven people are now solidly settled into weekly follow-ups at Batemans Bay. Three of these who have come for 12 months already are helping with the other four, and have come to Balmoral and Puja.

Public Programs are planned for this winter, with these new yogis playing a substantial role.

Jai Shri Mataji

Love to all, *Jenny Watling*

INTERNATIONAL NEWS

Vancouver, May 3rd

The ashram morning is mostly quiet - the silence of meditation, the still of a long rejuvenating sleep after late-night bhajans or videos, sometimes projected on a big screen.

Shri Mataji bought this house in Vancouver as a place for us all to be together, a place for all the children to play and grow in joy and security. This is a family ashram - twenty-eight people: seven couples, fourteen children, the fifteenth on the way. Under one roof eight nationalities, five languages, one Sahaja Yoga.

When Shri Mataji first came to the West to live, She resided in England, first in the county of Surrey. This ashram is in another Surrey, in the south-western corner of Canada, on the southern edge of Vancouver, a city of about two million. It's a sprawling flat suburb stretching from the mouth of the Fraser River to the American border. This isn't the hedgerowed farms of the English home counties. This Surrey has long been renowned for what it lacked - parks, planning and culture. Instead, it has been a place for car parks and auto parts, drive-ins and drive-throughs, where classical music usually meant Buddy Holly.

But now it's in transition. Turbanned, bearded Indian men talk on the street corners. The civic art gallery displays children's art culled from around the world. At our local park, the only one of any size, the signs are in English, but also Punjabi and Hindi. Around us gigantic homes are constructed for extended Asian families. In such a neighbourhood our ashram is nestled, Sikh grandmas handing out Hallowe'en treats, Chinese dads erecting plywood Santas. At the *Mama Mia* ice cream parlour in Surrey we are able to enjoy mutka kulfi, a cardamom-flavoured Indian ice cream, served by a distinctly south Asian family. They've decided to keep the most Italian of names above their shop, as well as the Italian tricolor flag across their business card. You can also get gelato if you want - mango, rose petal or even durian.

This is urban Canada, where Chinese New Year is celebrated by everyone. It doesn't matter - a tabla and harmonium will do just as well as a gong and bamboo flute.

The sounds and smells of the ashram reach through the house. The taped shenhai beckons from the meditation room. Chai invites from the stovetop. Children seem to dance and bounce in every direction like fleeting Spring birds - a robin or a wren, our next generation. The luxury of the weekend allows a second cup of conversation, a reminder of what we are doing.

This ashram is many things: a home for so many families, slowly folding and melding into one; an office for those who are able to work under this protecting roof; a school for the six home-schooling children, each with that driving stability of India School inside them. The high double garage is today a studio with puja backdrops in production, next perhaps a table tennis arena - both artists and athletes invited. This one house is a workplace, a school, a studio, a children's garden for everyone. And what are we doing here, living together, living Sahaja Yoga? We are spreading Shri Mataji's yoga. We are changing the world, no doubt. And we are growing in a step-by-small-step collective ascent. We are enjoying the journey together. It's in that detail that it happens - in the good morning smile, in the love generously spooned into each meal served, in the way we treat each other - at every moment, not just when we're feeling good.

And then there's Saturday. The double front doors swing open and, one by one at first, and then as a high tide of rising joy, Sahaja Yogis from across the city and across the border enter. Our own joy and awareness broadens with each arrival, and we come to know our purpose as the Body Sahaj Yog reconstructs and we grow in our union.

Vancouver is a small city. There are perhaps thirty other metropolises of larger population on this continent. We are disproportionately blessed. A hundred and eleven Sahaja Yogis (by one count) from eighteen countries call this city home. Nestled on a fjord-like inlet, on a rich river estuary, walled on one side by the blue and white of the mountains, Vancouver is blessed to be housed within this

still gentle and tolerant Canada.

Shri Mataji said this single Lakshmi-pink house, this ashram in Her Name, would establish Shri Ganesha in our country. Innocence and Wisdom and Joy are just that for which we pray within these walls, as we await Her arrival here in North America.

Richard Payment

Aruba, April 29th

Aruba is a self-governing territory of the Netherlands, located in the south Caribbean Sea near Trinidad. It is about 75 square miles and primarily flat and always windy. The population is about 70,000 people, with tourism as the mainstay of the island's economy.

Things here in Aruba are going very well. We have very recently started a program with SAMBA, the government's drug rehabilitation centre and, by the Grace of Shri Mataji, it's going fantastically. You cannot imagine how Shri Mataji's love is being felt by each and every one of these addicts. It's amazing. We have done footsoaking and ice treatment together, and what a rich spectrum of results!

When we first met one of the directors of SAMBA and presented a Sahaja Yoga leaflet to him, he informed us that most of the board of directors were Christian, and they did not like any yoga. After he read the flyer, he said that what he read seemed to be closer to Christianity than what they preach in church!

We set up a presentation for the board the following Tuesday. Armed with flyers, recommendation letters from the New York prison program and Shri Mataji's blessings, we went for the meeting. It went off so well we were all amazed. The room was full of vibrations and whatever we spoke was literally inhaled by the board. It was as if we were addressing their Sahasrara, and there was no challenge from the ego or superego. The result? What we wanted was to start two sessions per week. (Typically SAMBA offers a six week stay-in course.) What we got was every day for the first week and then three times a week!

Then again was the question of what to

do. Their attention span is not more than two or three minutes, we were informed. Also we were told that they are very, very sleepy for the first few days. However, when we arrived the group - about thirteen of them - was incredibly boisterous, very loud and right-sided. In fact, the most boisterous of the lot was saying things like "I will see if I like it. If not, I will walk out. No one can make me sit inside." (Today he wants to know how he can attend Sahaj meetings after SAMBA!)

So, instead of Self Realization, we started with footsoaking and what it is to be a seeker, how that seeking can be misunderstood! The next day was ice treatment and footsoaking. It was so amazing to see the power of footsoaking. We never spoke about anything except putting one's feet in the water. They felt their soles getting hot. They felt their upper body becoming light while their legs were heavy. Nearly all of them slept well the next day and all of them felt quieter. What incredible results! We explained various chakra locations to them and asked them to say the affirmations. Finally, when we gave Self Realization with Shri Mataji, there was pindrop silence. Everyone got their Self Realization beyond doubt. (Personally, I have never felt my own kundalini so strong over my Sahasrara as I do at SAMBA.)

Shri Mataji's love is very strong in this room. It's very hard to describe, but I have felt so much joy only at a puja! Today all of them are much quieter - a sort of a quiet dignity! You see their pupils dilated and their attention spans are more like fifteen minutes! All this in one week.

It's truly our privilege that Shri Mataji has allowed us to see the awesome effects of Self Realization and footsoaking. Those of us who work with this SAMBA group are utterly awed by the results. One of the newer yogis who assists at SAMBA told me that seeing the change in the seekers, he now realizes the Power to which he is connected.

We pray to our Divine Mother that She rehabilitates these seekers as Sahaja Yogis. We are truly blessed that we got this opportunity to spread Sahaja Yoga there.

Nikkil Varde

Kenyans Seek Assistance

The Sahaja Yogis of Mombasa Kenya, who number 188, have until recently been meeting weekly at the home of the assistant commissioner of India stationed in Mombasa, Mr. N.K. Devgan. With the transfer of Mr. Devgan to another post, the Kenyan yogis have found themselves homeless, both with the loss of the assistant commissioner's home as a meeting place and the loss of the hall that he had been generously renting for meditations and pujas.

In this situation, they write, *"we sincerely ask for any help from individuals of goodwill, so that we both achieve the teaching of Mother Mataji."*

The absence of the Assistant Commissioner's kind patronage has left the Sahaja Yogis somewhat stranded. He was also in the process of listing Sahaja Yoga with the Kenyan registrar of societies.

Any assistance can be sent by either a postal draft or registered mail to the Sahaja Yoga treasurer in Kenya,

*Ms. Millicent M. Amunga,
c/o Mr. N.K. Devgan,
P.O. Box 2075,
Mombasa Kenya.*

They are also looking for a copy of the book *Sahaja Yoga* by Hari Shankar Sharma and an English language bhajan book.

Birthdays!

Our best wishes to...

Simon Marlow, Cheryl Taylor, Alexandra Vernier, Todd Dellow, Deb Keetley, Maxine Whitnell, Goni Naidoo, Greg Turek.



-drawing by Monica Siren, age 10, from Adelaide