

Sahaja Yoga

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Australian Newsletter

Jai Shri Mataji!

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*Shri Ganesha, I am going to be worthy of Your attention.
Please make me innocent, so that I am in Your attention.
Shri Mataji, You who are Shri Ganesha,
Please give me wisdom and discrimination.*

STATE NEWS

from South Australia...

Invitation to join Adelaide collective in celebration of Australian National Diwali Puja 2003

Hello from Adelaide.

We the collective of Adelaide would like to extend our warmest invitation to the our brothers and sisters of Australia to bless our city with their presence for Diwali Puja in November.

Please find attached a copy of the registration form and itinerary. I'll forward the directions to the camp closer to date.

Having a sudden desire to have Diwali Puja in Adelaide this year, we set about looking for a venue (of course the ever-pervading critic at the back of the brain going: "nah nah nah, impossible!"), but with our hearts filled with desire and hope, opened up the yellow pages and rang the first camp that seemed to jump out of the page and Lo!, the only weekend they had free was the Diwali Puja weekend!!!!.

Being a new camp and not knowing how it would be we tried a few others with the response, "its too late for booking, we've been booked out for a year". So we set out to look at the camp, and it's ABSOLUTELY PERFECT. Set at the edge of the national park with access to numerous treks, a perfect hall for puja with a fire place, a huge havan area, lots of lush green grass for shoe beating and of course classic accommodation.

I find it hard to find words to express our thanks and gratitude to our Divine Mother who has blessed us with a picture-perfect venue and given us the opportunity to worship her in the form of Shri Rama. We do hope, with all our heart to have this opportunity to strengthen our Lakshmi tattwa and extend our hospitality to all of you.

*Rita Skipper
Adelaide*

from New South Wales...

Introductory program at Royal Hospital for Women a great success

Well, it seems that the promise of an organised course over seven weeks has proved a good motivation to Sydney seekers. Last Wednesday evening, 17 September, 85 seekers from the Eastern Suburbs attended the introductory session at the Royal Hospital for Women in Randwick. This adds to other seven week courses that are already well underway at Burwood, Liverpool, Hornsby and Carlingford, each attended by 20-50 people.

These courses have also prompted innovative ways of contacting seekers using email and the Internet site Freemediation.com. No hand-billing was conducted for the Eastern Suburbs course (we will save that strategy for a course early next year.) Instead we accessed the data base of email addresses we have built up over the last couple of years. This email contact has allowed both the seekers to contact us during the week with questions, and for us to prompt them during the week with what to look forward to in the forthcoming week.

Of course, Internet technology will never replace face-to-face contact and the dynamic interaction of programs. However, it does seem to provide a unique and unobtrusive way of promoting new Sahaja Yoga events to all those people who have willingly given us their email address.

*Lyndon de Valle
Sydney*

INTERNATIONAL NEWS

from Italy...

An Australian yogi describes the unique privilege and joy of hosting Shri Ganesha Puja 2003

Prelude

To be part of the effort to host a Puja is special thing, an experience unique in its scope, expansive expression and collective enactment of that which is the best within us. At one level it is natural to view the experience primarily in terms accessible to the rational mind: a good deal of work, extended hours engaged in all manner of activity both physical and mental which is needed to transport, house, feed and water 2000 people from all over the world.

As you prepare to join the yogis of the hosting countries it is a bit like commencing a long journey and contemplating the long trek, thinking of the effort and steady progress required to reach journey's end. Our great human family is unique in its diversity. There are those who never leave their homes for fear of the effort required to take on the task. Somehow it is easier just to avoid the work altogether: there are others who take the first faltering steps but have a crisis of will and turn back for home. And then there is that special category of people with sufficient dedication, commitment, and good will that reaching the goal is more than worth the effort: in fact the journey itself and its endeavour, the derived self-knowledge in itself can be a self-transforming experience and its own reward, together with the camaraderie and friendship shared along the way.

With light step and a sense of the good times to be enjoyed we began our long journey to Cabella and the hosting of Shri Ganesha Puja 2003. Hosting an International Puja is something like this: yogis undaunted by hard work come to host people from all over the world, the majority of whom they have never met before nor are likely to meet again.

It is in the giving and receiving of collective friendship that in itself is its own reward: in the long hours spent in the kitchen, in the thousands of kilometres driven ferrying Yogis from the airport to Puja; in the 1001 tasks that are presented all requiring someone to step forward, and those early morning hours gathered around the dining table at Centrassi at day's end when all are tired almost to a standstill and are yet still happy to sacrifice the few precious hours available for sleep to spend hours in contented banter joking about the day's events over bottomless cups of tea.

At the very core of the experience is that inherent wisdom, insight and understanding that everything that we do is an

offering to Shri Mataji, everything is dedicated to the Divine and is a chanceless opportunity to present a personal and collective offering of our time and qualities to Shri Mataji. She has created human self awareness, She has given us the spoken voice by which we may utter Her Holy names and has given us the vision by which we may behold Her form and the love that emanates from Her sacred heart, so that we are able, in some manner, to love Her and in this manner everything that we do is dedicated to Her alone.

As the hosts we continually request Shri Mataji's forgiveness for all of our mistakes for this is due to our own shortcomings, and any achievements are offered to Shri Mataji's lotus feet. All that is accomplished which is good and worthy, fine and noble, have their origin in Her, for we are only giving back to Her that which God Almighty Herself has created in us.

The Puja Weekend

We headed to Cabella from Milan airport, driving a small rented Fiat that performed like a compact rocket and could comfortably cruise at 120 kph on Italy's tollways. The moment you get off the highways and onto the winding back roads of Tuscany, you begin to feel the land's magic. The summer haze hanging over the rolling countryside that filters sunlight and turns all the colours into soft pastel hues. The open smiling faces all around and the seemingly endless number of ancient towns with streets that are narrow and seem as old as time, they are situated amongst the hills of Tuscany, these villages and their surrounds appear not to have changed, other than the souls who live there.

As you approach Cabella you pass along rows of hills to the North and to the South which mark the boundaries of the river valley, gently rising hills, interspersed with olive groves, rows of vines and beautiful villas with the splendid river running through it all, you come across the ruins of ancient mills, and many other traces of a way of life, indeed of a culture, that appears timeless.

We arrive at Centrassi our home away from home for the next five days, this country house perched upon the grassy hill overlooking the valley where neighbours, community, home and, most of all, people, form the focal point of daily life surrounded by forests and olive groves, in the spectacular hills, steeped in mesmerizing scenery and near the wonderful town Cabella Ligure, full of unforgettable beauty and spectacular food nourishing body, mind, and soul.

Centrassi became the centre of for our activities, men wandering its halls with mobile phones plastered to ears coordinating a fleet of vehicles crisscrossing the country meeting arriving yogis at airports, whose names are etched in memory, Malpensa, Linarte, the A7 and A20 highways, and beware the famous ring road at peak times. Then there would be others crouched over the luminescent screen of a laptop, listing, recording, sorting and coordinating a place for everyone, and hopefully everyone would

find their place. Others were visiting markets purchasing all manner of goods: flowers, groceries, food - all that would be required to satisfy the needs of the attending yogis, while the ladies cooking and looking after us around the clock.

All around are fully occupied and industrious people with much to do, no time for idle ramblings and waste of effort. The connection is established between selfless work, contribution and vibrations, many concerned not with how little one may get away from doing but rather how many opportunities to grasp to be part of the cause, for the Divine returns in blessings the modest amount of ourselves we offer.

By Friday afternoon Sahaja Yogis from all over Europe and abroad had gathered at the designated place for the commencement of the Puja weekend. The weekend's observance began with a Havan held mid morning in the grounds near the river. Yogis and world Sahaja leaders led the recitations of Shri Mataji's names as the Pujaris tended the sacred fires and completed the appropriate offerings attending the Havan. After the recitations Uncle Gregoire instructed that each yogi should offer a praise in their own manner and language to Shri Mataji which began a beautiful expression of each yogi's love for Shri Mataji uttered in the words and traditions of many nations so represented at the Havan. It did not matter whether one could understand the words that were spoken. All that mattered was that our Holy Mother's praises were being sung.

The lunchtime meal was served and it is such times that you appreciate the selfless work of so many Yogis who spend most of their Puja weekend working in the kitchen, especially the core team of European and Indian ladies who manage the cooking and are surely the unheralded giants of the collective effort. They usually commence around 7am with preparations for breakfast, cooking, cleaning, serving, and once complete immediately proceed onto lunch and then dinner, one continuous stream of work with little time between, accomplished with good graces, a smile, and to the sounds of good-natured fun resounding between the ancient stone walls of their workplace. Women work very collectively and to one purpose, there is little difference in opinion, nor one strong voice, nor wrestling of wills, they must feed 2000 people and so they just get to it.

In what is one of the many miracles of goodwill they spend most of the weekend in the kitchen attending little of the formal part of the programs, such in their collective awareness that preparing food for the yogis is their puja and their offering to the Divine.

At the commencement of the evening's music program Shri Mataji and Sir CP blessed the proceedings with their presence while Uncle Guido was announcing the names of

the recently matched couples. Shri Mataji allowed the announcements of the couples to precede much to the delight of the couples, as their first moments together would be before the Holy Feet of our Divine Mother. The announcement ceremony is an occasion of much joy and goodwill, faces beaming with the wonder of it all, a moment the couples will never forget.

Following the announcements the Romanian group took the stage and performed some very well-received and professional bhajans which were followed by a piece from the group from Thailand after which Shri Mataji and Sir CP left us for the evening.

Saturday was Puja day and many more yogis arrived throughout the day. Large crowds could be seen enjoying the fare from the café and stalls, others using the cooling waters of the river to footsoak, young children playing all around, others taking the chance to rest upon the earth under the shade of a cool tree, while others were meditating before Shri Mataji's chair within the Puja Hall.

The Puja Celebration

As Sahaja Yogis we had crossed the plains of the Earth, and travelled over her mountains and her valleys, and at Cabella assembled to worship Shri Mataji: there to seek Her tranquillity, and in Her presence know that our peace dwells within Her peace, and that our joy lies with Her happiness and so we began the dedication of the Puja.

Shri Mataji the Great Goddess arrived like the great Queen of all Queens, radiant and perfect in all Her splendour and magnificence, upon Her great throne She was seated the sovereign Power of the Universe, nobility in Her countenance Divine, Her face radiant with the beauty of all ages, the compassion of God was so great that Shri Adi Shakti Herself has allowed us to follow Her and as a Sahaja collective assembled in our thousands to worship Her with the hope that Shri Ganesha's great power of innocence should be respected, awakened, and revered in the world.

Shri Mataji called forth all the young children to come before Her, and soon that place before Her feet was filled with children of all ages, filling the stage, while all the time Shri Mataji's face was beaming love upon us all.

Shri Mataji commenced the Puja discourse and when She speaks we hear Eternity speak, and flow through Her words, the Divine calling out to the world She had created. She spoke of Her aspirations for mankind being held in the palms of these children who were humanities future hope, but we must look to the manner of the world that we will be leaving them.

Shri Mataji said that each child was like a miniature Shri Ganesha, and pointed out that although they could not understand Her discourse, yet there were still and silent, as they understood the vibrations. She said we should have

a statue of Shri Ganesha in our homes to always remind us of his nature, personality, and qualities that are also important if we want our children to have the same character.

Shri Mataji then asked the children to be taken outside for supervised play after which the Puja ceremony commenced, marvellous and joyous were the songs sung in Her praise during the hours of Her presence. During this sacred and blessed night we took our place before Her, Divine music was being sung, the yogis singing before the Great Goddess, everyone in joy and inner peace, Shri Mataji's presence being felt all around.

All of us who had assembled felt the silence. Everything happened as if time stood still, then as in an instant it seemed the Puja had concluded, after which the representatives of the Nations of the Sahaja world walked before Shri Mataji's stage as if in procession, their gifts presented to Shri Mataji in a most efficient manner, and directly the present giving observance was concluded, and thus the Puja concluded.

The Weddings

Sunday was the day of the weddings. During the morning the Haldi ceremony was enacted after which the Puja Hall was emptied and progressively converted into a marriage hall managed by the Yuva Shakti, a force not only in name but in deed, spirit and heart.

Some have suggested Westerners cannot carry on the traditions of the Indian Yuva Shakti be it the different cultural perspective, perhaps less respect for authority and willingness to work, but at Cabella seeing our young people in action the traditions and character of the Yuva Shakti are in safe keeping. They are hard-working, fun-loving, joyous, certain of their collective purpose, active and always willing to help each other. They are an ornament to the collective. They have transgressed the difficult teenage years and through their own choice have become fully committed and active Sahaja Yogis, vibrant, enthusiastic, taking up their responsibility while maintaining all that it means to be a young person entering the full bloom of their youth.

As the day lengthened and as traditions dictate the brides were transported to the Castle to seek Shri Mataji's blessings, one of their number as their representative performed Puja to Shri Mataji while the assembled brides were seated before Shri Mataji. Soon after the grooms also were presented before Shri Mataji and at Her holy feet and also sought Her blessings for their marriage.

After receiving Shri Mataji's blessings tradition orders that the couples should not see each other until curtain fall during the wedding ceremony so there was much activity before the castle's courtyard as a makeshift curtain was erected and the brides shielded from view, the grooms asked to keep their eyes downcast while their intended

were transported back to the Puja Hall in readiness for the ceremony.

The vibrations during the afternoon were incredible. Shri Mataji did not directly address the brides or grooms but She filled the whole atmosphere with the Param Chaitanya, with holiness, and auspiciousness and with great Divine Love. All were silent and still, the magnitude of the day written large upon their faces. Philip the German leader asked the men why they all had such long faces, they should smile and be joyous for this was their wedding day and it should be enjoyed; ripples of happiness then unfolded all about.

The grooms were then ferried to the road leading to the Puja Hall and a wedding procession began to the beat of the drum, passing cars beat their horns and waved in support, several of the well-wishers included many local villagers.

Then by ordered number the grooms took their allotted place before the long white curtain, following Shri Mataji's arrival the ceremony commenced with the recitation of mantra, accompanied with the casting of coloured rice over the curtain which was then lowered and the couples garlanded each other. The couples and their parties sat before the sacred fireplace first pouring water through their hands, before taking the seven marriage vows as they walked around the fire, disturbing one mound of rice as each vow was complete. Following the taking of their vows the couples were now married.

Shri Mataji and Sir CP then left the ceremony after which the couples enjoyed their first meal together before the famous recitation of the couplets began. This is a very sweet and festive time as the newly married devised rhyming verse in praise of each other, a time full of mirth and emotion as the first words uttered as a couple were in praise of each other, hopefully a theme which will set the tone and course of their future lives together.

Then followed Bhajans, music, dancing, singing, a long night of celebrations under the hallowed evening sky. Joy like a vibrant wind of change moved all about lifting us higher, filling the hearts of all so fortunate to be present for the occasion of the worship Shri Mataji as the great Deity, Shri Ganesha, praised and awakened in us all.

Conclusion

All manner of deeds we commit, yet Shri Mataji forgives. Ever do we stray, yet She saves us and brings us back to Her. Ever is Shri Mataji with us to guide and protect and so bless all Her Children, the Sahaja Yogis of the world, and for this we are ever thankful and praise Her.

*Ckris Kyriacou
Sydney, Australia*

Another report from Ganesha Puja 2003: a personalized way to *"Know Thy Self"*

It was a great pleasure to sit with the interested yogis under the tree outside the Poste Hotel in Cabella and discuss the reality of bringing Sahaja Yoga Meditation practices into worldly organizations via the entity now known as Corporate Meditation.

Towards the end of the meeting Herbert invited a Sahaja yogini from Turkey, Canan (pronounced jonanh) to share her experience on how she has been bringing SY meditation practice to the members of her business team. We were all captivated to hear how Canan was able to weave a very collective and yet personalized approach into meetings with her staff and of how motivated her team became to learn SY meditation.

The opportunity first became evident when her boss was heard to say that he would like to introduce some personal development training into the group, however he did not have a budget to cover such things. Canan was bright enough to volunteer to conduct such trainings at no cost to her company. The working title to her approach was simply to *"Know Thy Self"*.

Having gathered her group together Canan outlined the problem from the corporate standpoint. *"The company wishes to raise its standards, to change and improve itself. However, it was clear that in order to change the company it was the people who must change (ie if we can identify and solve the problems of the people, then the whole company can improve)."*

Having gained accord with the basic premise she began to address them about their serious problems, without getting really personal. The central question asked was: *"What is the main problem you are facing in your life?"*

Their answers were varied and as they were expressed aloud she wrote them up. Also she would then ask *"So what are you experiencing in your body at the time you are experiencing this problem?"*

The problems were many and varied and included stress, money worries, performance and promotion concerns, social and relationship problems, family issues, as well as physical, mental and emotional problems in one form or another such as confidence, weakness, ability etc. With the details of these problems being put up on the board and their internal experiencing being brought to attention, the members of her team were now very focused and keenly motivated to hear or discover her solutions.

It was now that she was able to introduce the relationship of each and every problem on the board to either a balancing problem on the 'Left or Right Side' or a catch or prob-

lem with 'One of the Energy Centres.' Canan did not use a formal chakra chart but just indicated on her body where these centres were.

Finally she explained to them that if they were ready they could begin working on these problems right away. If so then she would show them the beauty and benevolence of their own Kundalini or Mothering power that, like a miracle, can solve these problems.

*Pavan Keetley
Sydney, Australia*



This is just one of a series of spectacular photos from Shri Ganesha Puja 2003 on website <http://ganesha2003.ttcomm.net>

from New Zealand...

Request for recollections of Shri Mataji's visits to New Zealand

To all Sahaja Yogis and Yoginis: a request to all of you who came to New Zealand during Shri Mataji's visits.

If you could all go into your left side of memory and write down any or all experiences you gained, any photos you may have, memories of the Ashrams you stayed in, something that Shri Mataji said to you, any advice or information given by Shri Mataji in relation to New Zealand. Dates, times, names of others who travelled with you, last minute instructions for you to board a aircraft with Shri Mataji. Lots of other news you may not have thought important at the time. In particular the Pujas, Shri Ganesha Gauri, Shri Mahasaraswati, Shri Mahamaya puja in 1994.

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