I am truly blessed in this incarnation to be able to live, love and share Yoga. This is only because of the potent blessings of my beloved Swamiji and Ammaji that enable me to fulfil my Dharma of doing my best and leaving the rest at all times. The Yogic seeds they have planted all over the world are today blooming, flowering and flourishing creating great opportunities for self-transformation in so many sincere and dedicated souls.

Devasena and I had a gala time down under visiting our Yoga Sambandam, our Yoga relatives who gathered together with a sense of oneness, love, respect and profound interest. It was indeed a pleasure to meet and mix with so many of them who went to great trouble, expense and time to be with us on this tour. Such love and respect gladdens my heart deeply and makes me more determined than ever, to do more and more, to propagate Swamiji’s ideals of Yoga as a way of living throughout the world.

It was indeed a great honour to be invited to be invited by the International Yoga teacher Association to be the Major Presenter at their Worldwide Convention at Sydney. We were touched at the love, affection and respect we received from all delegates and presenters numbering nearly 200. To be invited as a Major Presenter at a Worldwide Convention being held after 13 years and to be in the list of legendary names reading like a Who’s Who of Yoga is humbling to say the least. It reiterates the gratitude I have towards life and my guru parents for I am so lucky to be able to live, love and share Yoga to my fullest. Devasena and I enjoyed performing our Carnatic Vocal Concert and Bharatanatyam performance at the Gala Dinner and were both deeply touched by the spontaneous and generous appreciation we received from all quarters. My dearest Yoga family of Devidasan, Bernadette, Margo and Gita made it even more special by being with us throughout the convention.

Yogacharya Muralidharan Giri was a gracious host and took excellent care of us throughout the tour. Readily sharing his home with us he left no stone unturned to make us feel as comfortable as possible. Murali is a wonderful human being and has such a Yogic attitude towards everything. He is an excellent organiser and had everything in the right place, at the right time and in the right manner. His loving care and concern for us stimulated me to write a short poem entitled, “Fulfilling our Dharma”.

A great many are unaware of their Dharma.
There are many who shrink their Dharma,
While some fulfil it though with great reluctance and
Others having no other option.
Yet, there are some who go beyond it,
They are the rare ones and
My dear Murali belongs to that
Rarest of the rare breed of human beings

We had a great time visiting the Shiva Vishnu temple in Helensburg and had a good tour around the Sydney Opera House, the botanical garden and Harbour Bridge. We also enjoyed a wonderful day out with my dear friend Balakrishnan who is a dear friend and
classmate from our school days together at Bhavan’s Gandhi Vidyashram in Kodaikanal. Bala and his wife Maria settled in Australia seven years ago with their darling son Nikil and it was a pleasure for all to catch up on news, views while enjoying a south Indian breakfast of idlis (my first ones abroad) and Vadas with traditional Indian Chutney and Sambar. Maria is an excellent cook and we relished each and every morsel before taking off on a trip down the coast off Sydney visiting Stanwell Tops, Corrimal beach, Wollongong Breakwater lighthouse and then ending the day with a nice luncheon cum dinner at the Taj Mahal restaurant. Its is so nice to meet up with my dear friends like Bala and share the success stories of our lives as well as the trials and tribulations that have shaped our lives today. We are already looking forward to the next visit and I am sure that will be soon too.

A day with the animals at the Kuala Park was another chance for us to reconnect with nature through its manifestation in the form of Kuala, Kangaroos and Cockatoos. Enjoyed a special bonding with one of the kangaroos who asked me why we humans are so inhuman! The Koalas were too busy either eating or sleeping and I think that incarnation must be the one where we get to rest the most. The Cockatoos enjoyed chatting with us whistling and saying many times “Hi, Polly wants a cracker”. However once they found out we didn’t have any on us, it was time for them to chorus, “Bye”. Talk about fickle minds! Being with the animals made me realise once again how lucky I was to have had such close interactions with all the animals in our mini zoo created by Swamiji in our Ashram at Sri Kambaliswamy Madam in Thattanchavady. These are such deep experiences that enable us to understand the oneness in all beings and thus open ourselves to the infinite universality.

Another lovely evening was spent with Murali’s music teacher Shreeyukta Dipannita Bhattacharyya (Didi) and her husband Shree Amal Bhattacharyya (Dada) at their hospitable home. We enjoyed a concert of Shastriya Sangeet by Murali on the occasion and it is a credit to both his perseverance and Didi’s teachings that he has blossomed into a capable singer. Of course, he still needs to have her instrumental support to get it all together but it was surely a special day to hear him sing so well. We then enjoyed a delicious North Indian dinner cooked with love by Didi and exchanged tales from all over the world as they have travelled to so many countries with such experiences everywhere.

Devasena and Murali accompanied me on a nice visit with my dear Swami Anandkapila (Dr Jonn Mumford) at his home in Sydney. I have a deep sense of gratitude towards him for his having given back to the Parampara a ‘Slice of Swamiji’ through his dedicated teachings of the Yantra over the past so many years. I count on his love and blessings at all times and he constantly motivates me to do my best in all spheres of my activity. It was a pleasure to meet and interact with both Janne and Edan as well as share their stock of lovely chocolate cake and Lamingtons (those delicious little sponge cakes coated in chocolate and coconut). We also enjoyed playing around with his pet doggie "Star" who is such a sweet little darling. She can definitely lick one to death if one is not careful and has a great talent for saying Namaste. We also had a lovely dinner at Govinda’s, that wonderful vegetarian restaurant of ISKON that is a regular must visit on any and every
trip to Sydney. To be able to have dinner there twice on this trip was special indeed for such food is hard to come by when one is a vegetarian and travelling the globe.

The annual meet of the Gitananda Yoga Association of Australia was an opportunity for us to reconnect with so many loving members of our Yoga family. We all enjoyed an intensive 3 day retreat that dealt with the topic, “Moving from Dis-stress to De-stress through Yoga”. It was indeed a special gathering as nearly fifty Gitananda Yoga teachers and students from all over Australia and New Zealand participated with great enthusiasm. It was special to have seniors like Sri Bala, Dr June Henry and Gita attend and bless us with so many lovely stories of their unique experiences with Swamiji. A strong New Zealand contingent made sure that the meet was an integrative one bringing together in Yoga the Trans Tasman neighbours. Margo is such an amazing organiser and had everything organised so perfectly that it was all like a walk in the park by the time we got there. She is a source of strength for all of us and a true example of Yogic womanhood for the younger generation.

Riverglen Conference Centre is an excellent venue and the excellent, natural ambiance added to the intimacy felt by all participants throughout the retreat. Talks on various aspects of stress and its pathophysiology both medical and yogic were complemented by practical sessions on stress busting Jathis, Asanas, Pranayamas and deep relaxation. Sri Bala led us through an experiential session of the Pranava as taught by him in his Chakra healing Course while Margo enthralled us with Swamiji’s Siamese Kriya! Devasena and I really enjoyed performing our music and dance for our dear Yoga family who are such Rasikas, real lovers of the cultural fine arts of India. We also chanted some of the Yoga Sutras of Maharishi Patanjali and also learnt many Mantras to induce healthy vibrations into the universe. It feels so good to have such a devoted and sincere Yoga family Down Under with loving Yoga relatives willing to go to great lengths to be with us on our travels.

The AGM of the Gitananda Yoga Association of Australia was conducted with dignity and the meeting decided to stick with the present office bearers and just add a few more to enable smoother functioning. I happily and willingly continue to serve Swamiji’s mission of uniting all our Yoga family as the Honorary President. Other office bearers present at the AGM included Muralidharan Giri (Trevor Fox) as Chairperson, Sri Bala Ratnam as VBT Consultant, Margo Hutchison as Liaison and Event Coordinator, Devaki Kerin as General Secretary, Janani (Louise Healy) as Joint Secretary, Catherine Domekamp as NZ Rep for North Island, Gargi (Helen Nortje) as NZ Rep for South Island, Dianna Timmins as Editor of the Association Newsletter. Committee members who couldn’t make it to the AGM but gave their wholehearted support through individual meetings and correspondence included Swami Anandakapila (Dr Jonn Mumford) as
Yantra Consultant, Devidasan Giri (Jean-Michel Ruffier) as Treasurer and Niraimathi (Nicole Cox) as International Secretary.

The return journey was one of a relaxed nature as we had a long stopover at Singapore that enabled us to go on a free guided bus tour of Singapore thanks to the authorities there. It is really mind boggling to see the amazing development of this place in the past 45 years since they got independence. Makes me wonder why we in India cannot do the same. When such a small place can do so much why cannot we with so much intelligence and ability in our country create a heaven on earth for our fellow beings? Thoughts such as these took over my mind as we went on the tour that showcased the mixed cultural co-existence between people from so many cultures.

It was a pleasure to be back home after the journey and as we got caught up with all the local news and developments, I thanked the Divine for giving me such a wonderful life with so many opportunities to love, live and share Yoga with so many all over the world. May we all grow together and may we all sustain one another in our spiritual growth towards the highest state of Kaivalya.