The Paramparai Post-Issue 13

Namaste.

Welcome to the revived Gitananda newsletter, now produced and edited by your part time Brit, but full time Aussie, Niraimathi. We have had a busy time recently with the blessing of Dr. Ananda and Devasena in the UK. Read on for a write up of the retreat and Cardiff performance, diary dates, and some inspirational writings to motivate your Sadhana.

Carnatic Music & Bharat Natyam Concert
Hindu Cultural Centre, Cardiff, April 2011

Much to the delight of those in attendance, Dr. Ananda and Devasena put on a beautiful performance of Carnatic Music and Dance at the Hindu Cultural Centre in Cardiff on Thursday 14th April. The skill of both these artists is magic to behold. Devasena’s grace and ability to convey the emotion and story within the dance was entrancing to watch, whilst Dr. Ananda’s talent as a musician and singer held the crowd in his rhythmic sway. Together they captivated the audience as they wove story, music, dance and song. The deep connection each artist has with their art was evident in every beat, every movement. It was not just a performance; it was an offering of beauty, majesty, of elegance and grace. When a performer is deeply connected to their talent, what is seen is nothing less than the Divine.

An excerpt from the article The Ultimate Attitude by Amma, Meenakshi Devi.
The Yogic Attitude towards life (Bhava in Sanskrit) must be a conscious choice if one is to progress on the spiritual path. Attitude is the looking glass through which one perceives the world. In cultivating consciousness, one begins to understand that how one sees the world around one, depends on these attitudes. As one progresses, one realizes that one can and must choose one’s attitudes consciously. Every attitude must be charged with a positive valence. The highest attitude is to realize that every event, every person, every place we experience in our lives is a chance, an opportunity to learn lessons which will enable us to grow spiritually. If we firmly anchor ourselves in that Ultimate Attitude, then we can truthfully say, “All is for the best” and “Everything that exists is good”. This High Attitude is called Shraddha or Faith.

But it is much more than the English word “faith”, which implies a belief. Shraddha is an unshakable, inner certainty in the validity of one’s viewpoint. It is not fanaticism as it also acknowledges that there are as many valid viewpoints as there are the minds of men. It is more a personal experience that one’s own attitude, viewpoint, is the very best one that can be consciously formed at one’s own personal level of evolution. Such an Attitude is always based in positivity, affection, kindness, awareness, control, strength, and all the other noble sentiments which bloom in awakened hearts. The old Jewish mystic Job expressed a beautiful Attitude when he shouted in ecstasy, even after undergoing incredible suffering. “The Lord Giveth and the Lord Taketh Away! Blessed be the Name of the Lord”. What an Ultimate Attitude! Total Trust and Surrender to the Goodness of That Cosmic Power! With such an attitude, Samadhi is just a hop, skip and jump away!
Gitananda Yoga Retreat with Dr. Ananda and Devasena
April 2011, Monmouth, Wales

The international gathering of people had a special time in the presence of Dr. Ananda and the graceful Devasena. With students both new and versed in the teachings of this paramparai, it was a lovely blend of Sadhaks. People came from as far away as France, Germany and even Australia to participate in a taste of Ashram life. A number of students in attendance had themselves entered through the door of Ananda Ashram. But for those who hadn’t, the atmosphere and daily routine were recreated nicely under the skilled guidance of Kalavathi and her fantastic assistant, Jeremy.

From the early morning Hatha practices, leading on to Pranayama, Bharat Natyam dance classes and Satsangha, the days flowed along at a calm, yet invigorated pace. The sun shone and the rich green of the rolling hills soothed the eyes, minds and hearts of those whose days are usually spent in office walls looking at computer screens! The food was most enjoyable and the retreat centre itself, the perfect location for our time together with its grand halls and abundance of spacious bedrooms.

It was indeed a delight to sit in the presence of Dr. Ananda and Devasena, to be inspired and recharged, to learn new things, and to be reminded of things already known. Dr. Ananda’s skill at weaving the teachings of this tradition with stories, ideas and often the plot of some DVD, made for laughs, deep thoughts and clear insights.

I imagine that all came away from their time at Monmouth with a fresh outlook, a stronger dedication to their Sadhana and an appreciation of not just a deeply profound and amazing body of teachings, but also two inspiring, good humored and well respected teachers. Thank you Dr. Ananda and Devasena. Your time with us was delightful and insightful.

And finally, let us end with some wise words from Yoga Life, November 2007, Vol. 38, No.11. CRISIS- an opportunity to change...

Swamiji taught us, “You don’t have problems! You ARE the problem!” In other words, we create our own problems! He also said that the word “crisis” in its Greek origin means “an opportunity to change”. Apparently in Chinese, the character, which represents ‘crisis’, is the same one used to indicate ‘change’. Nietzsche, the great 19th century German philosopher said, “That which does not kill me, will make me stronger”. Closer to our own times, Winston Churchill, England’s stalwart leader during World War II, said, “If you are going through hell, keep moving”.

If you have anything you would like to contribute to the Paramparai Post, please feel free to email Niraímathi on nikrubio@gmail.com

Diary Dates 2011/12
14th July - Vyasa Guru Puja
30th July - Srla Sri Ambalavanan Swamigal Guru Puja
30th July - Srla Sri Subramaniyam Swamigal Guru Puja
10-20th August - Ten day intensive course at ICYER
1st September - Ganesha Chaturthi
13th September - Jayaanthi celebrations for Amma
9-11th September - Detox, deep clean and Yantra Retreat with Kalavathi (UK)
24th December - Srla Sri Kambalisswamigal Swamigal Guru Puja
24th December - Srla Sri Gitananda Swamigal Guru Puja
30th December - Srla Sri Veli Swamigal
February 2012 - Ananda Ashram trip with Kalavathi (India)
Kalavathi@yoga-wales.co.uk 07727 139 379

From Kalavathi: It was an absolute pleasure to have had the privilege of hosting the 2nd UK visit of Dr. Ananda and the 1st UK visit of Devasena! I kept the venue the same as before since it is such a beautiful venue which transforms so effortlessly into an ashram environment. Even the staff have extremely yogic attitudes and its things like this that go a long way. Having Devasena here was so special. She added so many personal touches to things that made the experience even more authentic. Having the 5 day option worked really well. Being able to go deeper into concepts and having a gradual finish to the retreat was much more satisfactory. I have already tentatively booked Hilston Park again for the summer of 2013... I am just waiting on dates from Dr. Ananda ... You will be the first to know!