As we celebrate the 22nd Annual Day of Yoganjali Natyalayam (YOGNAT) and 47th year of ANANDA ASHRAM at ICYER’S Karma Yoga Seva in Puducherry, it is an opportunity to rededicate ourselves to our beloved Bharatam and its unique, soulful and elevating Bharatiya Samskrithi. We thank and congratulate each and every parent at YOGNAT for giving their children this “Gift of our Great Culture”.

We, in Puducherry are indeed blessed that a renaissance of Yoga and the Indian Cultural Performing Arts has manifested during the past few decades. This is primarily due to the untiring efforts of Pujya Swamiji Gitananda Giri Guru Maharaj and our beloved Ammaji, Kalaimamani Yogacharini Meenakshi Devi Bhavanani. They have been beckon lights enabling thousands of youth to see the light and walk the path towards regaining their invaluable cultural heritage. Yoga is our cultural heritage and the great Rishis are our ancestors in more ways than one. Spirituality is in our very genes and this physical and spiritual genetic potential enables us to experience transcendental concepts of Yoga in their fullness. However we are hindered by the widely prevalent ignorance of the treasures we have inherited. We have forgotten that we are the safe keepers of these treasures. All of our fine arts like music, dance, drama, pottery, painting, handicrafts as well as the vibrant folk arts have a deep element of spirituality of Yoga running through them. It is only the love and blessings of our well-wishers and patrons worldwide that enables our beloved, enthusiastic and talented children to make great strides of progress in Yoga and the fine arts. They have also excelled in their academic studies and many of them are now shining in higher studies and their professional lives. They are constantly proving that the art and science of Yoga is pan-universal in nature and not limited by any artificial ‘human made’ divisions such as nationality, language, colour, caste, religion or socio-economic status.

HISTORY OF YOGNAT: Yoganjali Natyalayam is the local cultural wing of Yoga Jivana Satsangha (International), an International Organization founded in 1968 with nearly 150 Centres in 30 countries and with headquarters at the International Centre for Yoga Education and Research (www.icyer.com). Yogamaharishi Dr. Swami Gitananda Giri Guru Maharaj, one of the greatest Yoga masters of the past century established YOGNAT on 27th March 1993. With the blessings of Pujya Swamiji who was hailed by many as the Father of Scientific Yoga, YOGNAT has brought national and international fame to Puducherry. The immense interest locally in Yoga, Bharatanatyam and Carnatic Music is largely due to the efforts of Swamiji and Ammaji over the last five decades. YOGNAT is a continuation of the Sri Kambaliswaamy Yoga and Fine Arts Programme for Youth started by Swamiji and Ammaji in 1975. More than 40,000 youth of Puducherry have received training in Yoga and the Fine Arts through the efforts of Swamiji, Ammaji and now Dr. Ananda and his team.

YOGNAT follows the RISHICULTURE ASHTANGA YOGA tradition (www.rishiculture.org) as propagated by Swamiji and the KALAKSHETRA Tradition of Smt. Rukmini Devi Arundale as taught by Natya Kalanidhi Padma Shri Adyar K Lakshman in Bharatanatyam. Carnatic vocal music is taught in the tradition of Kalaimamani Sirengam R Ranganathan. YOGNAT has developed a world famous troupe that appears regularly in prestigious festivals and stages spectacular Bharatanatyam and Yoga performances yearly in Puducherry. YOGNAT is
the only institute in Puducherry that has presented more than 50 full-length and mini Bharatanatyam Dance Dramas. It is noteworthy that four of the NATIONAL BEST CHILD Awardees from Puducherry are students of YOGNAT. Many of our students have bagged the BEST CREATIVE CHILD AWARD from the Govt. of Puducherry. Students of the institution have won various prizes at National and International level Yoga Sport competitions including Dr. Niraimathi and Master AS Anirudh who won Champion of Champions Award at the International Yoga Festival in 2000 and 2011 respectively. YOGNAT has instituted various awards such as the Sangeetha Samrat Vijaya Bhaskar Awards for Excellence in Carnatic Music, Michel Danckwerts Yoga and Cultural Excellence Award to motivate students while 600 students have received silver medals for completing a minimum of five years at YOGNAT till date. Many of our students have been toppers in the academic circle too with them bagging top ranks in state exams as well as in professional courses.

CONFERENCES, EVENTS AND HONOURS: Ammaji Yogacharini Meenakshi Devi Bhavanani was honoured with a LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT AWARD on the 8 February 2015 by the Chennai based Tamil Nadu Yoga Sports Association and Padmam Yoga and Natural Living Trust. This was in recognition of her selfless service for the cause of Yoga worldwide over the past five decades. We thank Yogachemmal Ravi Arumugam for taking the initiative to conduct the mega Yoga Sports event at JN Sports Stadium in Chennai at which the award was presented with more than a thousand youngsters participating. Yogachemmal E Gajendiran who was also honoured with Best Teacher Award on the occasion received the prestigious award on behalf of Ammaji.

Dr Ananda was invited to be on the AYUSH Ministry Committee of Yoga Experts for International Day of Yoga celebrations 2015. He attended meetings in New Delhi during April and May 2015. The meetings were chaired by Dr HR Nagendra, Chancellor SVYSA University and attended by eminent yoga experts as well as secretaries and officers from departments of AYUSH, MEA, HRD and Culture.

Dr Ananda was nominated to the Scientific Advisory Committee of the Central Council for Research in Yoga and Naturopathy (CCRYN) in Ministry of AYUSH, Govt of India. This is very prestigious as this is the council that oversees research and propagation of Yoga at the national level. His tenure will last three years from 2015-2018. Dr Ananda attended the first Scientific Advisory Committee meeting of the CCRYN in Delhi on 26 May 2015. Important decisions regarding Yoga research and education in India were made during the meeting.

Dr Ananda was invited to be a Resource Person for the online MEDITATION SUMMIT organised by Ananda Sanga Educational Institute of South Africa. A worldwide audience listened to eminent Meditation experts from around the World from 23rd to 29th January 2015. He was also an invited speaker for the NATIONAL YOGA WEEK-2015 held at MDNIY, New Delhi from 12-18 February, 2015. He presented an invited talk on "Yoga for non-communicable disorders" and participated in the Executive Council meetings of the Indian Yoga Association. The Hon'ble Minister of AYUSH, Govt. of India Shripad Yesso Naik inaugurated the Yoga Week and released the logo of the Indian Yoga Association.

Dr. Ananda attended meetings of the Governing Body of the South Zone Cultural Centre at Chennai presided by the Governor of Tamil Nadu who is also Chairman of the SZCC. It is notable that Dr. Ananda was nominated by Pondicherry Govt Department of Art and Culture to the Governing Body of the SZCC, Tanjavur under Ministry of Culture, Govt of India in 2013 and served as member in Expert committee to select “Young Talented Artistes awardees.

Dr Ananda was nominated to the Consultative Committee of the WHO Collaborating Centre in Traditional Medicine (YOGA) at MDNIY, New Delhi. He attended consultative meetings at MDNIY in the latter half of 2014. WHO identifies institutions from member countries to work in specific areas of health and designates them as WHO Collaborating Centers. Across the
globe there are 23 WHO Collaborating Centers for Traditional Medicine, but the only one for Yoga is at MDNIY while one for Ayurveda is in Jamnagar, Gujarat. It is a historic achievement for the country to have two WHO Collaborating Centers of Traditional Medicine and MDNIY is privileged to be chosen to engage in achieving Yoga specific outcomes.

Yogachemmal Dr. Meena Ramanathan successfully completed her Doctor of Philosophy in Yoga (PhD) from the Tamilnadu Physical Education and Sports University and received her degree from the hands of the Governor of Tamil Nadu at the convocation held at Rajbhavan in Chennai on 18 February 2015. We congratulate Dr Meena on this great achievement that is the result of tireless efforts for the past 15 years. We proudly felicitate her on her selfless service for the cause of the special children and the senior citizens of Pondicherry. She conducted many outreach programmes including CNE, CPE and CME for faculty of Indira Gandhi Government General Hospital and PG Institute, Senior Citizens at Serene Pelican Belfort Township, as well as a CME for the South East Province Health Commission Meet. She was invited to be a panelist for Woman’s Day event organized by Pondicherry Tourism and The Hindu at Hotel Surguru where she was felicitated for her significant contribution to welfare of women and presented her views on empowerment of women through Yoga.

Dr Ananda attended Board Meeting of the Council for Yoga Accreditation International of which he is a member of the Board of Directors. The meeting was held at Kaivalyadhama in Lonavla on 14-15 March and presided over by Shri OP Tiwari, Chairman of Board in the presence of Dr HR Nagendra, Vice-Chair of Board with other directors in attendance. CYAI is a peer accreditation association of Yoga certification and degree granting institutions modeled around the University accreditation system in the USA and field specific, standards bodies like that of law schools, business schools and medical schools. He also participated in Executive Council meetings of Indian Yoga Association at MDNIY, New Delhi where many important decisions were taken regard celebration of the International Day of Yoga and the accreditation and registration of Yoga practitioners in India. The meeting was attended by heads of premier Yoga institutions. He also attended Board of Studies meeting of GS College of Yoga and Cultural Synthesis on 4 July 2015, at Kaivalyadhama in Lonavla where he is chairperson for the subject, “Anatomy and Physiology of the Human Body in the Context of Yoga.” This appointment is prestigious as Kaivalyadhama is one of the oldest, premier Yoga institutions of India. He was earlier this year also appointed as Adjunct Professor of Kaivalyadhama.

Dr Ananda was included in Asian American Who’s Who (Vol. VII) published by Rifacimento International, New Delhi, India. He was earlier this year included in Kohinoor Personalities of Asia (Vol. III), published by Reguerdon Inc, New Delhi as well as Asia: Men & Women of Achievement (Vol. VII), Famous India: Nation’s Who’s Who and Asia/Pacific Who’s Who (XIII Ed). In the end of June 2015, Dr Ananda was honoured with the BHARAT EXCELLENCE AWARD by the Friendship Forum in New Delhi for his contribution towards promoting greater friendship and India-International cooperation. He was honored with the SIGARAM (Peak of Excellence) award by the Pondicherry Drama Arts Association during its annual event on 28 June 2015. This prestigious honor was bestowed upon him in recognition of his service and achievements in the field of music, dance and Yoga.

Yogacharini Devasena Bhavanani was invited to conduct a special programme on All India Radio for the International Day of Yoga on June 21 that was well received by general public and yoga enthusiasts. She was also invited faculty for the IDY celebrations of CYTER at the MGMCRI City Centre as well as the International Yoga Festival organised by Department of Tourism, Government of Pondicherry.

Jayanthi of our Paramguru, Yogamaharishi Swami Kanakananda Brighu was observed with a special Homa ceremony and all night AUM chanting at ICYER while regular Guru Pujas and
Vyasa Guru Purnima were celebrated with pomp and ceremony at Sri Kambaliswamy Madam (Samadhi Sthalam) in memory of the illustrious Gurus of this living tradition. Maha Shivaratri was also celebrated with special Pujas for the Shiva Lingam located under the Shiva Shakti Tandava Moorthy followed by 1008 Panchakshara Japa and Pada Yatra to ICYER where the specially worshipped Pritvi Lingam was immersed in the Bay of Bengal. Dr. Ananda as Madathipathi of Sri Kambaliswamy Madam has been conducting all activities under Ammaji’s guidance.

INTERNATIONAL DAY OF YOGA CELEBRATIONS 2015: The whole Yoga community got an amazing dose of invigoration with the announcement of the International Day of Yoga by the United Nations (June 21) thanks to the efforts of our beloved Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi. The Pondicherry community was honored in that our beloved Ammaji was invited to be a resource person for the International Conference on Yoga for Holistic Health that was held as part of the International Day of Yoga celebrations on 21 and 22 June 2015 in the impressive Vigyan Bhavan at New Delhi. The event was organised by the Ministry of AYUSH and was inaugurated by the Hon Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi. Ammaji was Co-Chairperson along with Smt Hansaji for the Technical Session on the Traditional Basis of Yoga that had among its invited speakers Dr David Frawley and Dr IV Basavaraddi. She gave a well-received talk on “Gurukula: The ideal structure for spiritual instruction” in the technical session on Living Traditions of Yoga and their Contribution in the Promotion & Development of Yoga. Ammaji was accompanied on this memorable trip by Yogacharini Vibha of Bangalore and Dhivya Priya Bhavanani who enjoyed her 12th birthday during the Yoga Day celebrations.

A member of the AYUSH Yoga Expert Committee for the celebrations of IDY2015, Dr Ananda was an advisor for the IDY 2015 celebrations organised at the beach road by Department of Tourism with more than 4000 school students performing the AYUSH Common Yoga Protocol on the morning of 21 June 2015. He gave special training sessions at YOGNAT for Yoga teachers and members of the Pondicherry Yogasana Association who then conducted the sessions in their respective schools. Staff and students of YOGNAT actively participated in the Yoga Day events organised from 21-26 June 2015 by the Centre for Yoga Therapy, Education and Research (CYTER) at Mahatma Gandhi Medical College & Research Institute under auspices of Sri Balaji Vidyapeeth University, Pondicherry. Dr Ananda, Smt Devasena, Smt Meena, Shri Shanmugam, Smt Lalitha, Sri Gajendiran and Dr Balaji presented speeches during the public awareness programme at MGCRI City Centre on 21 June. More than 300 participants including students from children’s, women’s and men’s classes at YOGNAT performed the AYUSH Common Yoga Protocol from 7am to 7.35 am. More than 300 members of the public had free Yoga and medical consultations, health checkup and Yoga therapy awareness sessions during the daylong event.

In the evening, a grand event was held at Gandhi Tidal on the Pondicherry Beach and Dr Ananda, Shri C Shanmugam and Smt Meena were honored for their Yoga Seva for the Youth of Pondicherry by NEHRU YUVA KENDRA. Dr Ananda gave a well-received talk on Yoga for the youth and the young students of YOGNAT gave a spectacular demonstration. The awards were presented by Shri V Sabhapathy, Speaker Puducherry legislative Assembly in the presence of Honorable Ministers, MLAs and eminent citizens of Pondicherry.

A National Seminar & CME on “Therapeutic Potential of Yoga” was conducted on 26 June 2015 at MGCRI organised by CYTER in collaboration with the Department of Physiology. Ammaji was invited to be chief guest for the event and delivered a through provoking keynote address. She stressed on the need to have a questioning attitude as exemplified by the great Rishis in the Vedic and Upanishadic lore. “The question is more important than the answer for the question determines our viewfinder, our trajectory and pathway towards higher evolution.” said she in her inspiring address. (The souvenir is available for free
BHARATANATYAM ARANGETRAM OF SELVI J SANGAVI: The great Tamil Saint Tiruvalluvar says, “Eendra pozhudhin peridhuwakkum thannakanai chaandron enuketta thuai” meaning thereby that a mother rejoices even more when the offspring is celebrated as a great person than the very day the child was born to her. Such was the feeling of bliss that must have arisen in the hearts of Selvi J Sangavi’s parents as it did for us her proud teachers on the night of her Bharatanatyam Arangetram. As the Buddha would say, “She created a beauty that had not previously existed” and blew the minds of everyone present as she became each and every role she portrayed from Lord Ganesha, to Lord Shiva, to Lord Krishna, to Muruga, to Mother Sita and to Lord Hanuman. Her parents left no stone unturned in their efforts to give her the opportunity of a lifetime and she made it a truly ‘one in the lifetime’ experience as she transported us all to a higher realm of consciousness through the medium of Natya Yoga.

It was truly a magnificent performance by Selvi J Sangavi who enabled everyone present on the occasion of her Bharatanatyam Arangetram at the JIPMER Auditorium to be elevated to a state of higher consciousness. The 31 of August 2014 will forever be etched in the hearts and minds of those present as each and every one in the audience witnessed the divine consciousness permeating through the performance of this young lady that surpassed all expectations. Sangavi has been a student of YOGNAT for the past 13 years and has been a star performer in all our dance Dramas and annual day extravaganzas for the past decade.

The Arangetram was inaugurated with traditional lighting of the lamp and a special Salangai Puja was done at the altar set up with beautiful portraits of our illustrious Gurus Yogamaharishi Dr. Swami Gitananda Giri Gurumaharaj and Natya Kalanidhi, Natya Kala Sarathy Nadhabrahmam Padmashri Adyar K Lakshman. This was a very touching moment as Lakshman sir had attained to Maha Samadhi a few weeks ago in Chennai and this event was our way of paying tribute to this greatest of modern Bharatanatyam Masters. With blessings of her Guru Ammaji and the eminent guests of the evening Sangavi enthralled the audience with a performance that far surpassed everyone’s expectations from a Bharatanatyam Arangetram. All aspects of the greatness of Bharata Natyam were on display with an amazing level of perfection manifesting in both her Nritta and Nritya. Bhava, Raga and Tala blend seamlessly creating and amazing experience of divine presence in the auditorium for the entire four-and-a-half hours. All the hard work that had gone into making this evening was well worth it as the Angika (bodily), Vachika (verbal), Aharya (costumes) and Satvica (subtle) aspects of Abhinaya came alive in full splendour.

The Chief Guest Professor Rajaram Pagadala, the Chancellor, Sri Balaji Vidyapeeth University expressed how he was transported to a state of Pramanandam while witnessing the performance and that the music and dance had enabled him to attain a trance-like state. Muthamilmamani Kalaimamani Pulavar I Pattabiraman, the Eminent Tamil Scholar, and Director Valluvar Vilkisai Kuzhu bestowed the title of “NATYA KALAI MAYIL” on Sangavi and this was very apt considering the special item she had performed as a Peacock Dance and also as many of the compositions of the evening were on Lord Muruga.

Natya Shironmani Kalaimamani Shri K Rajamanickam, the President, Puducherry Music and Dance Artists Association and Director, Sangeetha Salangai Natyalayala, was effulgent in his praise for the star student as well as her illustrious Gurus. He especially appreciated her stamina and enthusiasm that manifested in the taxing items composed and choreographed by Dr. Ananda and Smt Devasena under the loving guidance of Ammaji. Kalaimamani Dr. S Saroja Babu, the Chairman-Principal Wiseman HSS School and President World Thirukkural

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Organization, appreciated the sacrifices the parents had made to give Sangavi such an opportunity to learn and imbibe the great culture of India and how fortunate she was to be under the benevolent guidance of Ammaji and YOGNAT.

Sangavi was awarded a Nine Year Part Time Diploma in Rishiculture Ashtanga Yoga and Bharata Natyam from Yoganjali Natyalayam on the occasion. She thus joined the legion of a select group of YOGNAT stars who have received this valuable certification of (seven or nine years) in the past decade and half. The list includes V Renukadevi (2001), Padma M Prashanthini (2002), D Lakshmi (2005), Shreya Agrawal (2008), R Sruti (2008), Shilpa Balaji (2009), T Tamarasas (2009), G Kanimozi (2009), U Kokila (2009), G Charulatha (2009), N Ponghuzhali (2011), and J Sangavi (2014).

All items of the Arangetram were ”YOGNAT ORIGINALS” having been written, composed and choreographed by Dr. Ananda and Devasena with inputs from Ammaji. This made the whole event even more soul satisfying and was a true tribute to Lakshman Sir who had motivated Ananda to take up Nattuvangam and choreography at his Mridangam Arangetram in 1987 itself. Dr. Ananda conducted the orchestra with his Nattuvangam and Vocal while the able Mridangam accompaniment came from the ever energetic Nada Yoga Shironmani Shri Thirumudi S Arun. The melody was enhanced by Nada Yoga Shironmani Shri V Thanigachalam and Innissai Ilankuyil Shri Rajkumar Rajamanickam who gave life to the items with their violin and flute. Nada Yoga Shironmani Kalaimamani Shri Al Ramasamy invigorated each and every moment with his Mogarsing and special effects and to enable the audience to understand the nuances of the compositions English and Tamil compreering was done by Selvi I Krishnaveeni and Shri P Muthamizhvaanan. Krishnaveeni had also as student-teacher taken great efforts for the past few months in rigorously working with Sangavi often every night of the week to prepare the items before Ammaji, Dr. Ananda and Devasena could polish and fine tune them. The stage management was by Yogachemmal C Shanmugam and Yogachemmal Smt. Lalitha Shanmugam who were assisted Thiru Ramkumar of JIPMER and Thiru Natesan of Dandapani Electricals. Sangavi’s inherent beauty was enhanced and brought forth in full splendor thanks to makeup by Shri Velayutham and enthralling costumes by Shri Manian Tailors. A special mention must be made of the excellent design and printing of the invitations that had everyone in appreciation even before the event thanks to the efforts of Thiru Selvakumar of Surguru Printographs, Vilupuram.

29th ANNUAL PUDUCHERRY STATE YOGA SPORT CHAMPIONSHIP: Pondicherry Yogasana Association (PYA) founded by Yogamaharishi Dr Swami Gitananda Giri has been in the forefront of the Yoga Sport movement and Swamiji is hailed as one of its founding fathers. Since 1975 PYA has held Annual Pondicherry State Yoga Sport Championships including the ‘Silver Jubilee’ Championship in 2010. The 29th Annual Pondicherry State Yoga Sport Championship was organised on 15 and 16 November 2014 at Subulakshmi Mahal. More than 1200 participants from 30 Yoga and educational institutions ranging from the age of 3 to 25 years took part and were divided into various educational and gender-based categories. There was also a demonstration event held for more than 120 children under the age of 5 years to stimulate them to adopt the Yoga life. Enthusiasm and cheer shown by jubilant participants and their parents gladdened our hearts for it meant these children would continue their Yoga journey for motivation is such an important aspect of growth for children and these events surely do that at multiple levels.

Students had to be proficient in both the physical as well as theoretical aspects of Yoga in order to succeed. At the end of a grueling and hard fought event, Master R MANOJ and Miss S SARVEGNA LAKSHMI emerged as the well deserving “CHAMPION OF CHAMPIONS” in male and female categories respectively. They both received glittering trophies and a cash award of Rs 3000 in the valedictory and prize distribution ceremony held on the second day.
Thiru NG PANNIRSELVAM, the Minister for Local Administration, Government of Pondicherry was the Chief Guest of the event that was also graced by Mutthamizmamani Pulavar I Pattabiramanar, Dr N Ardhhanari, Yogacharya O Gangadharan and Dr Sugatham. International invitees included Yogacharini Jnanasundari of France and Yogacharini Anandhi of Cyprus. More than 300 winners in each of the 48 categories were really pleased to lay their eager hands on these glittering awards that were a fitting reward for all their hard work. The whole event truly represents the manifestation of Swamiji’s dreams of taking the message of Yoga to all sections of our society in an inspirting and enlightening manner and it was very heartening to hear the honourable Minister for Local Administration, Government of Pondicherry say, “Pondicherry is blessed by the intense efforts of Swami Gitananda Giriji who brought Yoga to all sections of the society. His work and that of Ammaji and Dr Ananda is highly commendable and we will be recommending Ammaji for the highly deserved National honours at the earliest”.

21st INTERNATIONAL YOGA FESTIVAL 2015: For 21 years Yoga has been celebrated in a festive spirit by the Government of Pondicherry, Tourism Department, at the start of the New Year from 4 to 7 January. Thousands gather from all over India and the world to be inspired by lectures, workshops, seminars, magnificent displays of complex Yoga Asanas, Yogic-based cultural programmes in an outdoor, festival, celebratory atmosphere. The festival was inaugurated in 1993, inspired and supported by the efforts and presence of Yogamaharishi Dr. Swami Gitananda Giri Guru Maharaj and has been held without break (except for the Tsunami year of 2005 and the cyclone Thane in 2010). Continuing the legacy of his father and Guru, Dr. Ananda and Ammaji along with disciples from YOGNAT and ICYER participated whole heartedly. Dr. Ananda and Smt. Meena under the direction of Dr. Madanmohan presented several useful, well organised programmes highlighting the work of CYTER at Sri Balaji Vidyapeeth University. Ammaji gave a special lecture on the “History of Classical Yoga” while other faculty and students of YOGNAT and ICYER who made presentations included Yogacharini Devasena Bhavanani, Yogachemmal Lalitha Shanmugam, Yogacharini Anandhi, Yogacharini Aishwarya, Yogacharya Radu Falcon, Yoga Sadhaki Eridani Baker, Yoga Sadhaki Priyadarshini (Anuradha), Yoga Sadhaka Markandeyan (Markus Haussler), Yoga Sadhaka Raghavan (Tyler Vaughan), Yogachemmal Dr. R Balaji and Christopher Albert. A special treat of this festival was the premiere of YOGNAT’S Annual Dance Drama on 6 January. This year Dr. Ananda and Smt Devasena had choreographed under Ammaji’s direction a stunning dance and music presentation of the devotional LINGASTAKAM. The 90 minute dramatic Bharat Natyam presentation featured spectacular sancharis, delineating some famous stories associated with the powers of the Shiva Lingam which were alluded to in the verses of the devotional hymn. The festival was a festival of goodwill and cheer and a chance for the old Yogic comrades in arms to meet once more in a congenial setting.

21st ANNUAL DAY OF YOGANJALI NATYALAYAM: July 20th of 2014 saw more than eight hours of non-stop music, dance, chanting and Yogasanas by more than 300 participants, a team of dedicated musicians and a dozen support staffers, that created a joyful and colourful experience of the cultural vibrancy of Pondicherry. Ammaji with her benevolent, loving and eagle eyed direction enabled the whole event to be on track throughout while Dr Ananda and his team kept the hectic pace going from start to finish. The faculty members, student-teachers, staff members and students all worked as a team along with the unstinting cooperation of our parents who expressed their dedication to Bharatiya Sanskrithi (Indian culture) through thought, word and deed. The event started sharp at 2pm with the lighting of the Kuththuvilakku by Ammaji, Thavaththiru Velu Swamigal of Melavanjore, eminent guests and faculty members with Aarthi performed by Yogacharini Smt. Devasena accompanied by the resonating chants by Dr Ananda. Carnatic vocal selections from numerous composers in different languages were then presented by music students under direction of Nada Yoga Shironmani Smt. Jyothirmayi and her team of music teachers. The chanting of
Achuthashtakam was led by Smt. Meena with the children astounding the audience with their clear diction and flawless rendition of this classic of Sri Adhishankara.

The Banner Dance of YOGNAT is always a special attraction as it gives the audience a chance to witness the amazing Yogasana skill of the children and the magnificent teamwork that comes into play. This year, Ammaji divided the banner dance into three teams and each team vied with the others to do better than their best. It is always heartening to see such amazing abilities of these young children and this type of healthy group activity enables them to grow in so many ways. The excellent psychosocial developments of our children over the past many years may be attributed to such golden opportunities that enable them to learn and understand strengths and weaknesses of each member while building up to their team’s best ever performance. The efforts of Yogachemmal E Gajendiran, Yogachemmal Dr. Balaji and Yogachemmal G Dayanidy need a special mention as they led numerous practice sessions in the proceeding weeks that enabled the kids to do their best. The senior boys led by S Sivashankar also gave a scintillating performance when the turn came to showcase their amazing agility and gravity defying abilities. The highlight for many was the Yoga demonstration by the ladies class of YOGNAT who showed that “pulls and pressures” of family responsibilities couldn’t hinder their enthusiasm and their skillful presentation was a truly inspiring display of Indian womanhood. Dr Vanaja Vaithiyanathan and Dr Nalini Srinivasan deserve special mention for being the catalysts for this show of shakti.

The dance performances were an amalgam of items drawn from the traditional Bharatanatyam repertoire such as Pushpanjali, Mallari, Alarippu, Thillana etc as well as many bhakti filled compositions and energetic folk dances. The small ones made us all proud with their flawless and cute movements while the seniors took the cake with their spellbinding performances. There were compositions describing the stories of Lord Shiva, Krishna, Muruga and the great Tamil poetess Avvaiyar. All dance teachers had made efforts to present their classes well while Ammaji deputed senior students to each class for hands-on training in managing the young ones, thus adding value to the overall presentations. The highlight of the dance section was the Muruga Varnam by the seniors and this 45 minute composition literally took everyone’s breath away in its spectacular melodic, rhythmic and emotionally surcharged presentation of the multi-splendored stories of the great Lord. Krishnaveni as the student-teacher in charge of the dance performances did an amazing job of coordinating all the groups and their practices and her efforts bore fruit in the excellent teamwork and formations presented by all the dancers. Smt. Devasena’s lovely singing complemented the efforts of Dr Ananda who was down with a bad sore throat, while the musical team made sure that no stone was left unturned in making the event a grand musical success.

Excellent coordination and human resource management by Yogachemmal Shanmugam and Yogachemmal Lalitha Shanmugam enabled all the bits and pieces to come together in a smooth and seamless manner while stage arrangements by Sri Sharavanan and Sri Ramalingam with Dandapani Electricals made everyone feel a sacred atmosphere.

The Chief Guest of the event, the Parliamentary Secretary to Chief Minister and MLA Lawspet, Thiru M VAITHIANATHAN was greatly appreciative of the efforts of all students and complimented Ammaji and Dr Ananda on an excellent show. “It is important that Pondicherry has such unique organisations like Yoganjali Natyalayam, for we need to cultivate artistic expression as well as human values in our youth” said he while giving away the prizes to the meritorious students. Kalaimamani Rajamanikkam requested the Government to honour Ammaji and Dr Ananda for their tireless efforts in the cultural renaissance of Pondicherry. “Dr Ananda is the only real Nattuvanar as he writes the lyrics, composes the music, choreographs the dance, sings it on stage and does the Jathis too while wielding the cymbals- the rest are mere Tattuvanars” said he in a humourous manner. Professor Madanmohan, Pulavar I Pattabiramanar and Dr Ardhanari felicitated while Smt
Meena was honoured with the title of “Mozhipeyarpu Thaaragai” (star of translation) by Pulavar Pattabiramanar for her skill in translating Dr Ananda’s various books into Tamil.

16th SWAMI GITANANDA YOUTH & CHILD AWARDS 2015: Puducherry Yogasana Association organized the 16th Swami Gitananda Youth & Child Awards 2015 competitions during May 2015 at YOGNAT and more than 50 children and youth participated in this event. Best Youth Award was bagged by DHIVYA PRIYA BHAVANANI and Best Child Award by S YOGITHA. S Surgea and I Pavyaa bagged runner-up prizes in youth and child categories respectively. In order to create interest in the art and science of Yoga, the PYA has organised these competitions every year since 2000. In this competition the competitors are tested not only in their Asana skill but also in their Yogic thinking and exposition in addition to other aspects of the art and science of Yoga. The individual events for this year’s competition were Yoga Art, Yoga Fancy Dress, Yoga Suspense Event and Yoga Elucation while the team events were Yoga Quiz, Yoga Dumb Charades and Team Yogasanas. The awards were given away in a glittering function held on 31st May at YOGNAT by Chief Guest, Thiru Nehru (Govt Whip and MLA Orleanpet) in the esteemed presence of Ammaji, Muththamizh Mamani Pulavar Pattabiramanar, Dr. N. Ardhanari, Dr. Vanaja Vaidyanathan, Shri CK Manoharun and others. The competitions were organized by the husband-wife Yoga team of Yogachemmal G Dayanidy and Smt. Reena who have been students of YOGNAT for many years, winners of the Youth Awards themselves and who have dedicated themselves to continuing the event helping others grow in spirit. Pulavar Pattabiramanar was felicitated on his 84th birthday as we at YOGNAT are blessed to have his benevolent support at all times.

20th ANNUAL SUMMER INTENSIVE 2015: Every year, the young ones of Puducherry look forward to the advent of summer when they get their academic holidays and more importantly an opportunity to further their yoga and dance abilities through the May Intensive classes at YOGNAT. This has been the pattern for the past 20 years and this year was no exception. More than 150 youngsters took part in Shlokam chanting, Yoga theory and practical sessions as well as Bharatanatyam classes conducted under the direction of Ammaji. Changing “Impossible” to “I.M. Possible” was the theme of this year’s Summer Intensive. Using the effective tools of Bharathiya Samskrithi - Indian Culture - Yoga, Bharat Natyam and Carnatic Music, the students were shown how to cleanse animal impulses and channel restlessness into courage, intelligence and skill of a hero. From there, the spirit may be further refined into the Yogic state of peacefulness, love, compassion and quietude. “Nothing is possible” for a person bound tightly by animal desires and passions,” said Ammaji. “Animals are bound by the survival instinct, Abhinevesha and age old conditioned behavior. All is possible for a Yogi with an awakened, sharp, clear consciousness.”

The much awaited 3-day residential camp was held at ICYER from 16-18th May and attended by 40 students and teachers. The regular Ananda Ashram schedule was observed with all rising at 5am and having a full day of classes on the beach and in the Ashram. Many team events of the Swami Gitananda Youth and Child Award competitions were conducted including Yoga quiz, Yoga dumb charades and team Yogasanas. Many fun filled moments were had by children who enjoyed the waves, the sun and the sands to their heart’s content. The bonfire on the beach was another gala evening with fun and frolic and much singing as all enjoyed their popcorn too. The cooking by Shanti and Kavitha always captivates the taste buds of our young ones and this time was no exception as each and every child enjoyed the tasty and healthy ashram food.

A grand valedictory function held on 31 May showcased skills honed during the month: Yoga Asana demonstrations and dance items were presented. A skit on the theme “Changing Impossible to I.M. Possible” which showed how Yogic techniques and concepts facilitated the curbing of animal impulses and channelized that energy into a heroic spirit which could culminate in the peaceful, meditative pose and attitude of a Yogi was a special treat. Chanting
of the Guru Stotram, prize winning speeches and Yogasana demonstration presentations were part of the programme. The function was presided over by Thiru G. Nehru, Government Whip and MLA Orleanpet Constituency. Special guests from abroad included Yogacharya Giriraj of Brazil, Ms Verna of Russia and Christoph Eberhard of Austria. C PRAGHATHI and ANANDRAJ BHAVANANI were adjudged Best Students while DHIVYA PRIYA topped prizes for most points garnered. More than 50 students received prizes for 100% attendance.

**YOGNAT SCHOLARSHIPS AND AWARDS:** We have great reverence for the great cultural traditions of India and profoundly respect those eminent personalities who strive to keep this cultural ethos alive through their selfless service for our society. Each year, YOGNAT selects students who have shown outstanding Yogic qualities and growth in recent times and this year, Selvi S SARVEGNA LAKSHMI and Selvi C PRAGHATHI have been selected for the BEST STUDENT AWARD in recognition of their exemplary character, artistic talent and Yogic growth. We also honour a student who has shown Yogic valour in the face of adversity and this year the YOGA VEERYA AWARD goes to Master ANANDRAJ BHAVANANI. Similarly Selvi DHIVYA SHIVANI and Selvi S HARINI have been selected for the MICHAEL DANCKWERTS YOGA AND CULTURAL EXCELLENCE SCHOLARSHIP AWARD instituted in 2003 by Chris and Annette Danckwerts of Australia in memory of their son who was a lover of Yoga and Indian culture. The Sangeetha Samrat SHRI VIJAYA BHASKAR MUSIC AWARDS were instituted in 2003 by the family of Smt Mangala Gowri and Sri CK Manoharun in memory of the great music composer Shri Vijaya Bhaskar. This year Selvi S SHAILAJA and Selvi N NEYA have been selected to receive the Shri Vijaya Bhaskar Music Scholarship Awards. The BEST FAMILY AWARD is being bestowed upon the family of Thiru M JAYACHANDRAN, Smt. RAVATHY and J SANGAVI for their dedication to the cultural heritage of our beloved country as manifested through the life giving art and science of Yoga and performing fine arts.

Swamiji and Ammaji have planted the seeds of Yoga and our beloved Indian Culture very deeply in Pondicherry and their pioneering efforts have started to bear fruit, manifesting a conscious and beautiful goodness (Satyam Shivam Sundaram) that didn’t exist before. The youth and children of Pondicherry are blessed to be born in this Punya Bhumi and to be a part of Yoganjali Natyalayam is considered their greatest blessing by so many of them. To understand the potential of each child and enable them to actualize it in a loving and supportive environment is the prime objective of YOGNAT that aims to make “The Ordinary Child, Extraordinary and the Extraordinary Child, Great!”

When you can do your work with love, passion and motivation producing happiness not only for yourself but for others too - then you are truly blessed in your life! We at YOGNAT are tremendously blessed by our Gurus, for, we are ever busy doing stuff that we love and enjoy. This also gives us the chance to constantly evolve ourselves on the path to liberation, the goal of human existence. “Work is worship” said our illustrious Guru Yogamaharishi Dr. Swami Gitananda Giri Guru Maharaj and he makes sure we are busy worshipping the Divine a lot for he keeps us ever busy with newer plans every day. We at YOGNAT are truly blessed to be Sishyas of such a visionary founder and are constantly motivated towards excellence by our dynamic director and Guru, Puduvai Shakti, Ammaji, Kalaimamani Yogacharini Meenakshi Devi Bhavanani.