

YOGANJALI NATYALAYAM

ANNUAL REPORT : 2013-14

Yogacharya Dr. Ananda Balayogi Bhavanani,

Chairman, Yoganjali Natyalayam and ICYER, Puducherry. www.rishiculture.org

As we celebrate the 21st Annual Day of Yoganjali Natyalayam (YOGNAT) and 46th year of ANANDA ASHRAM'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 the 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 Kambaliswamy 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 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 **Sriengam 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 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.

CONFERENCES, EVENTS HONURS AND TOURS:

Dr. Ananda has been busy touring the world to spread the message of Yoga and Indian culture and in the past year travelled to Australia. Dr. Ananda was invited to present workshops, seminars and talks at various venues in Australia and New Zealand from 24th March to 14th April 2014. He presented highly successful programmes organized by the Gitananda Yoga Association of Australia at IYTA-Wellington, Lotus Yoga Centre-Paraparaumu in New Zealand and Anand Yoga Academy at Adelaide. He also conducted intensive 3-day retreats at Tatum Park, NZ and Integral Yoga Academy of Australasia at Adelaide. He presented a special 2-day workshop at the International Yoga Teachers Association (IYTA) at Sydney, Australia and visited the Sivanna Integrative Health Centre, Sydney to discuss further collaboration in Yoga therapy. He had special personal meetings with Yogashri Dr. Eric Dornekamp, the senior most Yoga authority of New Zealand and the world famous authority on Yantra-Tantra, Dr. Swami Anandakapila Saraswathi (Jonn Mumford) of Sydney, Australia.

Dr. Ananda was included in **REFERENCE ASIA: Asia's Who's Who of Men and Women of Achievement** (Revised Ed Vol. III) published by Rifacimento International, New Delhi- April 2014. He was awarded **School Psychology: Best Performance Award 2013** by the Indian School Psychology Association (InSPA) during its 3rd National Conference on School Psychology Services to Multiple Disabled Children on 23rd November 2013 at NIEPMD, in Muttukadu near Mahabalipuram. He received **BIODIVERSITY AWARD 2014** at ARANYA Forest and Sanctuary on 21st March 2014 for excellence in spreading awareness of nature and culture internationally through YOGNAT. The award was presented by Shri N Balabaskar IAS, Secretary Auroville Foundation in presence of Aster Patel and Kavignar R Meenakshi.

Dr. Ananda attended Governing Body Meeting of South Zone Cultural Centre on June 25th 2014 at Chennai. This was presided by Governor of Tamil Nadu who is Chairman SZCC. Dr. Ananda had been nominated by Puducherry Govt to the Governing Body of the South Zone Cultural Centre, Tanjavur under Ministry of Culture, Govt of India in 2013. He also served as member in Expert committee to select "Young Talented Artistes awardees for 2013-14. He attended Board of Studies meeting of GS College of Yoga and Cultural Synthesis on 14th & 15th June 2014, 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 Chief Guest for inauguration of their Foundation Course in Yoga & Ayurveda. He was invited to be Resource Person for the One Day National Seminar on "Dimensions of Yoga and its dynamics" at MoP Vaishnav College for Women, Chennai. He delivered an invited lecture on "Diverse Dimensions of Yoga for the Youth" in the event organized jointly by the Krishnamacharya Yoga Mandiram and MoP Vaishnav College.

He was also nominated to the Editorial Board of Yoga Mimamsa, the bimonthly Yoga journal of Kaivalyadhama, Lonavla. He has previously served as an advisor to the journal since 2010. Yoga Mimamsa is one of the oldest and premier Yoga journals of India having been founded by the legendary Swami Kuvalayananda. He continues to be a reviewer for many journals including International Journal of Yoga; International Journal of Yoga Therapy; Journal of Clinical and Diagnostic Research; Biomedical Human Kinetics, Poland; Indian Journal of Traditional Knowledge, New Delhi; Indian Journal of Physiology and Pharmacology and the Journal of Ayurveda and Integrative Medicine.

YOGNAT is pleased to congratulate Yogachemmal Meena Ramanathan, Co-ordinator Outreach Programmes for submitting her PhD dissertation to Tamil Nadu Physical Education and Sports University, Chennai. The title of her 250 page dissertation is “Effect of selected yogasanas and pranayama on selected cardiorespiratory, psychological and psychomotor variables among low and highly depressed geriatric women.” This is a well deserved honor for her tireless efforts for welfare of senior citizens of Puducherry for more than a decade.

YOGNAT OUTREACH PROGRAMMES:

Various awareness programmes and lecture demonstrations were conducted by our faculty during the past year. Smt. Meena continues to teach at SADAY and also is conducting classes for senior citizens in old age homes of Puducherry. She gave a special invited presentation during CME organized by Pondy Pediatric Forum on 2.2. 2014. The interactive session was well received by the pediatricians who were motivated to refer patients to Yoga and undertake the practices for their own health. She also represented Ammaji and gave a special presentation on “Yoga for women” at the VCRC, Puducherry, during the International Women’s Day celebrations. She directed a special demonstration by SADAY students at Gandhi Tidal as part of Women’s day celebration of ARUMAI rehabilitation organization.

A special Yoga training programme was organized for Indian Coast Guard personnel of Puducherry was inaugurated on October 1st 2013 by DIG SC Tyagi, Commander Coast Guard, District HQ-5 (TN & Puducherry) and thirty members of the Indian Coast Guard attended the course conducted by Yogacharini Devasena Bhavanani at ICYER. The programme was conceptualized by Commandent N Somasundaram, commanding officer, Puducherry and aimed at enhancing health and wellbeing of its personnel. Ananda Ashram at ICYER is happy to be part of this nation building exercise and to contribute its mite towards the welfare of those serving our country with distinction.

Dr. Ananda was invited to give an interactive lecture-demonstration on “Yoga for health” for senior school teachers of Puducherry on 26-28th February 2014 at State Training Centre, Directorate of School Education, Govt of Puducherry. Yogachemmal C Shanmugam and Yogachemmal Lalitha Shanmugam continue to conduct special individualized therapy and training sessions at YOGNAT for tourists and visitors to Puducherry based on consultations with Dr. Ananda and many of our faculty are teaching Yoga and Bharatanatyam in private schools of Puducherry.

Jayanthi of our Paramguru, Yogamaharishi Swami Kakananda 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.

CYTER AT MGMCRI, SBVU: Dr. Ananda joined as Deputy Director of the Centre for Yoga Therapy, Education and Research (CYTER) at MGMCRI under auspices of Sri Balaji Vidyapeeth University (SBVU). Under the dynamic leadership of its Chairman Shri MK Rajagopalan, SBVU had set up CYTER in 2010 and its multifaceted activities are well supported by the management and higher authorities of the deemed university. This vibrant centre is directed by Prof Madanmohan and a scientifically sound Yoga therapy programme is imparted through the Yoga Therapy OPD functioning daily with consultations offered by Dr. Ananda (Deputy Director) and Mrs. Meena Ramanathan, (Coordinator and Yoga Therapist). More than 5000 patients have benefited since 2010. A CME-cum-Workshop on Yoga and Lifestyle Disorders was held at MGMC&RI on 22nd November 2013 and more than 250 medical and paramedical professionals as well as Yoga practitioners and enthusiasts participated. The CME-cum-Workshop and Phase II of CYTER was inaugurated by Prof KR Sethuraman, Vice-Chancellor, SBVU in the presence of Dr. S Krishnan, Dean (Administration) and Yogacharya S Sridharan of the Krishnamacharya Yoga Mandiram, Chennai. An interactive panel discussion on Yoga and Psychosomatic Disorders was held in the afternoon session chaired by Prof Eshwaran, Head of Psychiatry and the panelists included Yogacharini Cathy Davis, Dr. Latha Satish and Sri S Sridharan. Dr. Madanmohan, Mrs. Cathy Davis, Dr. Ananda and Smt. Meena conducted interactive practical sessions.

28th ANNUAL PUDUCHERRY STATE YOGA SPORT CHAMPIONSHIP:

Puducherry Yogasana Association organized the 28th Annual Puducherry State Yoga Sport Championship on 23-24th November 2013 at Sri Subulakshmi Mahal. It was a magnificent treat to watch more than a thousand participants, both boys and girls, from the age of three to thirty, perform their best. All of them walked out of the venue with some kind of gift, medal or certificate enabling all to have a sense of camaraderie normally absent in competitive events. It was heartening to see young ones cheering on efforts of their competitors in the Yogic spirit of oneness. Government Whip Thiru G Nehru, MLA was Chief Guest and distributed prizes to winners while Dr. Vanaja Vaidhyanathan, Pulavar Pattabiramanar and Dr. N Ardhanari were special guests. Master C PRASANNA and Miss ARADHANA MUKERJEE won the coveted Championship Awards.

20th INTERNATIONAL YOGA FESTIVAL:

The Yogic science was presented in an attractive manner as the 20th Annual International Yoga Festival was held under auspices of Tourism Department, Government of Puducherry from 4-7th January, 2014. The inaugural function was a grand affair, presided over by Lt. Governor of Puducherry, Chief Minister, Minister of Tourism, Secretary Tourism, and other dignitaries. YOGNAT presented its Bharatanatyam dance drama "Homage to Mother Earth – The Pancha Maha Bhutas" as the inaugural cultural programme that was well appreciated by the Lt. Governor and other dignitaries. Ammaji, Dr. Ananda, Devasena and the ICYER TEAM 45 members participated by rendering speeches which were much appreciated by all. The Yoga Festival was held for the first time in January 1993, under the inspiration of Yogamaharishi Dr. Swami Gitananda Giri who got it off to a good start by inspiring and organizing the gigantic event which boasted of famous personalities like Swami Dayananda Saraswati, Shri Amrit Desai, Swami Kesava Das, Dr. Jonn Mumford and others.

20th ANNUAL DAY OF YOGANJALI NATYALAYAM:

The grand success of the 20th Annual Day was created by the 600 participants as well as the appreciative audience. From 2 pm to 12 midnight on 7th July 2013, Subhalakshmi Mahal resounded with celestial sights, sounds and even tastes (from a well-appointed canteen) as the event literally “lifted the spirits” of thousands of spectators in the heavenly presentation of Sanskrit Shlokhas, Carnatic vocal music, out-of-this world skillful display of Yoga Asanas, exquisite Bharatanatyam dance items as well as exhilarating folk dances of all kinds. Exuberance was the name of the game which both performers and audience played together. Excited children with their even more excited parents, grandparents, aunts and uncles ran helter-skelter in sheer abandon! Dr. Ananda’s sonorous voice carried the show on its powerful waves, supported by skillful Drum beats and violin strings. The ten-hour spectacular was constructed on the platform of a year of basic training, which was intensified and sculpted into shape in March, April, May and June. More than 500 students participated ranging in age from the youngest, about four years, to the oldest yet agile housewives who put on a skillful demonstration eliciting rounds of applause. Thirty teachers and twenty assistants worked hard to get the small-ones to move together in circular, angled and v-shaped formations, all the while dancing in traditional Bharatanatyam patterns. A dozen musicians plied their skills honed over decades while master tailors crafted the brilliant costumes. Scores of photographers and television crews plied their craft. Tasteful stage decorations were everywhere with colorful thoranams, flags, lights, microphones and stage lights. All required scores of skillful hands and cooperative efforts. Parents for weeks upon weeks had to cope with late night practices and rehearsals. A special aura was created by the arrival of the Chief Guest and Special Guests who were accorded a grand reception with exuberant music, banners, flags and spectacular Yoga Asana formations. The Chief Minister of Puducherry, Thiru N Rangasamy was the Chief Guest who graciously distributed special awards while Special Guests included Minister for Welfare and Tourism, Thiru P Rajavelu and Minister for Electricity & School Education, Thiru T Thiagarajan. YOGNAT honoured the eminent social activist and spiritualist Dr. N Ardhanari and popular educationist Dr. Panch Ramalingam with KARMA YOGA SHIRONMANI awards in recognition of their selfless service for Indian society through education, psychology and spirituality. Tirumudi Thiru S ARUN, Kalaimamani Thiru Al. Ramasamy and Thiru V Thanigachalam were honored with NADA YOGA SHIRONMANI awards in recognition of their meritorious service for the Indian classical music and dance.

AMMAJI’S 70th JAYANTHI – A GALA SATSANGHA:

The gathering of our International Gitananda Yoga family on the occasion of Ammaji’s 70th Jayanthi at ICYER from 6-16th September 2013 was truly the confluence of a rainbow of Yogis and Yoginis. An amazing array of humane beings of different nationalities, colours, religions, gender, experience, languages and ages, all came together in Yogic harmony to celebrate with exuberance the birthday of the ‘Living Siddha of Puducherry’, our beloved, most respected and admired Ammaji, the ‘**Yogic lioness of Tamil Nadu**’ in the words of Yogacharya Eric Doornekamp of New Zealand. “Where else can we find so many young Yoga teachers with such a depth of spiritual awareness?” exclaimed Yogacharini Hanna Machia as she came down from one of the morning Yoga sessions. She continued with joy, “It is such a pleasure to see how the teachings of our dear Swamiji have continued under the watchful guidance of our beloved Ammaji through the years and to see all these young ones with such depth of knowledge heartens me greatly.” Truer words were never spoken for the young brigade of the Gitananda Yoga family is surely and steadily blossoming in wisdom and joy worldwide. It gives us great joy that such a growth is under the watchful eyes, and with the loving blessings of senior members of the Yoga family who are guiding and supporting the young ones

beautifully. Right from the introductory Satsanga with Ammaji on the 6th evening, and the “Yoga for Jetlag” morning class on the 7th with Yogacharini Shobana of Czech Republic, everyone was in the mood for a good Sadhana coupled with the generous sharing of wisdom and experience. Different teachers guided the various sessions of Hatha Yoga, Pranayama, relaxation, Mantra and spiritual art as well as Mantra, Bhajans and Carnatic music that were on the rigorous daily Ashram schedule from 5 am to 9 pm. Everyone participated in each and every session with gusto and no one missed any session due to illness, idleness or lethargy! The seniors including Margo, Cathy, Hanna, Murali and Heather led by example and kept all the young ones on their toes. Special sessions on Vibrational Breath Therapy by Bernadette, on Yoga for Children with Special Needs by Meena, on Mandala Pranayama by Hanna, and on Spiritual Art by Jennifer were complemented by interactive sessions on polarity and relaxation. Devasena led a Mantra and Bhajan session while Aishwariya, Radu, Gargi, Laksmi, Vibha and Cathryn made sure that all the morning Hatha Yoga sessions got the entire group off to great starts every day.

Cultural events by the teachers and students of Yoganjali Natyalayam were an opportunity for all to enjoy the marvelous musical, dance and Yoga talents of the young ones who outdid themselves in their performances for Ammaji. A special skit was organized by Reena Dayanidy and Krishnaveni that depicted the life of Pujya Swamiji Gitananda Giri Guru Maharaj in a touching manner. Students of YOGNAT brought to life different episodes of Swamiji’s life with Dramatic scenes coupled with video presentation. Anirudh gave a spectacular demonstration of his Yogasana skills and then teamed up with the senior boys of YOGNAT to put on display a wonderful team demo too. Many guests visited the Ashram during the celebrations to receive Ammaji's blessings including Sri Navin Daswani and his team from Super Audio, Chennai. A great number of e-mails and letters flooded ICYER as so many of her friends, students and family from all over the world sent in their best wishes and gratitude celebrating her glorious life of Yoga. Dr. Ananda and Devasena presented a series of music performances while there were many dance presentations by Krishnaveni, Sowmiya, Sanghavi, Vidyashankari, Balasundari, Dhivya Priya and their exuberant team. Yogachemmal C Shanmugam, Yogachemmal E Gajendiran and Sri S Selvaraj made sure that all the Puja events went off smoothly at the Madam.

The highlight of the celebrations was the **Ayush Homam** celebrated on Ammaji's birthday, the 13th of September and was led by Pundit Raja Shastri and his team from the Veda Patashala in Puducherry. Dr. Ardhanari and Mrs. Pattu presided over the Homam and along with Yogachemmal Lalitha and Shanmugam made sure that all arrangements were perfect for the celebration. Along with the Ayush Homam, Ganesha Homam, Nava Graha Homam, Maha Mrithunjaya Homam, etc. were conducted in Vedic style and this was followed by the ceremonial bath for Ammaji with the holy, sanctified water from the Pujas. Muththamizh Mamani Pulavar Pattabiramanar, Sri Ganesha Oduvar and other seniors blessed Ammaji with a long life while many devotees and students received her blessings on the occasion.

Dr. Ananda’s new books, “**Yoga Chikitsa: Application of Yoga as a Therapy**” and “**Saraswati’s Pearls: Dialogues on the Yoga of Sound**” were released by Ammaji and also a booklet on the history and traditions of the Sri Kambaliswamy Madam Guru Parampara distributed to all present on the occasion. Sri Selvakumar of Surguru Printographs was honored on the occasion and he presented Ammaji with a beautiful giant memento that now adorns the Satsanga Hall. All in all, a very wonderful time that enabled us to celebrate with joy, love and gratitude the birth of "one of the greatest woman of our times" (as so beautifully put by Zena Ursuliak from Canada). We all owe Ammaji and Swamiji so much, and, this is but a small way in which we can express our heartfelt gratitude and maybe strengthen further the inner resolve to help more and more seekers, on the path of conscious evolution, towards the highest spiritual goal of human existence, Moksha.

HOMAGE TO MOTHER EARTH- A DANCE DRAMA OF REVERENCE:

YOGNAT'S latest Bharatanatyam Dance Drama premiered on 29th December 2013 was entitled "Homage to Mother Earth". It was a celebration and offering of reverential Pranams to the Pancha Maha Bhutas, the Five Elements which make up Mother Earth: Ether (Akash), Air (Vayu), Fire (Agni), Water (Apas) and Earth (Prithvi). The music was soul stirringly wonderful, as sung by Dr. Ananda. The Drama opened with the Shiva-Shakti dance which resulted in the creation of the Pancha Maha Bhutas, who emerged into manifestation through the will of Lord Shiva and his consort Shakti. Then each element was Dramatized, showing its qualities, and associating it with temples dedicated to that Element and stories woven around that temple. Senior dancers performed Korvais in the pattern of the Mandala (geometric form) associated with that Element. Krishnaveni as Shiva and Lothika as Shakti gave the starting impetus to the Drama with their beautifully synchronized dancing. Folk dances associated with the various Elements added great colour and cheer. For example, Fire was celebrated with the Deepam Dance where about 40 young girls danced in formation holding lamps. The Earth Element was celebrated by a harvest dance and so on. Dramatic interludes showed various stories associated with the Elements such as the story of Kannappar, the hunter who sacrificed his own eyes to Lord Shiva in the Lingam form at Kalahasthi, a sacred site associated with the Wind Element Vayu. The dance Drama began sharply at 6:05 pm with the lighting of the inaugural lamp at Swamiji's shrine on the stage by dignitaries. The audience was transported to Deva Lokha, the plane of the Gods, for two and half hours, ending with the grand finale with all dancers assembled on stage at 8.30 pm. Chief Guests, Directors, Musicians, Assistants and Dancers were honoured after that. The Chief Guest of the evening Dr. M Ramadoss, Director, Puducherry University spoke warmly of his association with Swamiji, Dr. Ananda and Ammaji and praised their efforts highly, requesting them to showcase their productions all over India. Other guests included Kalaimamani Pulavar Pattabiramanar, and Dr. V Muthu, President of the Puduvai Tamil Sangam. It was a total team effort where the meaning of TEAM was apparent: **Together- Everyone- Achieves-More**. This included: Direction, Research and Choreography: Kalaimamani, Yogacharini Meenakshi Devi Bhavanani; Concept, Direction, Research, Music, Choreography, Nattuvangam and Vocal: Dr. Ananda Balayogi Bhavanani; Choreography Nattuvangam and Vocal: Yogacharini Devasena Bhavanani; Student Coordinator, Choreography and Assistant Direction: I Krishnaveni; Lyrics and Commentary: Muthamizh Mamani Pulavar Pattabiramanar; Music and Mridungam: Kalaimamani SV Jagadesan; Violin: Thiru V Thanigachalam; Flute: Thiru R Rajkumar; Mogarsing and Special Effects: Thiru Murugaiyan; Stage Management, Costumes & Make-up: Yogachemmal C Shanmugam and Lalitha Shanmugam; English Commentary: Yogachemmal Meena Ramanathan; Tamil Commentary: Thiru P Muthamizhvaanan.

NEW VIDEOS ON ICYER AT ANANDA ASHRAM:

ICYER and YOGNAT are part of a major documentary film on Yoga being made by the famed art historian Shri Benoy K Behl who has deeply explored ancient Indian heritage, art, culture and philosophy in his career of more than three decades. He has taken over 42,000 photographs of Asian monuments and art heritage, has made 128 documentaries, which are regularly screened at major cultural institutions worldwide, and his photographic exhibitions have been received worldwide. Ammaji and Dr. Ananda were interviewed in depth for the film and two days of hectic shooting saw many of the Yoga classes being filmed on the rooftops, ashram beach and the sea groyne nearby. Students of YOGNAT presented a special performance led by Dhivya Priya and then AS Anirudh gave a spectacular Yogasana demonstration. The crew travelled to every corner of the country interviewing the Dalai Lama, Shri BKS Iyengar, Swami Veda Bharti, Dr. David Frawley, Shri OP Tiwari, Smt Hamsaji, Shri S Sridharan

shooting more than 100 hours of footage to then condense it to a 50-minute-long video. Dr. Ananda and Ammaji were very pleased to work with Shri Benoy and his team and received a beautiful e-mail later saying, "People always say that "Yoga is a way of life". However, it is at your Ashram that we saw the illustration of this profound truth. It was a deep pleasure to be there. You gave us much, with your words, with Ammaji's words, with the illustration of the vision of Yoga in music, dance, bhakti and so much more. Rahul Bansal, a long-time yoga practitioner and teacher, is co-producing the documentary while Sanghamitra Ghosh is the assistant director. ICYER at Ananda Ashram wishes this project the grand success it deserves and expressed pride in being a part of it.

ICYER had a special visit from Joseph and Lilian Le Page, Directors of Integrative Yoga Therapy (IYT) in the USA and Enchanted Mountain Yoga Center in Brazil who are making a video series on Yoga therapy in India. They were accompanied by their student and photographer Shanti Mendola. IYT was founded in 1993 by Joseph Le Page, a Yoga teacher in the Kripalu tradition and body-worker whose special focus is energy healing. They are pioneer in training Yoga professionals who can bring the ancient insights of Yoga into mainstream wellness programs as their programs are based on a vision of health as a unity of body, mind and spirit. They interviewed Ammaji and Dr. Ananda and shared space with the students of the 6 month course by attending many sessions at ICYER. They also participated in the Sunday Puja at Sri Kambaliswamy Madam and the immersion of the Shivalingam on Shivaratri at ICYER's Yoga Sadhana beach. YOGNAT classes and a mini dance performance were enjoyed by them and they greatly appreciated the children and their talents. Their videos on ICYER and CYTER are available from <https://vimeo.com/channels/756271>

15th SWAMI GITANANDA YOUTH & CHILD AWARDS 2014:

Puducherry Yogasana Association organized the 15th SWAMI GITANANDA YOUTH & CHILD AWARDS 2014 competitions during May 2014 at YOGNAT and more than 50 children and youth participated in this event. BEST YOUTH AWARD was bagged by S SHANMATHY and BEST CHILD AWARD by S NARCHELVI. Dhivya Priya Bhavanani and P Yagavendan 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 Elocution while the team events were Yoga Quiz, Yoga Dumb Charades and Team Yogasanas. The awards were given away in a glittering function held on 1st June 2014 at YOGNAT by Chief Guest, Thiru V Sivashanmugam (Retired Deputy Secretary, Govt of Puducherry) in the esteemed presence of Muththamizh Mamani Pulavar Pattabiramanar, Dr. N. Ardhanari, Dr. Vanaja Vaidyanathan, Shri CK Manoharan, Smt. Mangala Gowri 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 83rd birthday as we at YOGNAT are blessed to have his benevolent support at all times.

19th ANNUAL SUMMER INTENSIVE 2014:

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 120 youngsters took part in Shlokam chanting, Yoga theory and practical sessions as well as Bharatanatyam classes conducted under the direction of Ammaji. Dr. Ananda led the a special programme focusing on the theoretical and practical applications of Pancha Kosha (the five aspects of our existence) as well as special Bharatanatyam lessons imparting skill, stamina and new compositions in collaboration with Yogacharini Devasena Bhavanani. The intensive began on May 5th with traditional Puja to Swamiji. Every day the classes started at 2.45pm with Ammaji leading the students through 108 sacred names of the Guru Parampara followed by the chanting classes led by Smt. Meena who guided them through Srimad Bhagavadpada Adi Shakara's Achchutashtakam that consists of eight verses in praise of Lord Krishna and Rama. Dr. Ananda then guided the young ones through an exploration of the Pancha Kosha – the Five Spiritual Potentialities of human life. This beautiful ancient concept of actualizing human potential deals with Annamaya Kosha (a strong, healthy conscious body), Pranayama Kosha (a vibrant, lively energy field), Manomaya Kosha (a focused, alert consciousness), Vijanamaya Kosha (effective use of prefrontal lobes of the human brain – the seat of wisdom, discernment and rational thinking) and Anandamaya Kosha (centering the individual in the cosmic structure). These high concepts were presented in a digestible form with lots of fun and humour filled moments thoroughly enjoyed by all. 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. Shanti and Chitra's cooking 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. Selvi YUVARANI was adjudged the BEST STUDENT OF THE INTENSIVE while DHIVYA PRIYA and ANANDRAJ BHAVANANI topped prizes for most points garnered with S Vidyashankari and G Prathiba bagging IInd. C Praghathi and D Nirmal received IIIrd prizes in senior and junior categories while 36 students received prizes for 100% attendance.

NEW PUBLICATIONS:

Ammaji continues to motivate and guide so many students around the world through her writings in 'YOGA LIFE' the International Monthly Journal of Ananda Ashram as well as in numerous other forums. There have been excellent appreciative responses worldwide to Ammaji's "THE HISTORY OF YOGA FROM ANCIENT TO MODERN TIMES" that is her magnum opus and has in her own words been "two decades in writing and research plus forty five years of Yogic Sadhana"

Two new books namely, YOGA CHIKITSA: The Application of Yoga as a Therapy and SARASWATI'S PEARLS: Dialogues on the Yoga of Sound authored by Dr. Ananda were released by Ammaji on 13th September 2013. The Yoga Chikitsa book has chapters contributed by Prof Madanmohan (Head, Department of Physiology and Director CYTER, MGMCRI) and Mrs. Meena while Saraswati's Pearls is a series of conversations between Dr. Ananda and Yogacharini Dr. Sangeeta Laura Biagi of Italy. In the past year Dr. Ananda authored /coauthored more than 30 research papers, abstracts and articles in national and international journals while his 21 books and 19 DVDs continue to be well received worldwide. Dhivyananda Creations will be releasing later this year a new book entitled, "The YOGA DRISTHI of Yogamaharishi Dr. Swami Gitananda Giri Guru Maharaj" compiled by Yogacharya Dr. Alan Davis of the UK. This is a compilation of many wonderful examples of

wisdom of Swamiji's from various sources and is a working partnership between Ammaji, Dr. Alan and Dr. Ananda. We feel this volume will have an enlightening effect on all who seek the higher life and hope that all those unfortunate enough to miss the opportunity to hear the "Lion of Pondicherry" roar his words of truth, will be inspired and uplifted by our humble offering and have a "Darshan" (sacred viewing) of Swamiji's great soul.

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 Vidyashankari** and Selvi **S Sabharisree** have been selected for the **BEST STUDENT AWARD** in recognition of their exemplary character, artistic talent and Yogic growth. Similarly Selvi **Dhivya Priya Bhavanani** and Selvi **S Surega** 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 **R Manjari** and Selvi **IM Eva Agnes Cindrella** have been selected to receive the Shri Vijaya Bhaskar Music Scholarship Awards. The **BEST FAMILY AWARD** is being bestowed upon the family of Thiru **D Saravanan**, Smt. **Vatchala** and **S Narchelvi** (Aranya, Auroville) 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.

It is our keen observation that unlike most schools where the ordinary are slowly edged out, in YOGNAT it is seen over the years that many "ordinary students" have been transformed into "dynamic, skilful and talented" youngsters who can hold their own against the best. This has resulted in our adopting the motto :

***MAKING THE ORDINARY – EXTRA-ORDINARY!
AND THE EXTRA-ORDINARY - 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, Pudevai Shakti, Ammaji, Kalaimamani Yogacharini Meenakshi Devi Bhavanani.