

# yoga network news

## some changes:

At Mangrove in April, I had spoken to Muktanand and offered to provide backup by producing this newsletter if ever she and Tapas wanted help. They have taken up that offer, so from now on please send your contributions to my address :-

Bhakti Manning. [REDACTED]

I will be attempting to produce the newsletter regularly at the beginning of each school term - August, October, February and April. If there is anything special going on or a large number of contributions, I will produce an extra issue. I am more than happy to do this as it is my only contribution to the movement at the moment, not being inclined to teaching. Bhaktipoorna

We will also have our own newsletter header next issue - Alakh Analda has sent a selection of artwork to Muktanand which she is forwarding to me.

At present I have an arrangement with the local school which means I should be able to keep printing costs to a minimum. Hopefully this will continue.

## contributions

I am including all the letters sent on to me by Muktanand including my own . Unless it is requested, or necessary to edit letters, I will publish them in full.

Contribution from Nityamukta 12.3.95

An ashram reflects a society, a culture and a country that it is situated in. There appears to be a constant breaking down principle and a constant new building up principle. Both are relevant and bound together by a third principle..... Term it - Guru. Therefore it appears the Guru-Disciple-Ashram will always exist. The play may be expressed in the changing content or patterns exhibited by individuals - but it will continue to go on. The human need is always there, and the tradition is founded in a Known Truth. So it seems it won't be lost.

It appears that now is the time for formal discussions. It is being used in all areas of the work and management field. This is a creative way of drawing out issues, addressing them, and allowing each individual to have an expression and a tolerant attitude.

Therefore, Muktanand's letter brought out a happy response from me. To know that we can all make contact, amongst ourselves, with the Mangrove swamis, and where possible meet to look at issues - to discuss and work together on these. Whether we reside in the Ashram now, whether we live outside independently, it does not matter. At least the idea of relationship in Spirit - in Guru is there, and that there is a willingness to combine and communicate is great.

Because of my life's effort to remain on the razor's edge of yogic inspiration, I find coming into contact with others who seek this knowledge a warming experience. (Warming in many ways - sometimes a warmth of love, sometimes the heat of anger ). But there is a special closeness nevertheless. Perhaps it could be called expansiveness.

Through yoga traditions, I feel I have been able to tap an inspirational source within. This has come about by dedication to Guru and Guru's dedication to Spirit and disciples. So for this I feel gratitude. Once that inspirational spring is flowing, I am not prepared to dam it up. So to keep the flow of inspiration, contact with Niranjanji when in Australia, or contact with swamis at Mangrove at any time on these new pursuits appear inviting. Yet, I am aware that some of my most inspirational, spiritual moments, when I feel close to myself is when alone and in "nature". That is, when away from the city, people, and by myself in the bush or at the sea - joined by the spirits of the land or sea. It is "they" who give me inspiration. They provoke the song that rises in my heart and gives me energy and whisper in my ear.

My connectedness with the land, links me in the environment. The yogic systems link me with people

the whole thing is very creative, although we differ with thought and talent and skills it is nevertheless fascinating and a wonderful adventure.

It is great to see the new wave of inspiration rising up in new aspirants. It is good to be in the quiet depths and observe movements.

It is wonderful to explore all possibilities in life's yogic path. But there does have to be time to do so, over and above the survival for everyday existence. For me this is the "Spanner in the works." Life in the city is so structured and organised time to travel to NSW from Victoria is not an easily acquired project. Time to travel even to Rocklyn in Victoria is often unavailable. Time is the destroyer for me! So all my wonderful ideas get put on hold for "time" to allow their expression.

The visit to Mangrove last year (1994) during Niranjanji's visit brought up many dormant emotions - a kaleidoscope of emotions in fact! I would not have missed this experience for anything, and the impact of it has deepened my understanding of me in regard to myself, to all external situations I find myself in. Me in the ashram, me down the street, me at work. The play of changes. Me in this play.

Emotional expressions were released whilst in Mangrove during Niranjanji's visit- the whole gamut of human feelings no doubt - yet underlying this, there was a unity and cohesiveness. No wonder things shifted and lightness prevailed. Everybody's dedication, love and work over the years have built a strong foundation. It is obviously ongoing.

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2nd April, 1995

Hari Om,

Only recently I had the opportunity to read the February Newsletter. I was very moved by the letters therein and realised that as a Karma Sannyasin I have not, though I thought I had, empathised fully with what the Poorna Sannyasins went through, i.e. the events and effects of the ashram eighties.

I am one, I am sad to say, who felt that the Poorna Sannyas week last April was hostile/negative and the Karma Sannyas was positive/softer, though not quite all "sweetness and light." As you say, dissent doesn't have to be seen as negative.

For me there is still that unknowness, "mystique" or is it the Indian sideways nod (neither yes nor no) that leaves me wondering what the hell is that supposed to mean. I wonder if the eighties will ever be resolved in my mind or just shelved.

Hurray for Vedantabodh re the celebration of Yoga '95. They certainly are quite different types of happenings and hopefully they will continue.

Many oms to you all.

Tattwasagar

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17th May, 1995

Dear Muktanand, Hari Om,

Making haste slowly seems to be my way lately. I hope I haven't held up the works by taking so long to write. That has been partly due to not quite knowing how to express what I feel and even to wondering what it is I do feel, so I'll just jot down a little about the 2 things you asked me to write about.

Firstly, and more importantly for me, is this year's Celebration. I'm still excited that it will be going ahead, but I must admit that I'm anxious about people taking so long to commit themselves definitely. I was hoping to have a basic programme organised by now but that can't be done until I know exactly who is coming and which classes or workshops they can offer. On the other hand Celebration enthusiasts have unhesitatingly offered their services to such a degree that I feel overwhelmed. So I'm just trusting that all will fall wonderfully into place, be as spontaneous and ad hoc as usual, and that everyone will have a great time.

I, and others like me, would be tremendously disappointed if the Celebration were allowed to lapse. I don't regard it as being in any way similar to an ashram experience but rather as something quite separate and distinct. For a start, everyone is totally free to "do their own thing", to take part or not as they choose, to offer to run an activity or suggest that a particular activity should be run, and finally - and this point is very important - everyone is equal - there are no outsiders and insiders and no hierarchy. It is quite simply a time for yoga people, and also non-yoga people, to come together and

share as one large extended family.

Contrast this with what many of us have experienced in our dealings with the ashram.

This brings me to the second subject - Niranjan's visit to Rocklyn and my impressions. This, of course, is entirely subjective and possibly no-one else there would have viewed it in even a remotely similar way, so it is probably a pretty jaundiced view. I went unwillingly and the atrocious weather did nothing to improve my mood. As soon as I had concluded the business I went there to do, I left again.

However I would have to say that the programme, for nearly everyone, was a great success and particularly for people new to yoga or the ashram. Shakti Mudra did a superb job organising and everything seemed to run extremely well (as far as the constant rain would permit). They even had a take away food van there, run by Indians, which was voted a tremendous innovation.

I can't tell you what Niranjan said but I was told that he seemed to be indicating future directions and areas of change and that people who hadn't heard him before were impressed by his humility, his understanding of Westerners and his clarity.

There were very few purna sannyasins present, a fair number of karma sannyasins who did most of the voluntary work, and the majority were the bright-eyed, shining-faced new wave. In my negative state, as I sat there uncomfortably squashed, cold and damp, I thought, "what am I doing here? I've been down this road". Twenty years ago I too sat with the shining, rapt face and drank everything in, but one cannot keep repeating the same thing forever. So where are we today and where do we go from here?

These are the questions I think we're all trying to answer and it has plunged some of us into the spiritual doldrums. It is confusing and bewildering because we are unsure of our "place". Whilst most of us are engaged happily enough in our separate, personal lives (or lifestyles) we are still connected and want to maintain and strengthen that connection and are struggling to devise its form. For me personally (& perhaps for others) it is also trying to recapture and reawaken the spiritual impetus or purpose. I don't have any answers. All I can think to do is to keep on meditating.

I'll look forward to your letter.

Hari Om Tat Sat and love Vedantabodh

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Muktanand,  
Hari Om,

I thoroughly enjoyed seeing you again last month, and am attempting to fill my promise of a contribution to the newsletter.

Our conversations that day were quite positive and hopeful, but I am not presently feeling that way about the Aussie Ashrams. I have just been speaking to Kiran, who was told by Sivamurti that consideration was going to be given to her situation and the financial fraud that was played on her by Akhandananda. The result, after the management meeting was that "it was a bit of bad luck, and it seems it was all between Akhandananda and her" - no recognition of the fact that when she dealt with Akhandananda, he was Director of the Ashram. In addition, I have been told that young female swamis from Mangrove still keep contact with and visit Akhandananda, as do other people associated with the ashram. I have also been told that methods such as dragging residential novices out of bed by the hair if they don't get up and hitting are still employed in places like Rocklyn Ashram. If all this is true, it is really depressing. A conversation with one of the resident swamis revealed that he did not really care what happened, whether the mistakes of the past were repeated or not. He survived it last time, and could survive it again or just leave. He was staying because staying was easier than leaving and setting up a household or residence of his own. I know all of this does not apply to all the swamis at Mangrove, but feel they need better people if things are to improve. I don't know how many people would want to be closely associated with the Ashram here when things like this haven't been straightened out. It is obvious that it will take time, but it is hard to see how there is going to be sufficient positive momentum to hold a successful convention next October when there is such lack of direction and so many negatives and uncertainties hanging around. I can only hope things will have been straightened up by then.

I did get to see Swami Niranjan. I had been invited by the Venkatraos to visit them during their stay at Mangrove and returned there the week after I saw you. I spent the day with them. When Swami Niranjan arrived from the farm in the afternoon, they went to see him,

and knowing that I had worked with both Swami Niranjana and Swamiji in Munger (and my being their guest at Mangrove so to speak), they assumed I should accompany them, so REDACTED and I spent an hour or so with them there and then had dinner with Niranjana and them. Later that week, we again bumped into him. We had planned to go to Luna Park with the Venkatraos grandchildren, but found it was closed. So we caught the ferry across to town and went to their hotel. Swami Niranjana was sitting in the foyer on the way to the dentist. We talked to him there and had lunch with him. It was nice to get some contact in a relaxed setting (the Regent Hotel !!) without having to run the gauntlet of ashram protocol. It almost gave me the feeling that someone up there or somewhere was looking after me. I felt very satisfied. I enjoy his company and feel that he at least has scruples, values and an intrinsic spirituality. I hope that in time he has some influence on the way things run in the ashram here.

I hope this letter does not sound too negative. In spite of all this, I still have extremely positive feelings and a very strong sense of being connected to Swami Niranjana, Swamiji and many of the people associated with the ashram. I think that most of the recipients of the news letter must also have such connections and so can understand my attitude. I really do hope that the situation in the Australian Ashram is resolved in a positive way so that it can go ahead, and leave past mistakes behind.

Hari Om to everyone ..... Bhakti.

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Post Script : It is some time since I wrote the above letter. At the time of writing it, I was in a rather intense ashram-related-post-Niranjana's-visit-mind-space. ( May be it should be called post-ashram-visit-trauma-syndrome or post-ashram-conflict-resolution or even "What the hell is it that I feel I've lost though I know it is still with me, why do I feel it is still central to my being, why haven't I got an avenue to express it ,who is responsible for this situation, and why does the connection start to grow and intensify over ten years after I left, when I have a new, completely different, non-yogic lifestyle. ) Anyway, at the time of writing, I was not inclined to put down to many personal feelings, but in doing the newsletter, I just wanted to say, that the most important thing about this newsletter to me, apart from the role it may play in countering a repeat of the Aussie 1980's style ashram , is the release it gives people to express themselves, and the reassurance it gives to know that there are others like me, who still need and want to express, resolve and grow, who know the ashram can no longer provide their answers, stimulus or home, but who are on a one-way road. It is reassuring to know, that wherever on the road you are, and though you might not have companion travellers, others are treading the same path, facing the same feelings, having the same breakthroughs and frustrations, and handling it. Talking to Muktanand the other day, we both expressed the desire to see the whole picture fit together, all the ashram experiences clearly explained, all resolved. We agreed that rather than a enlightened revelation, it seems we are presently stuck with a slow, painful, laborious, dribble-like growth of understanding. I know, myself, that for everything resolved, another ten problems arise. Still I feel confident that I am making steady progress ?!?!??

I look forward to hearing from those of you who wish to make contributions.

Bhakti.

next newsletter

will be published in October. I hope to include a updated list of network members. Any contributions can be sent to B.Manning, REDACTED

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