

From: [Yogasandhan](#)
To: [Suryamitra](#); [Atmamuktananda Saraswati](#); [Ahimsadhara Saraswati](#); [Poornamurti \(Phil\) Connor](#); [secretary@syta.org.au](#); [Amarnath \(Anthony\) Cormack](#); [Bert Franzen](#); [haribodhananda](#) [REDACTED]
Cc: [Gurubhatka](#)
Subject: Re: Mangrove History Task Force
Date: Saturday, 22 March 2014 2:02:58 PM

Hari Om all,

I'd like to hand over a few things which have been raised by people with me over the last two weeks, for your consideration and in particular related to Bert's point..

- Focus our energies on the apology and the healing ceremony. In so doing emphasising that we have implemented systems and processes that have ensured 29 years of trouble free growth and development for the Ashram, Sannyasins and community alike.

Misconduct by sannyasins and teachers:

- [REDACTED]
- [REDACTED]
- [REDACTED]
- [REDACTED]

The first two are no longer accredited with SYA in response to their actions. Even though [REDACTED] case was handled by a neutral legal party you can see by [REDACTED] response she was none to happy with Mangrove's handling of the matter. [REDACTED] (search for [REDACTED] to find her piece). She is still very connected to Satyananda Yoga and has been conscious not to name people. Prior to Manly [REDACTED] hit on enough women to upset some and his behaviour as a resident, teacher and swami could be called into question. [REDACTED] is now living in Munger this could also be called into question

[REDACTED] has been silently un-accredited. He hasn't been informed neither has [REDACTED] No-one has made an official complaint about him to SYAA although we knew via SYAE of his misconduct in Europe. He was mentioned although not actually named in the FB discussions by [REDACTED] who alluded to the fact that there was no public acknowledgement of the misconduct by [REDACTED] the [REDACTED] website states that he's "taking a break from teaching, so that he can focus on his own sadhana (personal yoga practice) for the next few months." his reasons for leaving [REDACTED] aren't connected with Europe and an affair isn't illegal so on one level there is no need but people will read it and our response however they want to read it. current question is, was our response sufficient?

Some women complained about [REDACTED] making unwanted advances, he was banned from the ashram for 2 years and residents attended an harrasment workshop [REDACTED] has changed his behaviour and attitude and is welcome again. This is probably the most transparent response that has been made although I doubt any of the many women who had been on the receiving end of [REDACTED]'s advances would have known it happened.

[REDACTED] is outside our jurisdiction but that distinction is not known to other people. He and Shishyananda apparently initiate in Swami Satyananda's name and story's about [REDACTED] around in NZ.

Point being over the last 10 years there have been more smaller issues and Mangrove is still learning how to respond appropriately. To paint a picture that we have it right could trigger the cries of "bullshit" from more than a few places. There have also been allegations of bullying at Mangrove leveled by paid staff towards sannyasins and I believe other paid staff. Not sure if any of these were official complaints.

Addressing the culture

This is the training, talks and work shops that I can recall have taken place at Mangrove over the past 10 years. HR or Jayatma might have a fuller account especially pre 2009.

- emotional intelligence, (Bert, 2008?)

- another workshop by you bert involving the kleshas, 2008?
- non-violent communication, (NVC trainer, 2010)
- student support skills, (YS diploma, yearly for YS students)
- mental health first aid, (Prematma, 2008)
- understanding conditions of child abuse and how to recognise indicators and how to report concerns, (Santosh, 2010)
- how to address or prevent bullying in the work place, (2010)
- DISC personality identification (Guy someone, 2011)
- how to develop a workplace/ashram environment where each person is personally responsible and accountable for their behaviour and interactions with others , above the line discussions, (Chakramani, 2013)
- healthy attitudes to sexuality in spiritual life, (Haribodhananda, 2014)

On-going association from the past

Bert you raised the flag about us using Nityapuja as legal advice given that he was the appeals lawyer for Akhanandananda

An ex resident and visitor to Mangrove questioned Haribodh's involvement in family yoga, given close association with Mangrove's history especially given reference to a talk we asked Haribodha to give on Sexuality and Spirituality. (Sorry Haribodh you said it was a dangerous topic... you were right). The point raised by REDACTED was that from within the ashram everything seems normal and we're too close to the people and events to see things as others including himself might see them.

These kind of associations can be misconstrued very easily.

News from northern NSW...

APZ said APD is working to pull together his 'research' into the facts of the history which he will apparently share with people ... i don't know how.

Response to me from APV (Tim's sister) regarding the removal of comments from FB: "I suspect that SHISHY has had a hand in this as she is attempting to threaten the people who have been speaking on facebook with her rubbish."

Support ...

There have also been messages of support from visitors, teachers and initiates which are summed up by Atmakiran's message

My thoughts are with you all at the ashram at the moment having to deal with all this coming up from the past again. I really value the work that you are all doing there now and will be there at Easter to show my support.

*Rest assured that there are many of us out there who support all the hard work you are all doing.
Om and prem
Atmakiran*

All the best

Om & Prem

Yoga

"Each day watch the colours of your mind,
until the light shines clearly" ~ SSS

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Sent: Fri, 21 Mar 2014 12:39:46 +1100
Subject: Mangrove History Task Force

Hari Om

In consultation with other members of the team it has been proposed that we form a task force to manage the current issues arising re Mangrove's history. This task force will be made up of representatives from SYTA, Manly Yoga and SYA, so that all three parties can agree on the appropriate path forward.

There are a number of reasons for doing this, but I think most importantly it will ensure that all communications/responses/actions are determined based on full information and appropriate advice (legal and otherwise), we give consistent messages to our community and the public, and we do the best we can for all affected parties. We also don't want to over-engineer it.

It is important that the responsibility for managing this issue be limited to a few so that it can be done effectively and with full awareness of the potential consequences of any action taken. These matters are sensitive, which is another reason for not including more people than we need to in the decision-making process. As I'm sure you're all aware, it is essential that we get the tone and wording right for any communication as it is so easy to misinterpret what has been written and cause unintended harm.

I will represent the Mangrove management committee on this task force but we (the MMC) will not be active in the decision-making as I think it's important for some distance and perspective to be applied, and we are also busy running the day to day operations here.

It is proposed that the task force be made up of:

- Atmamuktananda (SYA)
- Ahimsadhara (SYA)
- Suryamitra (SYA)
- Poornamurti (SYA)
- Haribodhananda (SYA)
- Krsnadhara (SYTA)
- Amarnath (Manly Yoga)
- Bert Franzen (HR Consulting)

We will take advice from the Royal Commission and potentially others such as Kate Eastman (legal).

I have attached below Bert's email from last night as I think he has very clearly outlined what our next steps should be. Most importantly, we should limit our actions to only what is essential so

that we don't fan the flames and keep the issue going.

Please let me know if you are in agreement with this and we can start the ball rolling on communicating between us. I have cc'd Yogasandhan and Gurubhakta to let them know what is happening but they don't need to be included on communications going forward.

Om

Suryamitra

Message from Bert:

Hello Everyone

My view is that we should not escalate. I think it would be unwise to get Niranjanananda involved publicly as it puts him in a very difficult position and could put out the wrong messages. On a private level however he should reserve his right to take legal action regarding the Bhakti/Smith emails.

I'd also guard against the potential to over-engineer internally. Keep it simple and the people involved to a minimum. Invite the distressed initiate (recipient of Bhakti/Smith email) in to meet with someone to discuss her concerns. This will allow the chance to correct misconceptions.

Be media ready. I believe Suryamitra is the media person so all media should be referred to her.

Proposed next steps

- In the immediate short-term, we issue a 'cease and desist' letter to both parties (I'll have draft by close business tomorrow) shutting that down from causing further damage.
- I believe Suryamitra has sent an email to the recipients of the Bhakti/Smith emails, putting them in the picture. How detailed were we in these communications?
This was sent from SYTA to the SYTA members - I'll send it to you separately, Bert (SM)
- If not already done, we should consider some form of damage control initiative focused on the initiates affected by the Bhakti / smith emails.
- Suryamitra has shut the Facebook forum. Removing that as a problem.
- Focus our energies on the apology and the healing ceremony. In so doing emphasising that we have implemented systems and processes that have ensured 29 years of trouble free growth and development for the Ashram, Sannyasins and community alike.
- We should push the apology/healing day loud and clear for everyone to hear and attend.
- Hold the special day where we sincerely acknowledge what went wrong, those who were hurt and join together in healing;
- Ensure that we have proper referral services available. There will be those who will not be satisfied but, unfortunately, there's nothing that we can do other than offer support and understanding. Referral to independent support and counselling services are available and should be utilised.
- After the Apology / Healing day we continue to provide ongoing support to those affected and in need. This could involve invitations to free stay/s at the Ashram and/or attend specific programs, referral to external experts etc.

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