

# S atyananda Y oga C entre

## L o n d o n N e w s l e t t e r

S p r i n g / S u m m e r 2 0 0 8



Hari Om. As I sat gazing out of the patio doors into my garden looking for some inspiration as to what to write for this editorial I could not fail to notice some of the beautiful signs of Spring with new buds bursting into flower and a warm breeze in the air. A very different climate to the one that greeted me when I returned from India at the beginning of January when we needed to wrap up warm with hats, gloves and scarf!

In November and December many yogis and yoginis visited Rikhiapeeth, some of us for the first time, for the 12th and final Rajasooya Yajna and Sat Chandi Mahayajna which was held from 10-14 December 2007. We were blessed to be part of this special occasion to invoke and worship the Devi (primordial cosmic energy) through the chanting of mantras, the giving of Prasad and to be in the daily presence of Swami Niranjan and Swami Satsangi. Every day saw more and more people from not just all over India but from all over the world culminating in over 20,000 people from over 45 countries by the end of the program. On the final day Sri Swami Satyananda gave us darshan and was speaking for over 7 hours. The majority of his darshan was in Hindi with a few pertinent points in English but what a blessing to be in his presence and receive his teachings. Having sat on a chair for the majority of the time in the program I was determined on the last day to sit on the ground and really absorb the energy. After about 1½ hours I did not think my back would hold out but 4-5 hours later I was still sat in much the same position totally absorbed in the energy with no pain - the power of Devi!

Participating in Seva was as much part of the celebrations as being in the main programme area. The teachings from Seva penetrated on many levels giving us valuable lessons in selfless service. The energy and love that went into preparing food for thousands of people was quite something whilst at the same time calmly (well most of the time!) watching irritations and buttons that got pressed in the process. The effects of the celebrations will have permeated on such a deep level and will almost certainly have some long lasting effects.

Those of us who stayed on for the Kriya and Tattwa Shuddhi course were blessed again with Paramahamsaji's Darshan. I was moved to tears to be in his presence. Ever since the first inner vision I had of him in my early 20's my connection with Swamiji has been an inner experience and to be sat a few feet away from him was a truly beautiful experience. To see his Divinity, his obvious love and devotion to God was inspirational as he shared with us his wisdom and sense of humour - what a blessing!

Some yogis and yoginis have taken some time to reflect and share with us some of their experiences from Rikhiapeeth.

We are so fortunate in the Satyananda tradition to have such a range of practices for our personal transformation and over the next 6 months we are blessed to have Swami Niranjan's visit to Europe, Guru Purnima and many new courses, workshops and training days for both students and teachers to help to deepen our sadhana and transform our daily lives so yoga does not become something that just happens on the yoga mat.

*Shantipriya*

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## Swami Pragyamurti A round & A bout

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19 April ***Tools for Transformation***

Sheffield — contact Tapasvi, tel. 0114 2338340 or  
email xsnoon@yahoo.co.uk

26-27 July ***Residential Weekend (topic to be announced)***

Sheaton Castle, Yorks — contact Namrata Devi,  
tel. 01287 619065 or email lesleykwood@hotmail.com

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## Shankhaprakshalana

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The date for this wonderful cleansing practice is 26 April. The cost is £27. Please pay in advance, put your name on the list at the centre, leave a contact number and make sure you take an information sheet. If you have not done this practice before you must contact the supervisor of the day.

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## New Classes

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We are blessed with several new courses running this year which include:

***Swami Nirmal*** is running a 12 week course for intermediate/experienced students, starting on 5 March 7.30 - 9pm. The course is entitled: Mudras: The psychic attitudes of yoga designed to bring delight to the practitioner.

***Swami Pragyamurti*** is running a 12 week course for beginners, starting on 5 March 7.30 - 9pm. This course will continue after the 12 week initial course.

***Brahmananda*** is running a 9 week Sadhana Course starting 25 March until 20 May, 7 – 8.30 pm (occasionally may run a little longer to allow for sadhana feedback and discussion). Cost: £65 (payable in advance). This 9 week course is designed to assist in introducing some home practice in a structured and systematic way, taking the experience of yoga to another level. Participants will be expected to use the weekly class as a basis for 'sadhana' - regular yoga practice. This will involve some asana and pranayama and yoga nidra practice, exploring how to bring yoga into our

daily lives, thoughts and actions. This sadhana will be developed over the 9 week period, allowing the cumulative power of yoga to reveal itself, using it as a core around which the different experiences of life can revolve. It will be suitable for beginners and those with more experience who wish to develop their practice and experience of yoga. *Places are limited to 8 and priority will be given to existing students.* For further information or to enquire about a place, contact Brahmananda: ***brahmananda108@gmail.com***

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## Guru Purnima on Friday 18 July 2008

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Come and celebrate with us for all or part of this joyful day from early till late. The programme will include chanting of *Guru Gita*, mala making, decorating the house and garden, a yoga class, meditations, late afternoon feast and a roof raising *Maha Kirtan* to finish the day. All welcome, donations appreciated.

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## Kirtan and Nada Yoga

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### **Kirtan (Devotional Chanting)**

Kirtan and chanting of *Maha Mrityunjaya Mantra* take place on the last Friday of the month, 7.30-9.00pm. Kirtan is free – everyone welcome.

### **Nada Yoga (Yoga of Sound) with Krishnadhyanam**

Krishnadhyanam will be returning from India in April and will be resuming his Friday evening Nada Yoga class from Friday 18th April. If you do not come to the class regularly please ring beforehand to find out if he is here as he will be away teaching at various times during the summer. You can ring him on 07905 534217. At the moment the class will be at 7.30 pm on the following Friday evenings: 18th April; 2nd, 16th May; 6th, 13th June; 4th July; 1st, 8th, 15th, 22nd August; 5th, 12th, 19th September. Please note that these dates, particularly some of the later ones, may change! Krishnadhyanam is also available for individual lessons in harmonium and kirtan.

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## Satyananda Yoga Academy Europe (SYAE)

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Satyananda Yoga Academy Europe (SYAE) has just completed the 3<sup>rd</sup> residential of the latest Yogic Studies 1 Course. The guest teachers were Swami Anandananda from Italy and Swami Yogajyoti from Ireland who were both very well received by the participants. This course will be completed in June 08, and the continuing effects and transformation that this process is having on the students' lives is really quite amazing to witness and to be a part of.

For further information, please contact ***admin@syae.org*** or look at the website, ***www.syae.org*** or Brahmananda is also contactable via the London centre.

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## RYE UK (Research on Yoga Education) Training Update

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After successfully completing two years of training last year, RYE UK plan to run some RYE techniques workshops in the summer (London and Devon) for school teachers, yoga teachers or parents and also training in 2009.

RYE specialises in teaching school teachers simple yoga techniques that can be used in the classroom during lessons at school to improve attention, learning and self-esteem.

If you are interested please contact Lynn (Lilamurti) or Kerry (Katyayani) at ***info.ryeuk@gmail.com*** or tel: 020 8693 4603.

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## SOUTH AFRICA – February 2008

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South African and I have a deep connection, which I first became aware of in my teenage years. In the 1950's the media started to inform us of the iniquities of the apartheid government and I became a staunch supporter of the courageous struggles of the African people, and on the request of the ANC leadership I never purchased or consumed anything South African until the release from prison of that great yogi, Mr Nelson Mandela. I realised then the depth of my gratitude and inspiration and hoped one day to go there to express my thanks. But I did not want to go empty-handed. I wanted to take something useful for the people of South Africa.

Imagine my joy, therefore, when I was invited to go to South Africa to teach yoga by three young jignyasu disciples of Swami Niranjanananda in Cape Town. For two magical weeks in February I lived in the home of Sangeeta, Chaitanyananda and Lalita and their small dogs - a home not unlike my own, surrounded by a jungle garden, full of love and laughter, limitless tea and yoga.

My three "housemates", together with fellow yogis of the Ananda Kutir Ashram and the truly amazing Lucille Meyer, organised a busy and varied programme, which started the day after my arrival in Cape Town. Most of my activities had an HIV/Aids focus because of my long-time involvement in the field and because it is such a huge problem in the country; and thanks to Lucille's contacts I spent wonderful days in a large men's prison with nurses, officers and social workers from many prisons in the Cape area, with a support group for Positive Muslims (great name!), in township TB/HIV clinic and with various other groups living with a number of chronic and debilitating illnesses. As most of you know, I am no yoga therapist, so it seemed best to get to the point and teach people some simple and effective practices which

they could integrate into their lives (and pass on) immediately, which would start the process of boosting their immune system, stimulating their vital energy and, most importantly, helping people discover their personal source of power and self-esteem.

In addition to the HIV-focused classes, workshops, TV programmes and radio interviews, a 5-day intensive Yoga Nidra training course was undertaken, with 30 interesting and highly committed yoga teachers and therapists with a huge range of knowledge and experience. What a joy and privilege it was, working with you all, learning so much - and special thanks to the Recovery Warriors for your courage, grace and love. (N.B. my Yoga Nidra training course usually take 6 months, so yes, it was intense!)

Before returning to London I spent a busy and rewarding 24 hours in Johannesburg at Sannyasi KamalaVidya's beautiful Yoga Centre, and shared a platform with one of many extraordinary women I met during my visit - Kim Feinberg of the Tomorrow Trust, which is dedicated to helping the many children orphaned by HIV/Aids. When asked what she needed most from us, Kim answered "Awareness...then money" and her work deserves both of these. (Please check her website.....[www.tomorrow.org.za](http://www.tomorrow.org.za)) The Johannesburg Centre is hosting

Swami Niranjanji's visit is in June, and lovely though the Centre is, I do sincerely hope that they will take him to Soweto, where he can touch many hearts with his light and wisdom, where his fabulous drumming can make the children dance in the streets with him and where the township Mamas can swamp him in their warm embrace.

Words cannot express my gratitude to Swami Satyananda for allowing me to teach these perfect practices, to witness the changes in people's bodies, their smiling eyes, their tears of release and realisation, especially as for most people it was their first ever yoga class. Yoga truly is universal, it belongs to all of us. And we must heed Swami Sivananda's instruction to pass on the teachings "from shore to shore and from door to door" and I would add that we must give them to the poorest of the poor, to as many sick, lonely, lost people, young and old, that we possibly can. We must fast-track teachers where necessary, to reach our difficult and dispossessed young people. We must open our doors and hearts to everyone, so that yoga is no longer seen as a pastime for comfortable middle-class, mainly white, female people. We must remember the real meaning of the word YOGA, as a spiritual path touching every aspect of a human being, and not a limited obsession with precise positioning of muscles and joints - long overdue.

So thank you, South Africa, I'll be back! And it's great to be back here in London with all of you beautiful people, so Hari Om Tat Sat and big Love.

***Swami Pragyamurti***

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## Reflections on the 12th and final Rajasooya Yajna and Sat Chandi Mahayajna

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### *Why go to the Sat Chandi Mahayajna?*

I could not believe how ambivalent I was about going to Rikhia but I knew that I wanted to be there for the celebrations of the Divine Mother. The academic bit of me has been writing about feminine aspects of the divine off and on for years. I wanted to be there, feel the Divine Mother, but was scared too. I left it to the last minute for nearly everything, but when I started getting on with it, everything fell into place. I had never been to India before and I was travelling alone as I had done 25 years ago. I thought that if I was alright then, I would be now, and so I was, when things were good. When they weren't so good how lucky I was to be in the same residential block as people I knew. It wasn't easy to share a small room with people who had been in it for some time already. Wise words from one of my friends down the corridor helped and I remembered Mrs Doasyouwouldbedoneby from the Water Babies, and tried to act accordingly.

I thought I was going for the puja, the celebrations, but it is the karma yoga that I remember. At 6.30 am or so, hundreds of us, westerners and Indians, were sorting, peeling or chopping potatoes. I was awestruck by the way we fed thousands and thousands of people as much as they could eat, all the cooking done in huge pots on wood fired stoves. The organisation was astounding, both complex and simplicity itself. Because there were lots of people to do the work, it all got done.

Somehow I ended up with some inspiring Australians on the water crew and poured water, and poured water and poured water. Mostly I poured water to wash hands with, but one memorable afternoon I was given a different lesson about keeping things flowing and poured water to drink.

I was amazed at how complicated pouring water turned out to be. Instructions could change three times in fifteen minutes: only give three splashes, the queues are too long, give them more water, you are using too much water back to three splashes. Then it was make them bend over, pour from the heart, just use a wrist movement. Pour from the heart made most sense and in the end I tried to give everyone what they needed and didn't pay too much attention to the flow of instructions, but concentrated on the hands waiting for water. Gnarled and nobbly hands, hands with rings, young, slim pretty hands, hands with two thumbs, hands shyly concealing the false teeth that needed washing, hands holding the false teeth proudly. Impatient hands of the Batuks (aka naughty little boys) turning on the water taps. How glad I was that I was only on their station once! I am normally a very earth bound creature, this fluid changeable element reminded me not to get stuck, to keep flowing.

What of the puja, the celebrations I thought I had come for? The invocation to the Goddess made my hair stand on end whenever I heard it. The evening prayers, beautifully read by Kanyas left me weeping every evening. The pandits chanting “Aim Hrim Klim, Aim Hrim Klim” still reverberates in my heart, as do the words of the kind Indian who ran a kiosk and got me a crepe bandage overnight when I sprained my ankle. When I thanked him he said “You are far from home and need help. This is my seva”

Any advice to others? If you don't like big crowds don't go to a huge celebration. Do make your first visit with someone who has been before; take ear-plugs; don't be surprised if you get a bit sick or unwell, get some ayurvedic cough sweets called Koflets from the kiosk if you get a cold and bring some home. As for the rest – that's up to you.

**Kripa**

### *The Joy of Karma Yoga*

My introduction to Karma Yoga was in lazily chasing some leaves around the back garden at Thurleigh Road. I remember feeling slightly confused about why I was doing it and mildly resentful that I was paying for a yoga weekend and doing the gardening! I tried unsuccessfully to explain it to friends who were both amused and outraged on my behalf.

Some years later, having left my work as a travel agent to teach yoga, I was hoping that I would never again have to deal with Joe Public in person or by phone, or be burdened by tedious administration tasks. A period of looking after the book orders for the yoga centre, in the spirit of karma yoga, somehow helped me to let go of my negative feelings about this type of work, so that now I can use these skills happily, to earn a living and help with my yoga teaching.

Three trips to Rikhia, each with increasing amounts of seva – service – have been challenging and have brought up many layers of resistance in me. No pay, no praise, no personal satisfaction in a job well done... What am I doing here? However, working without attachment seems to bring its own rewards. Through trying to let go of my attachment to the things that motivate me, I seem to have loosened the hold of my biggest driving force – Guilt. I wouldn't go so far as to say it is gone from my life, but there is, for the moment, a lightness in the space above my shoulders that is pleasantly surprising.

And so, I am happy to sit here at my computer for some time to help with the newsletter. I am glad of the reminder to keep the attitudes of karma yoga

alive in my work. And if you have a little time to give to karma yoga, you never know, you might actually let go of something you don't want!

**Sarita**

### *Remembering Rikhiapeeth*

Arriving for the first time in Rikhia was like coming home. A sense of welcome and warmth comes straight to you. It was especially welcoming after the hustle and bustle of the rest of India. Already there were many people, a few thousand, here for the final Sat Chandi Mahayajna. Each day of the Yajna it was as if the population of Rikhia would double. In the festival, the divine goddess, the mother energy is invoked to bless all those in attendance, and yes this blessing was certainly felt. The whole program was lead by the Kanyas and Batuks the young girls and boys that were being educated through the help of the ashram. They had no easy job, the boys would help with seating people and making sure people kept moving when they should, bearing in mind the numbers rose to 15,000, no mean feat! And the girls would lead the chanting and kirtans. The concentration and focus of these children was amazing. Sitting for hours on end, reciting mantras and still they had the energy to play afterwards. Everyone in attendance received Prasad (blessed gifts). I was so touched by the amount given to the local villagers: cooking utensils, food, clothes; and to the people attending the ashram from outside; more clothes, books and other items. To give is an important lesson, but I found to be given to was also a valuable lesson, as I had not expected so much, anything in fact. Karma Yoga is important at all times, but I found out it was so important during the program just to keep you grounded as the kirtan being sung and the mantras chanted by the pundits from Varanasi could easily send you off into an intoxicating state of bliss or put your head into a dizzying whirl of energy. I'm not a crowd loving person but am glad that I came to join the other 15,000 people as well as the 5,000 waiting outside

A few days after the celebrations was the Kriya Yoga and Tattwa Shuddhi course. Over 200 people from so many different countries practicing these forms of yoga and what a privilege it was to be there amongst them. Not only to be initiated into the practices but also given the whole of both of them in a week. All 20 Kriyas taught incrementally so we could absorb these teaching in the most precise but clear way. Not only did I feel energised from them but also the space that came to my mind allowing me to watch and witness myself from a clear inner vantage point.

The final day of the course was Christmas Eve, and a busy day as well. As well as having a morning of Kriyas and Darshan with Paramahamsaji, Diksha was that afternoon and then in the evening, the Christmas show! Initiations

took place in the long marbled hall of Yagna Shala. Again another few hundred gathered to take either mantra, Jignasu or Karma Sannyasa.

When first arriving at Rikhia I heard on the ashram grape vine that Swami Satsangananda was not giving initiations to people. I remember thinking to myself that I wouldn't mind at all if it was her that gave me Jignasu, even though on the way all I thought about was Swami Niranjan. When the Initiations began, I peeked through one eye open to see with my happiness that Swami Satsangi was the one giving the Jignasu diksha. When placing the mala over my head I felt her gentle but firm power of her initiation. I was overcome with gratitude and a deep sense of peace but also a new purposeful energy had come in supporting me for the work that I am to do now.

That Evening was the Christmas show that many of us had been rehearsing all that week. There were many groups of people singing, dancing, clowning, all sorts of acts. I got involved with a multinational group of people and we sang a couple of songs together. We called ourselves the 'Merry Krishnas', we did. Well we found it amusing anyway. It was Christmas after all!

The day before I was due to leave I saw Swami Satsangananda without anyone around her. I had brought a mala that I wanted Swami Niranjananda to bless for me but during this whole trip although I got to see him there were always a few thousand other people around, quite inaccessible. But seeing as Swami Satsangi is now initiating, I thought why not ask her to bless it for me? So I did. Even though I am one of so many thousands of people she comes across, she took her time and passed the energy of Paramahamsaji to it.

This whole trip for me was about her. She and Swami Satyananda invite us to their home. We bask in the energy of the Divine Mother with them and Swami Niranjan, we get given the whole of both of Kriya Yoga and Tattwa Shuddhi, that are her practices to pass on, she gives the initiation of Jignasu Sannyasa to me and also allows the time to bless my mala. Before coming here she was a photo, a picture in the Bihar books. She has made a firm impression on me in the last few weeks. She is a woman of power but also overflowing with compassion and love. A true Shakti!

***Nadashakti***

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## Share Your Reflections

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We are always on the lookout for yogic articles to put in the London SYC Newsletter, so if you have a burning desire to write something for the next issue or feel inspired to draw a cover illustration, please leave a note for Niki at the London Centre or send an email to Shantipriya at [shantipriya@btinternet.com](mailto:shantipriya@btinternet.com) or Sarita at [sarita108@btinternet.com](mailto:sarita108@btinternet.com) Around 450 words nicely fills a page – any format is fine, emailed or handwritten.

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## Swami Niranjananda in Eastern Europe 2008

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Swami Niranjan will be touring Eastern Europe in May. There will also be various lectures and workshops by guest speakers including: Swami Anandananda, Swami Pragyamurti, Swami Paramatma, Swami Sivamurti, and Swami Vishwashakti. Dates are listed below with websites for each event for more information and for booking arrangements or visit [www.yogamag.net/news1.shtml](http://www.yogamag.net/news1.shtml). Please book well in advance as all of these events are likely to sell out early!

**SLOVENIA**     ***Tantra Yoga: Evolution in Life***  
18-19 May     [www.satyanandayoga.tara.si](http://www.satyanandayoga.tara.si)

**CROATIA**     ***Stress Management and Yoga***  
20-22 May     [www.satyanandayoga.hr](http://www.satyanandayoga.hr)

**HUNGARY**  
22-24 May     ***Yoga—The Science of Total Well-being***  
25 May     ***Yoga, Tantra and Science***  
[www.satyananda.hu/](http://www.satyananda.hu/)

**SERBIA**     ***Developing Human Potential Through Yoga***  
27-29 May     [www.swniranjan-serbia08.org](http://www.swniranjan-serbia08.org)

**BULGARIA**     ***Yoga—Method for Awakening of Inner Potential***  
30-31 May     [www.yoga2008.org](http://www.yoga2008.org)

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## Yoga Poornima Celebrations 2008

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Yoga Poornima will take place at Rikhia, India from 8—12 December 2008. If you are planning to attend, please inform your local Satyananda Yoga Centre for possible travel companions and to enable us to inform Rikhia of approximate numbers. You may also contact Rikhia by telephone or letter: Bihar School of Yoga, P.O. Rikhia, Dist. Deoghar, Jharkhand 814112, India. Tel: + 93 04799449

Local Accommodation     [www.yogavision.net/sk/accom.htm](http://www.yogavision.net/sk/accom.htm)  
Travel arrangements     [www.yogavision.net/sk/travel.htm](http://www.yogavision.net/sk/travel.htm)  
India Travel     [www.syclondon.com/indiaplan.htm](http://www.syclondon.com/indiaplan.htm)

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## Love and Maitri from Rajasthan

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'Love and maitri' is the motto of the Nirvanavan Foundation in Rajasthan, India (maitri means friendship). Satyananda Yoga Centre, London is very happy to support the Foundation and Krishnadhyanam spends many months there each year. This is his latest 'news':

*4 March 2008.*

Last night I slept at Advaita Garden, the main school of the Foundation. Three new classrooms are being built. Each day a hundred or so children arrive at 8 am looking spruce and clean in their new school uniform, settling down amidst the dust and rubble of what resembles a building site more than a school at the moment. Last year the children asked if they could have a school uniform; they chose the colour and wear it with great pride.

Our direct debit scheme in the UK has been working for just over a year now and it is amazing what a difference having a regular income has made (at present we have over £500 coming in each month). It's not only the money – the teachers can now depend on a regular salary for instance whereas before they would go unpaid if donations were low – but the security this provides and the confidence it inspires. So, yet another big thank you to everyone who contributes, whether by direct debit or by occasional donations.

I am here for just a month on this visit. Each day I teach music to small groups of children. School finishes at 1pm and in the afternoon I am painting the school, gardening, and organising the distribution of pencils etc. to the other schools, which I will be visiting next week. Our 'Great Coloured Pencil Appeal' in January brought in over three thousand coloured and lead pencils from all over the UK – enough for all the children in all of the schools to have their own set. (Jet Airways gave me extra baggage allowance to bring them over.) An extra bonus was that we were able to provide a modest income to a group of the women in one of the prostitution villages who made cloth pencil cases for the children, who each received pencils, an eraser, sharpener and a ruler.

Such a 'gift' means an enormous amount to these children who have so little. What they do have – in abundance - is enthusiasm, energy, the most beautiful smiles and an infectious sense of joy and optimism. It is inspiring to be around them and I feel very privileged to be here.

The pencil appeal continues – I shall be returning again in October with another suitcase full I hope!! We also need good quality pencil sharpeners!

If you are interested in visiting the Foundation I will be here again between October 2008 and March 2009, and will be very happy to show you around. Any yoga teacher who has experience of working with children would also be more than welcome!

***For more information about the Foundation see the website [www.nirvanavan.org.uk](http://www.nirvanavan.org.uk)  
If you wish to contact me my e-mail address is [krishnadhyanam@hotmail.com](mailto:krishnadhyanam@hotmail.com)***

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## Yoga Lifestyle Course —September—November 2007

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Having attended Kripa's Thursday evening beginner's class since January and gradually feeling the benefits of the body beginning to unwind, I was interested to see a small leaflet advertising a Yoga Lifestyle Course starting in September 2007. Reading on how I would progress through postures, breathing practices and meditation sounded very appealing and I was intrigued by the "SWAN theory". After some thought and discussion with Kripa I decided to take the plunge and sent off my deposit.

On a crisp and bright sunny morning in early September I walked to Thurlough Road to begin the course. We often noted during the ten week course how each time we came together we were blessed with a spacious blue sky and a warm smiling sun. I remember the first morning; sitting in the kitchen smiling at new faces, trying to remember new names and discovering ginger and sorrel tea.

During our first afternoon session the course teacher, Poornam, brought out brightly coloured papers, stickers of Om, Krishna and Ganesh, ribbon, string, needles and thread and we began to design our personal spiritual diaries. This sense of creativity and exploration remained throughout the course. Although we only met as a group once a fortnight over a ten week period we each began our day with chanting, a series of asanas, meditation and throughout the day practised on a specific awareness training using the Yoga with Attitude book. It is a powerful feeling knowing that when you are practicing at 6 am in the morning, so are many others.

Poornam's joyful smile combined with her insights and understanding of asana and pranayama kept us going as we struggled with the postures, working with expressing ourselves through our spiritual diary and sometimes just simply trying to keep the daily practice alive. The course is balanced and able to accommodate a mixed ability class. Students are given reading material and cd's for further guidance and if any issues arose you could contact Poornam by email or phone.

The course ended with a residential weekend, which included an inspiring and magical fire ceremony and celebratory dinner. After ten weeks, the intriguing SWAN theory is now work in progress and early mornings are dedicated to practice.

Many thanks and appreciation to Poornam and Kripa.

***Om Shanti, Michelle***

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## Yoga and Life Drawing

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Two years ago I stepped through the door of a new class, not a yoga class, but a life drawing group. It was not something I'd had much contact with, save a few embarrassing sketches from Art School many years ago, but the idea of attending a class in my local community appealed. So I unfurled my sugar paper, bought a new putty rubber and nervously strolled into the studio.

When my initial, tentative attempts at a masterpiece didn't deliver I felt like giving up; I would never be able to 'see'. I just didn't have enough natural talent, I thought. But one piece of advice from my tutor changed that, he said: "Don't be afraid to rub away the lines you've drawn. They will still be there as impressions on the page; let the marks of what you've done before guide you."

He was right. And I began to notice how as in yoga, there sometimes (but not always) comes a point when the lines flow; you're looking not just at the person before you, but you see how beautiful the human body really is. How thigh flows into hip, a waist rounds itself into belly or how a chest fans out across a collarbone to become the dip in a throat. When the lines flow there is no thinking, no thoughts that distract, no awareness of your physical self. Just a focus on the practice, connection with the beauty of being human and the knowledge that every time your charcoal marks the paper, whether the marks eventually stay or fade they all build the picture.

For me, yoga and life-drawing are connected and influence each other deeply. Every asana practised (even if it is merely a stretch with awareness), and every meditation and every Yoga Nidra, (including the ones where I may have dozed off and missed the words), they all count; each one leaves an impression to build on and guide me. And with yoga, as with the life drawing over time and with a bit of practice, it does become easier to see the right line.

*Niki*

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## FREE eNewsletter

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Can't wait for the Autumn/Winter 2008 newsletter? Then why not subscribe to our FREE quarterly eNewsletter, with themed Q&A sessions with Swami Pragyamurti, and to keep in touch with the centre and events go to **[www.syclondon.com](http://www.syclondon.com)** and follow the instructions to subscribe.

For back issues visit **[www.syclondon.com/enewsletter](http://www.syclondon.com/enewsletter)**

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## Yoga Lifestyle course – Starting 6 September 2008

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The course will systematically develop over a ten-week period, with four fortnightly day workshops and conclude with a weekend residential retreat.

The aim of the course is to support you in incorporating yoga lifestyle techniques into your everyday life. We will do this by looking at both theoretical and practical techniques. In addition to the workshops you will be encouraged to maintain a daily practice along with a simple journal. For more details, contact Poornam tel.: 07789 322305 email: poornam@padma.org.uk

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## New Kirtan book available

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Yajnamurti has compiled a wonderful new kirtan and bhajan book which is now available at the centre for £7.50.

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## Meditation CD Sets recorded by Swami Pragyamurti

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### **Panch Tattwa Dharana – Meditations on the Five Elements**

This boxed set of four CDs was recorded live during a weekend yoga retreat at Sneaton Castle (Whitby) in September 2006.

The practices work with the five elements and their associated chakras, physical senses, mantras and yantras (symbols) in a structured and accessible way, from the gross tangible Prithvi (Earth) up to the subtle insensible Akasha (Space). There are specific practices for each tattwa, culminating in a yoga nidra which incorporates all five elements.

In the final practice of tratak you can use the tattwa yantras printed in the accompanying booklet, either for your zodiac sign or for a tattwa that you are working with in your daily sadhana.

### **Prana Vidya – Preliminary Practices**

This boxed set of four CDs was recorded live during a weekend yoga retreat at Padmasambhava (Wales) in October 2006.

Practices include: SoHam in sushumna nadi, Discovering the space body (sthulakasha), The five pranas meeting of prana & apana, Tracing pingala nadi tracing pingala & ida nadis, Recharging manipura chakra, Awakening prana in sushumna, building up in ajna, Chaturdik pranam mudra.

Please note these practices are not suitable for beginners.

### **To order from the London Centre (pay by cheque)**

You can buy the CD sets at the London Centre, or download and complete an order form from [www.syclondon.com/cd](http://www.syclondon.com/cd)

Cost is £18 for each boxed set of four CDs plus 15% p&p (UK mainland).

Full details and free podcasts from each set at [www.syclondon.com/cd](http://www.syclondon.com/cd)

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## Sayings of a Paramahansa

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Work which you do free of charge is called nishkama seva.

Selfless service is necessary for self-transformation.

It is necessary to clean the rajo and tamo guna of the mind.

Nishkama seva, selfless work, is like detergent.

Nishkama seva doesn't just mean work, you should  
have a feeling for it in your heart.

**From: Yoga Mag, May 2002**



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**Front Cover: Dancing Lord Shiva**