

Ananda Marga Good News from Ghana

Dear Sister/Brother/Friend,

Namaskar/Heartfelt greetings!

It's been some time since our last update....I hope you and your family are well in all ways and full of deepening inspiration!

Here in Ghana things are fine. In fact, aren't things always fine wherever we may be? It's only when we lose perspective, and forgot the Essence of all, that things seem otherwise.

Enough philosophy! Please allow me to share a wee bit of what has occupied some of my time and space...

Travels In the first half of 2011 I traveled to Maharlika (Philippines), Indonesia, and USA. The Ananda Marga Wellness Centre in Cebu was home for one month Along with 13 other noble souls from various places on planet Earth we underwent intensive training in natural therapy. During that time I started a liquid fast for 40 days which had a tremendous beneficial result for me. Last month yet another AMWC training completed; the number of AM Wellness advocates continues to grow worldwide! See www.amwellness.org for more details!



Wellness Centre Graduates & Staff



Hydrotherapy (foot bath) Tutorial!

As I was in the SE Asian neighborhood, I was invited to Medan, Indonesia by Devakantaji, an old Ananda Marga friend who I met in 1996 in Sydney, Australia. He graciously arranged for treatment by an adept in Qi-Gong massage. The aim was to help with a bad knee (torn meniscus) and total deafness in the left ear (since 1997). Though excruciatingly painful, noticeable improvements came during the treatment, especially in hearing. Alas, neither I nor the good 'doctor' had enough time to pursue a lasting cure due to our travel plans.

My brother in Medan manages Yogalife, the top yoga studio in town, complete with a vegetarian café, and has many contacts and friends. He efficiently arranged, "Give Your Heart to Africa", a charity night/concert, as well as a meditation workshop. About 30 people attended each program. This spontaneous community of well wishers, in classic Chinese style and generosity, assisted in so many ways. My detox fast continued; the entire visit was a wonderfully rewarding 'working holiday' for me.



Scenes from Medan & Yogalife

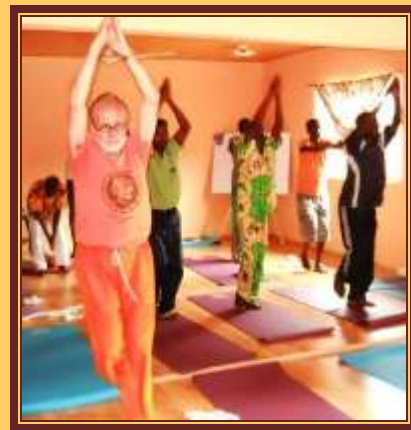
Several months were then spent back in the USA. An anticipated knee operation was replaced with physical therapy. While 'stateside', several yoga detox workshops and presentations were shared in New York City; Westchester County, New York; New Haven, Connecticut; Asheville, North Carolina; and Merritt Island, Florida. Many dear and wonderful old friends helped and just as many dear and wonderful new friends were made!



Muddy & Steamy at the Merrit Island, Florida detox weekend!

Upon return to Ghana in July preparations began for the first Ghana detox weekend. Dada Shilabhadranandaji (my brother monk and co-trainee in Cebu) got things started before I arrived. Arrangements for our scheduled 1st Yoga Teacher Training (YTT) also kept me busy.

YTT For the past several years a small group of senior margiis and Acaryas in the USA have trained Ananda Marga yoga instructors as per recognized international standards. Trainings have been conducted in USA, Brazil, Denmark, Mexico, Portugal, and Syria. In August, 2011 Dada Vishvarupanandaji and Didi Ananda Ragamayaji came to Ghana as trainers with Sister Sulocanaji from Portugal as assistant trainer. 16 participants from Burkina Faso, Cote d’Ivoire, Ghana, Nigeria and Togo completed the first part. The 2nd part of the training will be completed this coming July-August in Abidjan. We see YTT as a significant capacity building initiative for local margiis, and Acaryas.



UKK Our annual W. Africa UKK or summer conference is the major Ananda Marga regional event of each year, approximately 150 attend. Vibrant African kiirtans are always the number one highlight. The 2011 UKK was hosted at the Relax Hotel in Tamale, in the north of Ghana, by its owner and director, brother Govindaji and his family – Damayantiji, Varsaji, Balwantji, Nitii, and Anju. The program included philosophical and practical classes, RAWA cultural evenings, planning meetings for future activities, sadavrata (free meal distribution) in town and at the local government orphanage, a naga kiirtan (street procession) and public conference. A positive article about us came in a nation-wide newspaper.

Holistic Health & Lifestyle Centre In September we held our inaugural Yoga Detox program, “Be the Master of Your Own Health”. This was our first small step on the long-and-winding road to establish a permanent, full time wellness centre in W. Africa. Though only 4 women attended all had a wonderful time. After that, a weekend was held for the Accra margiis, two in Lome, Togo and two more for the public in Accra. Feedback is very positive. All feel this program holds much potential. Brother Sarveshvara has been an active force in these efforts.



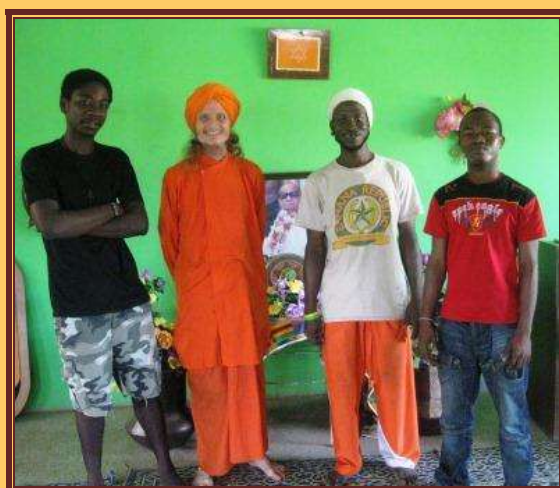
Yoga classes, massage and other treatments continue at our modest health centre in Accra. Brother Murari continues to widen our network of contacts. As a result we've been invited to conduct classes, treatments and workshops at a new beach resort in a nice area of the city. Negotiations are also underway with staff at an international high school.

MG 1/4s Renovations Physical improvements continue at Madhu Shyam, our permanent spiritual centre in Accra. With help from a donor in USA we were able to install aluminum and glass windows in Baba's room, a glass block window for our staircase, establish foot paths on one side and rear of the house, refurbish an outer wooden and glass door and complete outdoor ceilings at the roof. Govindaji in Tamale donated a sofa and 5 easy chairs for our front entry foyer.



A participant in our detox and natural therapy programs has sponsored the architectural drawings for further additions of rooms, a direct staircase to the 2nd floor and a commercial sized kitchen (with a rooftop dining area). Once the drawings are completed and approved by our local margii committees – and sponsors found! – a new phase will begin.

Improving or putting up a building is nice but we've been inspired to build people - their character - into strong, spiritual aspirants. In this regard two newly initiated brothers have joined us at Madhu Shyam. Amitabha is from a popular beach area on the outskirts of Accra and Amogha Siddhi hails from Abidjan in Cote d'Ivoire. Collective meditations, karma yoga around the house and garden, and classes on Ananda Marga practices and philosophy are keeping us all busy – oh yes, and some focused vegetarian 'satsaunga' in the kitchen as well! Brothers Visnu and Murari are also with us.



Amitabha, Visnu & Amogha Siddhi

Ho KG Construction continued on our Kindergarten in Ho, regional capital of Volta Region in eastern Ghana. Support from margiis in Taiwan was used to purchase 100 bags of cement, mold 3,000 'sandcrete' blocks, lay concrete floors and begin construction of the classroom walls. What was once only a noble intention is slowly materialising before our eyes. A budget to complete the building has been updated and more support will hopefully come soon!



Pracar in Tamale A return visit to Tamale, site of our summer UKK, was arranged by local members with great anticipation. Presentations on "Scientific Study Methods" were shared at 3 high schools. The students and staff members were stimulated and the seldom discussed topic of meditation caught the Imagination of many young and bright minds. A small booklet with the same title was reprinted last year. This topic is an effective approach to pracar (spreading the word) here in Africa. A radio interview on natural health and yoga included phone-in questions and follow-up phone inquiries. The local Ananda Marga unit committee was reactivated with key responsibilities taken up by newer members.

Accra Unit Activities Monthly service programs are on-going including distribution of food or clothes and visits to hospitals. Accra Bhukti Pradhan Devakii and her committee arranged a lively beach outing – more than 20 margiis and Didi Gayatriiji enjoyed naga kiirtan, group meditation, swimming and a picnic lunch; 100 or so public were given free meals at the beach. Visits were arranged to margiis and neighbors who due to poor health or other reasons had not been seen for quite some time; this had a unifying effect and was deeply appreciated by the beneficiaries and their families. The annual New Year and Easter weekend retreats were held at Madhu Shyam, the programs include 3 hours sadhana shiviir and 3 hours akhanda kiirtan. At the New Year retreat toys were distributed to about 100 children at the residence of the local chief and his extended family. The local RAWA unit meets weekly, they rehearse Prabhat Samgiita, bhajans and kiirtans; these, the original songs of Yogendra and drama skits are shared at the retreats. Another dedicated group of margiis meets each Thursday evening for study circle and class on philosophy and 16 points. 30 or more people usually attend vibrant weekly Dharmacakras (DC =

group meditation & kiirtan); a smaller unit recently began an additional DC on Saturday evenings at Madhu Shyam, 10 people attended the first gathering.



On our way to the Chief's palace...



BP Devakii & Co. with Chief's representative



Just a few of the children we played with!

Neo-Humanist International School and Namaskar Boys Student Home are two long running projects in Ejura, Ashanti Region. Dada Shiveshvaranandaji is the in-charge since 2000. Support in the form of volunteers and partner, sister schools are needed. The school includes KG through Junior High School and has about 300 students. More sponsors for the 12 boys (ages 7 to 18) at the home are required. If you know anyone who can help in this regard please contact us. More details on these two projects can be found at: www.kidsworldwide.org

Ananda Madhura Master Unit Both of the projects in Ejura and many more to come will eventually be relocated to Ananda Madhura, a 97 acre master unit land within walking distance from our current site. Recent renewed efforts toward development of this envisioned model project started in the New Year. Weekly planning meetings have been held under the able leadership of Papa Shankar and brother Sudhiira. Watch this space for more news!

Didijis too!! Didi Gayatriiji and Didi Ananda Vinamraji are also busy with so many great works. Check the www.kidsworldwide.org to know more.

Future Plans are many and varied:

- Attend AMURT's Humanitarian Project Management training in Sweden - June, 2012
- Further renovation and expansion of Madhu Shyam (MG 1/4s) and the Holistic Health & Lifestyle Centre
- Conduct more detox and natural therapy workshops; develop our facilities for treatments and eventually residential care
- Purchase a 2nd hand van or motorcycle (AM in Accra currently has no vehicle).
- Complete construction of the Ho Kindergarten, help local margiis identify and train teachers and open the school
- Pursue the Daboya District Library project in the north of Ghana (update the budget, prepare formal proposal, & find sponsors to refurbish a marvelous old building for use as a community library)
- Further develop and implement effective pracar programs to popularise yoga and meditation; train local margiis to deliver these programs; publish new brochure and/or periodical

All these lofty pursuits require moral, material and financial support. Detailed budgets for any and all the above are available upon request.

Sponsorship is also needed to bring Didi Ananda Ragamayaji back to W Africa as co-trainer for modules 3 & 4 of our YTT this July. Her ticket from the east coast of USA will cost USD 1,300.

If you or those known and loved are able to assist please let us know.

That's it for now....

Be well in every possible way.

With brotherly regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink on a white background. The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style and reads "Dada Pramananda".

Dada Pramananda

April, 2012