

Some reflections

It was interesting that although the hosting nations as a group had very little personal contact with Shri Mataji through the weekend, we felt Her gracing soothing presence throughout. Perhaps our collective understanding that she is with us always and everywhere is maturing. If I might be permitted to editorialize further, grouping Australia and Asia together to host an international pooja beyond our shores is perhaps an indication that Australian yogi's role must become more international, focusing on the very important work Shri Mataji can do through us in the Asian region. Some thoughts I had, in any case.

the experience of being at the Ganesha puja was for me simple, powerful and unadorned. It was an opportunity to fully realise that we are worshipping the most compassionate, wise, powerful, complete incarnation to have ever graced us with a presence. The renaissance artists mentioned below depicted, for man's adoration, shri Jesus Christ and the Madonna but we have had the most complete incarnation revealed to us in Her lifetime. For want of better metaphors, every puja is the sermon on the mount, Krishna's advice to Arjun before the battle and Shankaracharya's revelation of Divine Mother. Are we just a little bit lucky?

Florence and after the puja

Perhaps interesting for future travelers to puja in Cabella and surrounds, some twenty yogis later visited Florence to view (and enjoy immensely) the incredible work of the renaissance artists such as Michelangelo, Raphael, Titan, Da vinci, and Botticelli. Most interesting for me was a beautiful work "Madonna of the Girdle" in the academy Gallery painted by Francesco Granacci. It illustrates the Virgin Mary in heaven lowering her girdle to St. Thomas (the doubting) on the earth, St. Michael (Bhairava) kneels with St. Thomas. The painting, an incredible revelation from the unconscious, so beautifully depicts the Kundalini connection (the griddle is from the Madonna's waist and depicts as a cord) being offered to St. Thomas by the Divine (Shri Mataji as shri Mary) perhaps shri Bhairava is present in the painting to illustrate the devotion from the left side that is necessary to worship and adore the Goddess.

*John Fischer,
Canberra.*

"fundamentalism comes from doubt"

"Those who speak don't know, and those who know don't speak"

(Quotes of the week from J. Smiley)

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SAHAJA YOGA PROPERTY FUND-RAISER



It has been decided to postpone the arts and crafts exhibition to a later date... The Glebe street Fair, however, is on. The date, on the 17th November, is during the very busy shopping season. Approximately 100,000 people come to the Fair and it will be a prime spot for fundraising. We shall need a large stock of Sahaja Yogis arts and crafts to keep up with demand. Just think how many items will be needed if only 0.5% of the visitors bought something. All interested in donating handmade items or helping out please contact us A.S.A.P. to let us know what you would like to donate. Phone or fax Simon or Ellen Marlow on 043 721546 or phone Meredith Cooper on 02 94116827.

PLEASE O PLEASE INDIA PILGRIMS

A prompt return of all outstanding India Tour applications would be appreciated.
Peter Brownscombe.

NAVATRI CELEBRATIONS

The first day of Navatri is Sunday, October 13th. Dussera, Victory day, falls on the 21st October. Puja date to be announced.

*M is for Mother
O is for open heart
T is for true love
H is for nice heart
E is for excellent Mother
R is for remember Her*



by Pragna Richards



Shri Ganesha puja 1996 in Cabella

Over the weekend of 13-15 September 1996 Australia, East Asia and Iran hosted the puja to our Holy Mother in Her form of Shri Ganesha. the following is one view of that momentous and enriching event. Clearer attentions, larger hearts and more knowledgeable mind will forgive my inaccuracies.

Preparations

Yogis from the hosting countries began arriving in Cabella between Milan and Genoa from early in the week. Around 105 yogis from these countries were to help in the preparations. The first main Australian contingent about 35 arrived in Cabella on the Monday evening before the puja and spend the next few days enjoying the lovely vibrations (Shri Mataji was in residence), the beautiful surrounding countryside and Shri Mataji's castle(400 years old, built on a small steep hill just above Cabella on a much older fortress site- perhaps 2000 years old) The castle is five stories high and named Palazzo Doria (Doria palace) - presumably after the family that ruled the once powerful seaport city- state of Genoa. Shri Mataji has restored much of the castle's inside and now has started on the outside, which we heard is be tiled in orange/ ochre hues.

By Thursday we had worked out what to do in the preparations, where to swim in the icy mountain river and where the best latte makiata (coffee- stained milk) and foccacia (pizza) were to be bought. Some yogis were staying at the hotel and some up in the hanger here the puja was to be performed (the hardier yogis, seeing it was getting into single figures Celsius at night) Shri Mataji asked the hosting yogis to eat in the castle kitchen which vibrated us and collected us together once or twice a day, more or less.

On Friday night the European yogis started to flow in, pitch tents.(I am reliably informed that a total of at least 701 people attended the puja weekend- more than is usual for Ganesha pujas) the hosting countries practiced their musical, dramatic and dance performances and began to anticipate the cultural program to be held on the Saturday evening. the backdrop for the musical program was to be a painting of Uluru with a stunning painting of shri Shiva, shri Parvati, shri Ganesha and shri Kartikeya painted in the foreground, with shri Ganesha dancing- an adaptation from the backdrop used at Bundella.

Musical program

Shri Mataji come to musical program at about 9pm and the first half of the program was dedicated to Indian classical ragas played by students of Baba Mama's music school in Nagpur- unusually as often the Indian selection is held later in the evening. Nick Buff from Australia played a raga on saxophone and other renditions of ragas were given by very talented young Indian musicians on a synthesizer (yes) and on the sitar, tabla and other instruments. The quality and variety of their compositions on the ragas was very high and our Divine Mother was unstinting in Her praise them. We enjoyed them immensely. Program comprised a number of cultural works from the hosting countries- forgive me if I omit anything. These included: bhajans by John Smiley and group, a music video clip produced in Australia, a lovely Portuguese origin dance from Malaysia, a delicate Thai dance, a Japanese song, a well end, rustic dances and rhythmic kawwalis from the Iranian yogis. It was a varied and sumptuous feast of world culture. Delicious mutton biryani was served at around 4 or 5 in the morning, but I think most of it was consumed for brunch and lunch the following day!

Ganesha puja

On the Sunday morning, we began to finish the preparations for the puja. the walls of the hanger were bedecked in finger- painted swastika and balloons(red, white and green- three colors of the Devi, and also of Italy - useful when getting Italian yogis to blow up balloons) suspended from the ceiling at the back of the hanger to face Shri Mataji, on the stage was a 9 foot image of Shri Ganesha doing namaskar to Shri Mataji, painted simply on a white cloth. The stage was also a very simple and beautiful setting Uluru cloth backdrop painted with a flowering tree and birds in a Chinese style.(simplicity being quality of Ganesha) To each side and forward of the backdrop were two similar ochre drop clothes(like banners) with matching flower and bird patterns which gave a three dimensional feel to the stage. Large vases with large floral arrangements completed the whole oriental effect.

Shri Mataji arrived for the puja at around 4 in the afternoon and gave a very interesting talk on preserving the innocence of children(which was being challenged in today's society), not being too attached but to love all children, and talked about Her granddaughters to illustrate Her points (I won't try and recount details here) The children then came up to do the first part of the puja. Then married ladies went up and, finally the national leaders performed aarti. The puja was filmed and displayed by a projector above the audience as it unfolded. It was simple and relatively short. Some people found it one of the most effortless pujas they had been to, others had different but equally valid experiences. To me the vibrations were light and soothing. The amount of prasad handed out after the puja was phenomenal- including chocolate covered marshmallow fish, which I am sure must have swam from Aotearoa (land of the long cloud) to present themselves at Her Holy feet.

Shri Mataji appeared to have been pleased with the puja and commented privately, I understand, that she had forgotten to thank the hosting nations. But does God ever forgets? After the puja people sang and danced and enjoyed the vibrations Shri Mataji had gifted to us all. The small children received presents as did some of the European yogis who had were asked by Shri Mataji to cook for the weekend. (that reminds me to mention how tasty the food was, and the tremendous work that went into food preparations and the less-than glamorous and highly underrated work of those engaged in the washing up tasks)

On Monday, we cleaned up the puja site and kitchen and most said farewells to brothers and sisters and, perhaps in a generally more contemplative mood, soaked up the last of the vibrations from our stay in Cabella. I felt a sense of completeness at having been part of accomplishing a Ganesha puja to the feminine Divine Incarnate in the soul (Jivatman - Living spirit- Italy) of the world. A real experience of Son, Mother, and spirit (father) united.

