

THE AUSTRALIAN

Sahaja Newsletter



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FEBRUARY 3RD '95

SRI MATAJI'S TRAVEL DATES

AIRLINE	FLT	DATE	FROM	TO	DEPT	ARR
QANTAS	28	12 Feb	H/KONG	SYD	2030	0810
QANTAS	425	19 Feb	SYD	MELB	1230	1320
QANTAS	424	21 Feb	MELB	SYD	1100	1215
QANTAS	21	28 Feb	SYD	TOKYO	2230	0610
CATHAY PACIFIC	501	2 Mar	TOKYO	H/KONG	1235?	1445
CHINA AIR	606	6 Mar	H/KONG	TAIPEI	1250	1420
CHINA AIR	631	10 Mar	TAIPEI	K/LUMPUR	0710	1350
THAI MALAYSIAN	416	14 Mar	K/LUMPUR	BANGKOK	1250	1345
THAI	914	17 Mar	BANGKOK	DELHI	0005	0245

2.

MahaShivatri Puja

An information package and registration forms have been forwarded to interstate co-ordinators for local distribution and will be available from Burwood this Friday night. Fees for the weekend are as follows:

	NSW/ACT	Other States International
Adult	\$110	\$90
Concession	\$100	\$80
Student	\$20	\$20
Infant	\$0	\$0



Note:

Concession - pensioner, fulltime tertiary student e.t.c.

Student - attending primary/secondary school

Infant - not yet attending school

Yogis are requested to return registration form and fees by 15th February to enable us to meet preliminary expenses and to minimise administrative activity on the actual weekend. Please contact Bryan Fitzpatrick on (02) 747 2820 for additional information/registration forms.

NEW FAX MACHINE.

Michael Fogarty now has a Fax/Answering machine.

The phone number is the same (02) 417 5572 phn/fax.

FOLLOW-UP CONFIRMATION.

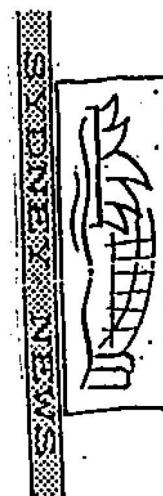
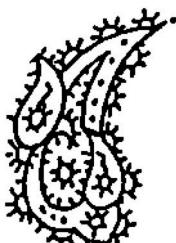
There will be 2 follow-up workshops on Thurs. 23rd and Tues 28th Feb., at the Y.M.C.A. Sydney.

Bhajan Practice

As Sri Mataji's tour approaches, we are starting bhajan practices on Sunday mornings at 10.00 at Burwood Ashram

This means we have basically only 2 weeks left for rehearsals before those who are travelling to Melbourne depart.

So rehearsals are also now on Saturday (for school children) at 10.30 a.m. at Nicholson Parade, Strathfield as well as at 10.00 a.m. Sundays at Burwood.



3.

HINTS TO RUN A 7 WEEK DISCOVERY COURSE

The new 7 week Discovery Course agenda has been prepared in response to suggestions to amalgamate the existing "Foundation" and "Discovery" 7 week courses into a more succinct and faster moving program format.

People seem quite ready to commit to attend a 'course' and can also more easily explain coming to Sahaja Yoga to others as a meditation course they are doing.

An important idea behind this format is that people can come and join in at any time. Brand new people in their first week can be taken to one side and given Realisation.

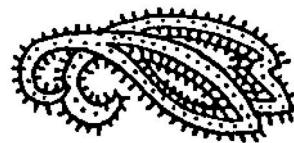
After that it won't matter where they are in the 7 week course if the course is ongoing. Each week you can issue handouts for that session and by 7 weeks they will have it all.

Handbill and Poster copy masters have been prepared so that you can put your local details on them and use copies of these as an ongoing promotion for your weekly course/program. If you would like these copy masters to be tailored to show your local contact or program details then please call Pavan, who has them on his Mac and he can easily alter and print them out. His Phone/Fax/Answering Machine is: 042 672 170

Suggested content for both course handouts and the video component are being prepared as sets of masters for the new 'Discovery' course format.

You will have to arrange your own copies but the masters will be available in a file folder, and two composite videos.

Dr. Bohdan has some suggestions on some exercises that you might include in your course and these include exercises where there are too many people for personal attention and interesting ways to use the elements.



Please note that the following suggestions are just that....merely suggestions. Each session and each course, like each seeker, has a spontaneous life of their own. Our job is to help Shri Mataji give the seekers Self-Realisation and to assist them into deep meditation.

Some consistent suggestions for running these type of courses have been as follows:

Try and establish the vibrations in yourself first.

Explain that the Kundalini is the Divine Mother within you.

Position Shri Mataji as a catalyst, someone who has a special gift, the capacity to awaken Kundalini and help you into meditation (ie. not relaxation or concentration)

Emphasise feeling the vibrations and the experience of true meditation.

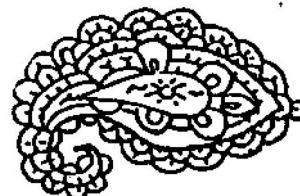
Get new people involved in getting and giving vibrations quite quickly.

Watch their attention, don't overtax them with too much talking or video. Be patient, loving and careful not to challenge their existing beliefs.

Try to include some instruction, video, vibrations and meditation in each week.

Suggest they try Sahaja Yoga meditation consistently and exclusively for a while, like a scientist, to give it a fair evaluation.

It is up to us to nourish each seeker as best as we possibly can.



4.

INDIA SCHOOL REPORT

Travelling to Dharam Sala
By now, most will have
received their forms for the
details required for the
group travel to India.

If you have not received the
letter & form, please contact
Rob Richardson on
(02) 745 2996 as a matter of
urgency. We need completed
forms and \$200 deposit by
Friday 17th Feb.

Anticipated date of travel is
Tues 28 March.

Any adults who would like to
be escorts/minders to help
get the students to school,
are urgently required. The
job of escort is rather
taxing, but very rewarding.

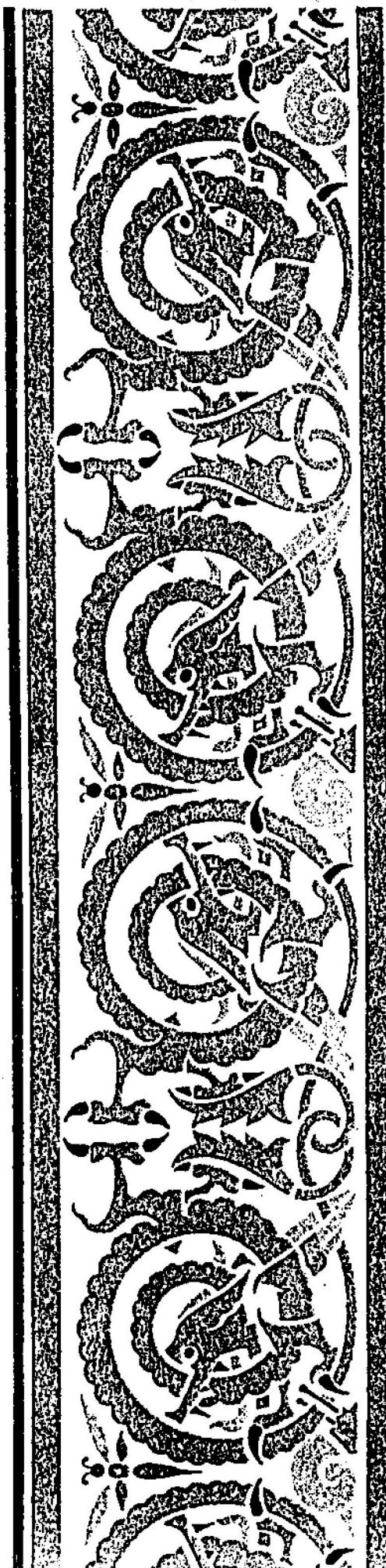
Bonuses for escorts are:

1. Get to visit the school
2. You are not required to return to Australia straight away. You may stay over in India (although not at the school) or have a ticket onto Europe with a 90 day validity on your ticket.

Escorts/minders need to fill out the form and provide \$200 deposit by 17th Feb also.

More news when we finalise an airline and date.

Regards Rob Richardson
John Brownscombe





Religious Revival of the Third Millennium

The third millennium is likely to be characterised by a continuing—it is already well established—international resurgence in religious and spiritual movements, both traditional and new.

The effect of the millennium itself, the magic year 2000, is working strongly on the imaginations of many people of all religious persuasions. Predictions about what may happen run from fundamentalist Christian apocalyptic visions to New Age notions of space ships arriving to rescue the chosen ones before the final armageddon.

These extremes are reflections of a much more common trend—the search for spiritual fulfilment which has not been provided by modern life or material wealth. Catering to this deep need is going to be big business.

This megatrend parallels the upsurge of interest in the arts. It reflects the widespread alienation from science and high technology and a feeling that they have failed in their promise to deliver all 'the answers'.

In fact, science is not there to tell the meaning of life. Such things are sought spiritually and through arts and literature.

Spirituality, yes. Church, no.

Mainstream religions in Western countries continue to decline. This is the common consequence of periods of rapid change. In the stable and prosperous 50s and 60s, the churches were stable. In the accelerating and revolutionary 90s, people are turning to fundamentalism or charismatic TV preachers or New Age healers.

America has in excess of 4 million Moslems and from 3 to 5 million Buddhists. Centres offering yoga, meditation, iridology, homoeopathy and a dozen other disciplines and alternative forms of health treatment are flourishing.

Before several public disgraces, TV evangelists in the USA had tapped the business potential of the medium and modern telecommunications to an extent that put many corporations to shame.

In North America, over 90 new religious denominations have been put together almost solely by telemarketing.

Before his 'fall', Jimmy Swaggart's show went out to 140 countries in 15 languages every week. Jim and Tammy Baker's PLT cable network went to 12 million households. Jerry Falwell made US\$91 million in 1987 from his TV show alone.

The Millennial Consumer

Fundamentalists and New Agers share one thing in common. They can't get enough books, tapes, music and videos about their new-found inner life. As a market they are enormous and growing.

- In the US, 60 million adults describe themselves as 'born again Christians'. Religious book sales in 1987 were US\$1.5 billion. The total market for all associated 'Christian products' is closer to \$3 billion.

- The 'Sacred Melody Centre' in New York is a 12,000 square foot 'Christian store' selling all manner of religious paraphernalia. Sales are worth over US\$1.6 million a year. Hanna-Barbera's biblical cartoon videos sold over a million copies—for \$20 million revenue—within 12 months of release.

Marketing to the New Age

Self described new agers number between 10 and 20 million in the USA. In percentage terms they are a small group. However, they are 95% tertiary educated with average household incomes around US\$50,000. They have money and they don't mind spending it.

- One shop in Los Angeles stocks 30,000 New Age books.
- Huge US book distributor Ingram Book Company, brought out a New Age catalogue of 2,000 titles and increased sales 20% in 6 months.



The rock claims its 26th victim

The death of another tourist climbing Uluru yesterday prompted an Aboriginal leader to remind visitors that traditional owners preferred that the rock was not climbed.

The 52-year-old NSW man died—apparently from a heart attack—after turning back from the steep section of the climb where a chain is provided for climbers.

He became the 26th recorded person to die while climbing Uluru. Several have fallen from the rock to their deaths.

The chairman of the joint board of management of Uluru Kata Tjuta (The Olgas) National Park, Mr Yami Lester, said traditional owners preferred that visitors enjoyed other aspects of the rock.

"We would like people to walk around the base of the rock, or to take part in some of the guided tours by Aboriginal rangers," Mr Lester said.

"More and more visitors are choosing not to climb the rock because they want to respect the wishes of the traditional Aboriginal owners."

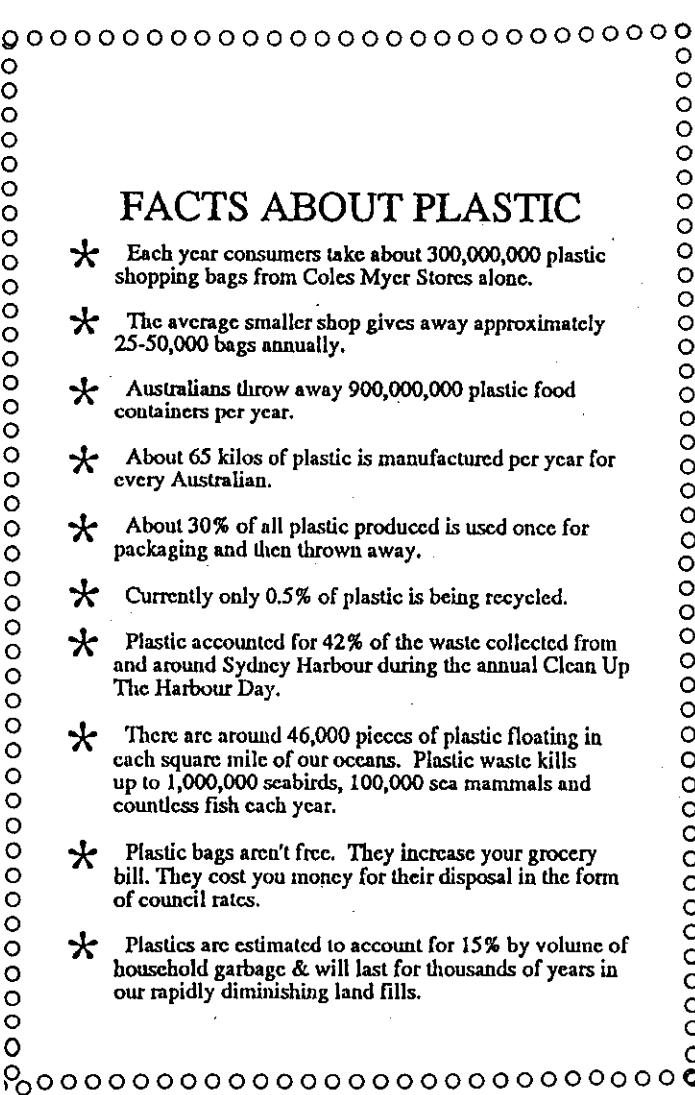
The park's acting manager, Ms Caralyn Dean, agreed that many of the "more sensitive" visitors did not feel the need to conquer the rock.

"In the past, we found some people climbed the rock, then learnt that Aborigines preferred visitors not to do so, and they became very upset about it," she said.

"Now the information is more readily available and they can make that choice."

Mr Lester said the greater understanding of Uluru's significance was demonstrated by the continuing return of so-called "bad luck rocks"—pieces of rock taken by visitors from Uluru then later returned.

Some visitors have reported a run of bad luck after taking the rocks from Uluru.



FACTS ABOUT PLASTIC

- * Each year consumers take about 300,000,000 plastic shopping bags from Coles Myer Stores alone.
- * The average smaller shop gives away approximately 25-50,000 bags annually.
- * Australians throw away 900,000,000 plastic food containers per year.
- * About 65 kilos of plastic is manufactured per year for every Australian.
- * About 30% of all plastic produced is used once for packaging and then thrown away.
- * Currently only 0.5% of plastic is being recycled.
- * Plastic accounted for 42% of the waste collected from and around Sydney Harbour during the annual Clean Up The Harbour Day.
- * There are around 46,000 pieces of plastic floating in each square mile of our oceans. Plastic waste kills up to 1,000,000 seabirds, 100,000 sea mammals and countless fish each year.
- * Plastic bags aren't free. They increase your grocery bill. They cost you money for their disposal in the form of council rates.
- * Plastics are estimated to account for 15% by volume of household garbage & will last for thousands of years in our rapidly diminishing land fills.



JIM MCCLELLAND

It's time to sack the Pope

SHOULDN'T the Catholic Church sack Pope John Paul II? Since he was last here in 1986, the percentage of practising Catholics in Australia which had already fallen to 25 per cent—compared with 60 per cent in the early '60s—has since declined to 20 per cent in major metropolitan dioceses and 10 per cent in a few others.

My authority for those facts is Mr B.A. Santamaria in his weekly column in *The Weekend Australian* of January 21-22. He added: "More than 90 per cent of students in Catholic schools give up the practice of their faith within 12 months of leaving school. Almost all of the religious orders are dying—not least that established by the beautiful Mother Mary MacKillop—while the majority of seminaries appear to be on their last legs, nor is there much doubt about the reasons."

Despite this gloomy auditor's report, Mr Santamaria, for his odd personal reasons, regards the present Pope "as one of a handful of the greatest Popes in history". One can imagine what the shareholders of a public company would do to a chief executive officer who turned in a record like that! If he showed up at an annual general meeting, far from being rapturously received as the pontiff was at Randwick racecourse, he would be more likely to be lynched.

The financial pages of the media almost daily report cases of chief executive officers being given the golden handshake and their marching orders for failure to perform, as disclosed in their company's annual balance sheets. What further evidence does the Catholic Church need that something is wrong at the top? Yet, though for health reasons the present Pope's tenure is not likely to last much longer than Deng's in Communist China, the chance of a change of direction seems equally unlikely in each case. Just as Deng's successors offer more of the same, the Pope has stacked the college of cardinals, who will elect his successor, with clones of his conservative self.

To the problems of the Catholic Church lamented by Mr Santamaria should be added the mounting disclosures of abuse of children entrusted to the care of its teaching orders all over the world. The lesson to be drawn from this is surely that celibacy imposes a sexual strain which can turn its devotees into menaces to the children whom parents have entrusted to them. Surely the answer is equally obvious: abolish the rule of celibacy for the teaching orders.

Might not the Church's insistence on priestly celibacy also have something to do with the fact that "the majority of seminaries appear to be on their last legs", as Mr Santamaria bewails? Is not the shortage of male priests also an argument for the ordination of women? The board of directors of an ailing company which was as blind to the causes of its ill health as those who run the Catholic Church would get short shrift from its flock. Might not this blindness have something to do with the reason why so many Catholics are dropping out?

There are probably more doomsayers around today than at any time in human history. The greenhouse effect, the plundering of the world's forests, the inability of all governments to solve the problem of unemployment are just some of the causes of their despair. But greater than any of these menaces is the threat of unsustainable over-population of the globe. Even the drastic measures taken by the Chinese authorities to limit families to one child are evidently not working to achieve their objective.

The reiteration by the Pope of the Church's anti-social anathema on contraception, in my view, amounts to an offence against humanity. If his teaching on this subject were universally obeyed, world misery would be multiplied beyond imagination. Fortunately, the overwhelming signs are that even people who continue to regard themselves as practising Catholics are defying the papal ukase in droves.

