

## Asian Seminar November-December 2010 Special Edition

**Growth is Natural** by Ludovic Odier, Singapore

The Asian Seminar kicked off with the talk, "**Mouth Speaks But The Heart Understands**" by Sis. Srimathi Rathod. Soon after the talk began, Master arrived to listen. He remarked, "Master gives us everything we need but it is up to us to use it. Are our hearts attentive? Will we be making the most of the Seminar?"

The Singapore Centre abhyasis followed this up with their outreach programmes at the Centre, and for the public in Singapore. One of the key lessons for the day was to drop the distinction between abhyasis and non-abhyasis. We were reminded again we are all brothers and sisters, and a willing heart is needed on both sides for a connection to happen.

The next morning, Bro. Capt. Chakrapani captivated the audience with his talk, "**What am I?**" He shared his vicissitudes and his thoughts as a ship captain alone at the helm, as a CEO and as a husband. He talked about the man he ought to be, following His Master and His path. Like for many of us, it was a story of change and transformation. We were moved by his humanity, humility and heart.



That afternoon a touching and somewhat humorous account of how the Mission in China got a real spurt of growth following the visit of a group of French abhyasis was recounted. They called themselves "*the French Fries*" who went to meet the Chinese, whom they affectionately called, "*the Fried Rice*". Beyond countries, nationalities and cultures, we were truly inspired by a demonstration of love, courage and bold faith. A small group of abhyasis, through numerous open houses and encounters, made a such big difference to those interested in spirituality in China.

Day three, Bro. N. Prakash gave a heartfelt talk, "**Be Connected to Him**". He shared with passion the story of his connection with Master. We felt the trepidation of his journey as a trekker following a humble mountain guide from the valley to the summit. I could not help but think of my own path and connection with Him. That afternoon offered a chance to participate in a lively Q&A session with a panel of three preceptors, who answered questions about meditation, spiritual progress, satsangh, cleaning and the 'taming' the ego.

Another giant, Bro. P.R. Krishna gave the last talk on Thursday titled, "**Growth is Natural**", the Seminar's underlying theme. He recounted the moment of creation upto the time of Man, the time at which, he said, growth stops being natural as men tend to mess things up. Through his superpowers, mind and will, humanity seems about to crash now. Can we do something about it? He commented, "Isn't Sahaj Marg about bringing a much needed transformation? Is there hope?" There is still hope, he said, if each of us changes. As much as Master brings us hope and gives All, are we listening? Are we following our Hearts in this regenerative quest?

The audience was spellbound throughout the Seminar. Hearts were beaming, joyful in brotherhood, thankful for every day for a lesson learnt. The last day was graced by Master's presence and His closing speech. Much to my dismay, I missed it as I had already flown back to Singapore. I still miss Him but I am hopeful that our Hearts will speak. May all Brothers and Sisters, everywhere incessantly weave the branches of hope and love through humanity and Him.

Master's talks given during the seminar can be accessed at <http://www.sahajmarg.org/media-gallery/audio>



## *At The Cottage with Master*

### **New Abhyasis**

The region's new abhyasis including those who had not met Master earlier, had a golden opportunity to meet Master at close quarters. Master started off the conversation in his trademark, heart-winning style of explaining the Sahaj Marg system succinctly. He said we spread Love with no barriers in our system. One abhyasi remarked and thanked Master for drawing her in at the right time. He responded the right time should be every time, and gave the analogy of the seed. He said the seed should be sown and watered at the right time and intervals, allowing the sun to shine at the right time, etc. Similarly, the right time does not stop once in our spiritual life. Everything should be continued at the right time, every time.



Another abhyasi requested for blessings to carry Master in the heart forever from that instant. Master said He is always present and that the seed is sown at the first sitting itself. On insistence, He said, "If you ardently wish, it will happen".

He said the human relationship whether between spouses or between parents and children doesn't depict real Love. True relationship is possible only between Guru and disciple. He remarked, there is frantic sex in today's world, and sex and love are inversely proportional. More and more of love would mean less and less of sex, and more and more of sex implies less and less of love. Master also emphasized, "the heart has to be cleaned day after day to be fit to receive His grace to grow."

He also finally said, **"When you go out from here, develop the courage to Love everyone with no restrictions"**. Abhyasis came out feeling elated with beaming faces – some with welled up tears of joy and gratitude, touched in a unique, miraculous way somewhere in the heart. It rests upon us to apply this in our life!



### **Children**

When the word was out that children from Singapore may get to see Master, they stopped all their activities to wait outside His cottage.

In every child, one could see the children's eagerness to be with Master "Thatha". The boys who would not usually sit still for a second waited quietly until Master came out and sat in His chair. When He started to give out candies, saying, "one by one", without being told by adults, the children waited their turn to go to Master.

He joked with the children, telling one child not to be shy, while another not to ask for more candy. When the child persisted in asking for more, He brought the child close to Him, touched His beard said, "If you eat too many sweets, you will become an old man like me. The child promptly replied, "I want to be an old man like you"!







## Preceptors

**W**hile the Asian Seminar was in full swing, Master very graciously scheduled some time for preceptors.

He started off on a jovial note saying, "We have exchanged pleasantries, what do we do now?" leaving everyone tongue-tied unexpectedly. After a brief lull, preceptors mainly from China, fielded their questions in all earnest.

Below is an extract of the Master's responses:

"Sahaj Marg does not select. We accept anyone who comes. We do not reject because we believe those who come, come for some good. Many come for better life, relationships, etc. When our preceptors introduce Sahaj Marg, they must talk to them about two things:



- **Guaranteed spiritual progress if we do what we have to do. Meditate in the morning and in the evening. Do the cleaning. Do the practice.**
- **Meditation does not do anything for material progress but if it does then it is according to one's samskaras. As we progress by meditation and cleaning properly, we change.**

I believe before a child is born, the soul chooses who the parents should be for its evolution. The soul knows what is good. After we are born, somehow the program changes. Why? Because of our desires. Desires change the program and we suffer. With the original program, we would be liberated. When there is no desire there is no temptation, no corruption of the program and there is liberation.

It is wrong to blame circumstances. We are totally responsible for what we have. You do what you have to do. The beauty of Sahaj Marg is I don't give up. What needs to go, will fall off. It is a system to make one a perfect human being.

Once a preceptor asked Babuji about non-abhyasis. He replied that we create barriers when we say non-abhyasis. On Sunday satsanghs, only those who attend will appear before Babuji like on a TV screen. Our aim is to make all meditate for their own good. So when we are doing for others everything is right. If they are late, leave the doors open. In the West, they are guided by time. In the East, they are guided by the heart."



## Abhyasis' Insights



### **Our Experience at the Seminar** by Suntharamoorthy, Sri Lanka

**T**hirty-one abhyasis including all six prefects from Sri Lanka participated in the Asian Seminar. Of the 31, 18 were new abhyasis who saw our Master in person for the first time. The most important observation we made is the change in the attitude of not only those who went for the Seminar but also those who could not make it.

The new abhyasis who spoke about their visit to the Ashram, have created an impact on the abhyasis back home. All Sri Lankan centres now pray for Master's health every Sunday after satsangh.





## **Believe in Him** by Grace Ge (Ge Hong), Shanghai

**B**efore going to India for the Asian Seminar, I was very worried about my visa application, as this would be the third time within the past one year that I have applied for an Indian visa.

I emailed Master asking for His help. Master replied He would pray for me. I then went on to apply for the visa. During the whole process and while waiting for a reply, I was very anxious, worrying the application would be refused that I totally forgot I had already asked Master for help.

Unexpectedly, I got my visa without being asked to provide any additional information or to go through any interviews. It was only when I got the visa in hand, I recalled having asked Master's help.

At the inauguration of the Seminar, Master said, ***"Hear only what He says, see only Him, whatever you see. Do only what He tells you to do and never lose sight of Him. Follow Him. And without knowing, like a baby in the mother's arms you will be there when she gets there"***.

When I am in front of Him and look I into His eyes, I know that I believe in Him, and I am willing to follow Him, no matter where He leads me. But do I still believe in Him when I leave him?

I decided I would pray more, believe in Him more firmly, do what I should do and can do, and then leave the outcome to Him. No matter what the outcome, I know it will be the best one He will make for me.

## **A Visit To Manapakkam Ashram** by T. Kaniamuthan, Kulim

**I**t is with great pleasure I pen a few lines of my wonderful visit to the Manapakkam Ashram during the Asian Seminar. On the first day, I went around the Ashram full of excitement—the splendid garden within the grounds was picturesque. I was delighted to interact with so many abhyasis who came from various parts of the region, their warmth and kindness lifted my spirits during my days there.

The atmosphere was entirely harmonious. The spirit of brotherhood that Revered Master often talked about was seen everywhere. There were no differences felt in terms of caste, creed, religion, between the rich and the poor.

The congregation at the Ashram, I clearly understood had only one common objective and goal — to inculcate spirituality and to internalise the values taught by Master. This was apparent when abhyasis attended all satsanghs tirelessly, participated in the seminars and listened to senior abhyasis, who were great speakers, sharing their amazing spiritual experiences.

I absorbed all that was taught and realised the importance of meditation. The requirement of the system, particularly the effect of transmission, which is, the distinguishing factor compared to other systems.

I also learned of the abhyasis' desire to meet Master. They waited patiently in rain and heat outside the cottage just to get a fleeting glimpse of Him. I realised how much love and affection they have for Him. My earnest desire to meet Master in person to get his blessings finally materialised.

On 2<sup>nd</sup> December, early morning, my wife and I walked towards the cottage to meet Master for my wife's final sitting before she was made a preceptor. She later told me that as she walked into the cottage, the tranquillity of the moment was shattered by the sound of her beating heart. Moments later Rev. Master appeared and she felt her heart skip a beat. After the sitting, she experienced sudden, unaccountable blissful joy. As Rev. Master blessed us, tears of joy fell in an overjoyed state. It was truly an occasion of ultimate happiness which we will cherish forever.







## The Rewards and Possibilities *by Rose Cheryl Orbigo, Philippines*

I must admit that slight hesitation was gouging into me on the road to the Asian Seminar.

The first reason was financial consideration, as I had also attended Master's birthday in July 2010. Second, the expected heavy load at work at the same time as the Seminar. Third, I ended up as the only abhyasi from the Philippines confirmed to go to Chennai. By then, I knew I had to go.

Being the lone representative of my country was worth it — at first, if only to hear and know that our center was included in the lineup of participants, but later, and more importantly, because of the overall rewarding experience. Let me point out a few highlights:

- **The story of how French abhyasis helped the Chinese centers hold a seminar and a series of open houses was nothing short of inspiring.**
- **Sitting at Master's feet just an arm's length away and for about an hour was a rare privilege. I hadn't been this close to Master for such a long period in about five years. I was content to just sit, listen, and take notes.**
- **I conducted satsangh at the Babuji Memorial Ashram almost five years after my very first time. My experience was different this time, but my joy still came naturally.**

Being in that atmosphere among fellow abhyasis, friends, and familiar faces was both calming and rejuvenating. Towards the end of the seminar, this was my takeaway: **the possibilities are endless when the heart is open. We just need to say yes within ourselves, and the grace will naturally flow in.**

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## Tell the truth *by Purshotham Naraindas, Indonesia*

I just want to share a thought of mine after attending the recent Asia Seminar in Manapakkam, which simply put is about "Telling the Truth". I do not know why this thought came to me after the Seminar. I guess telling the truth in any situation, be it in daily general conversation or at work or at any place, at any time will make us feel lighter.

To give a small example — I get calls from various companies on a regular basis which are not relevant to our work. Earlier on, I would tell my staff to inform the person on the line that I was not at my desk or that I was out of office. Now I pick up all calls and listen to what the person has to say and answer accordingly. I say what I mean and mean what I say. I think somewhere down the line, the message was finally received loud and clear that our office does not require these services. They stopped calling. I think truth does not hurt but it actually burst our insides. Therefore the term "Truth hurts".

Master has said it many times if we lie, we lie only to ourselves. But why am I now acting on this thought, why not before, why after all these years of the practice? It's never too late for change. I will hang on to this thought and go with the flow.





## Being at His Feet by Vijeta Rathore, Korea

The joy and spirit of the Asian Seminar touched me when we heard about it. Attending it was a 'dream-come-true' for me.

As I entered the premises, I sank into the tranquility and subtlety of the environment that is the consummate manifestation of His love. Each and every aspect of the Ashram is an embodiment of Master's love for His Master, Babuji Maharaj. Seeing Him and being there is an experience that words fall short of.

Master graced us with a talk, setting very clearly the goal and the path in front of us. The goal is 'complete oneness' with Him, complete faith in Him. The path is to obey Master, do what He says, and to continue until He tells us to stop.



I was immensely happy to see brothers and sisters from across the continent assembling at the feet of our Master. The contentment of being at home was palpable in every one. The Seminar began at the right note of **'Speak with the Mouth, Listen with the Heart'**. For it opened hearts to directly receive the discussions of the Seminar.

The Seminar was very instrumental in imparting ideas and best practices from various centers. This helped in shedding prejudices and inhibitions in connecting to people. It inspired us to reach out with an open heart. Fellow abhyasis who shared their experiences imparted deep insights and inspiration. It showed how sincere and continued efforts bear fruits over time. The work of the Chinese and French abhyasis, who ignited the spark and who is now carrying it forward, has motivated us all to take steps, leaving the rest to Him. Dear Master put in us light, life, enthusiasm, hope and a deep sense of responsibility to carry on His work in whatever way we can.

## My Meeting with Master by Zong Xiangwei, Shanghai

About a year and a half before starting the Sahaj Marg practice, I used to suffer from a number of health-related problems and a quick temper. Now, my health is getting much better. My family members and other people around me see I am more even-tempered. I know all these positive changes happened because of Master.

Before going to the Seminar, I was very hesitant if I should go, as in my 60 years of life, I have never travelled to such a distant country. I was very concerned if I could bear such a long flight, and if I could adapt to the weather and food. But when I thought about Master, and all the good changes I have seen in myself, I decided I would go to see Him.



During the week of travelling and staying at the Ashram, although sometimes feeling tired, thanks to Master, I was surprisingly okay with everything!

On the evening of Master's meeting with new abhyasis, I was very lucky to sit just beside Master. I could not help touching His hand, requesting Him to touch my head, wishing that Master would bless me with peace and health. Most proudly, one night during the Seminar, I made delicious Chinese onion oil pancake for Him and had a photo taken with Him!

I pray for Master's health and long life. I will go to India again if there's an opportunity in future.







## Japanese Tea Ceremony *by Sumire Nakamura, Japan* Translated by Hiroyuki Kanae and Clarissa Beg

*Jibun ga omote mo inai koto o jibun ga okoshite to omouwanakatta.*

*I realised, I didn't really know, everything I have experienced in my life, is what I've created.*

800 years ago, green tea was brought from China to Japan by the monks who went to China to learn more about meditation. The monks started to use the tea, for the spiritual purposes of meditation, to represent simplicity. The tea was refined and called 'matcha', which was to be used in 'The Japanese Tea Ceremony'. The tea, is used to rid the heart of prejudices, and reflect the inner mind through the gestures of the ceremony's meditative movements.

It has been 40 years since I have performed a tea ceremony. When Bro. Sriram asked me to perform it during the cultural event at the Asian Seminar, I agreed. I realised it was the unfolding of one of my samskaras.

Even though I was in India, I didn't feel I was in a foreign land. I naturally slipped into the atmosphere and the environment of Manapakkam Ashram. When I was there, I realised I had many confronting issues that I was battling with, that I didn't want to acknowledge, and consequently they didn't seem to go away. It was a tough time for me.

I didn't want to be the main presenter at the tea ceremony. I just wanted to be the helper. I was used to having someone else do these things. I kept asking Sis. Clarissa, what to do, and she reacted differently than she usually would. She told me to speak directly to the people concerned with the questions I had. I found out that I didn't want to be held responsible if things didn't work out, so I wanted Sis. Clarissa to lead!

Because of these complications I created, I found myself in a familiar situation. But this time, I saw that I was running away from my responsibilities and how insensitive I was to people, all the while thinking previously I was the opposite.

Japan is a small island surrounded by water and is afraid of other countries but has copied and received many of their ideologies and accustomed itself to a Japanese-Foreign way of living. We, as Japanese, have improved on materialistic products with our 'eye for detail'; to work long hours without question, under high expectations and with perseverance.

I feel because of it, we have lost our inner human spirit. During the Seminar, I experienced many emotions I wouldn't have felt, thought or even known were inside me, had I not been asked to perform this ceremony. Evidently, for the first time, I saw and felt, that I too, came from this Japanese orientation of heart and mind that I couldn't and didn't want to previously admit to. I underwent a lot of self-awareness. Without a doubt, I now know which road to take. I'm grateful to Master for showing me the way and in having to write this article.





### *Abhyasis Say ...*

Since my first meeting with my Master, I feel like, even now, living a new life, in a new way, always under a great person's control. I love my Master, so I love my life. I am willing to see Master again and again.

***Ezhilini Mnohararajah, Sri Lanka***

I would love to attend again. Peaceful, very nice atmosphere.

***Mrinal Sharma, Singapore***

It was a refreshing experience and I felt I was being cleaned by Master himself. Met many abhyasis and shared profound thoughts on meditation.

***Jayanthi Nagappan, Melaka***

From many nations to one soul.

***Zhang Xin Yun, Kunming***

Looking forward for the next seminar. It's so delightful to see Master.

***Rupa Mahesh, Singapore***

Would love to attend again and again, as frequently as possible.

***Jitender Tiwari, Singapore***

The trip to India was physically exacting but spiritually enriching, simply put it was the love of nothingness.

***Ni Chun Yan, Shanghai***

The Ashram experience was amazing, out of the world. Everyone should be in His presence and experience it. It cannot be expressed in words. I will visit every year.

***Nitya, Singapore***

The Seminar to me was like, Stepping into Nature to be bathed in sunshine and love, like a retreat for the soul to bask in sunshine, a time to purify the soul and a place to let love take wings.

***Li Xinni, Kunming***

It was my first time to meet Master, and I am very fortunate to have become a preceptor. Now I always recall the time in the Ashram, it was so delightful and peaceful. Also, I got so much spiritual progress as I met many people who devote themselves to the *Spirit*. I feel so lucky, I am looking forward to go back again!

***Forest Lai, Shanghai***

## **ASIA PACIFIC SEMINAR**

The Asia Pacific Seminar (APAC) will be held at Awana, Genting, Malaysia.

The date is tentatively scheduled from 16<sup>th</sup>-20<sup>th</sup> June 2011.

Details will follow soon. All are encouraged to attend.