

Quarterly Newsletter (Q2 2024)

Asia Pacific Amrita Kudumbam



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AMMA'S MESSAGE

My darling children, how are you doing? Amma hopes and prays that you are all healthy and happy. In a world where our planet and people face many challenges, it is not easy to feel happy and peaceful externally. However, our inner peace depends on how we respond to situations in life. We must have reasonable control over our senses and emotions to respond wisely. This is why spiritual practices are vital. Children, you should consider spiritual practices as important as eating, sleeping, and earning money. We should remember that just as we have a physical existence, we also have a spiritual existence.

Children, a tree with deep and strong roots can withstand adverse weather. Likewise, the deeper our spiritual practices and understanding, the stronger our inner strength will be to face and overcome challenging times. Meditation, prayer, and selfless service bestow us with inner strength and peace, regardless of the experience we go through in life.

Children, take good care of your physical, emotional, and spiritual well-being. Always remember that the body is like a temple inside of which the soul or God resides. So, never abuse your body, filling it with negativities

and unhealthy food. If properly taken care of, the body and the mind will eventually enable you to be good human beings.

In this rapidly changing world, always stay rooted in your values and principles. Our spiritual journey is not about escaping reality but embracing it with love and compassion. Continue to learn, grow, and share the wisdom you gain with others.

You are all very dear to Amma. Amma is always with you. May the Divine shower grace upon you, and may you find peace and fulfilment in your hearts.

Endless hugs and kisses to all Amma's darling children.





ASIA PACIFIC SPIRITUAL RETREAT

March 29 – 31, 2024, Singapore: The last time Swāmījī (Swāmī Amṛtaswarūpānanda Puri) led a retreat in Singapore was in 1994. The day-long retreat was held in Changi Village, in an old, colonial bungalow set amidst rolling lawns and gnarled trees. Thirty years later, history repeated itself over the Good Friday long weekend. This time, the event was scaled up to include devotees from the Asia Pacific (APAC).

The venue was Changi Cove, a charming resort not far from where the first retreat had been held.

In the heart of Changi Cove stands a 150-year-old tree—the Common Pulai, as it is known locally. It is just

one of many trees dotted in and around the hotel, located in a leafy, secluded suburb in the eastern nook of Singapore. If you didn't know any better, you'd think this quaint hotel was cut off from the city. But it is only a stone's throw away from Changi Airport, a veritable metropolis consistently ranked as one of the world's best airports. Such contradictions abound in Singapore, with the juxtaposition of the colonial and the post-modern, her hybrid East-West culture, and her ongoing attempts to remain ever relevant in the face of change.

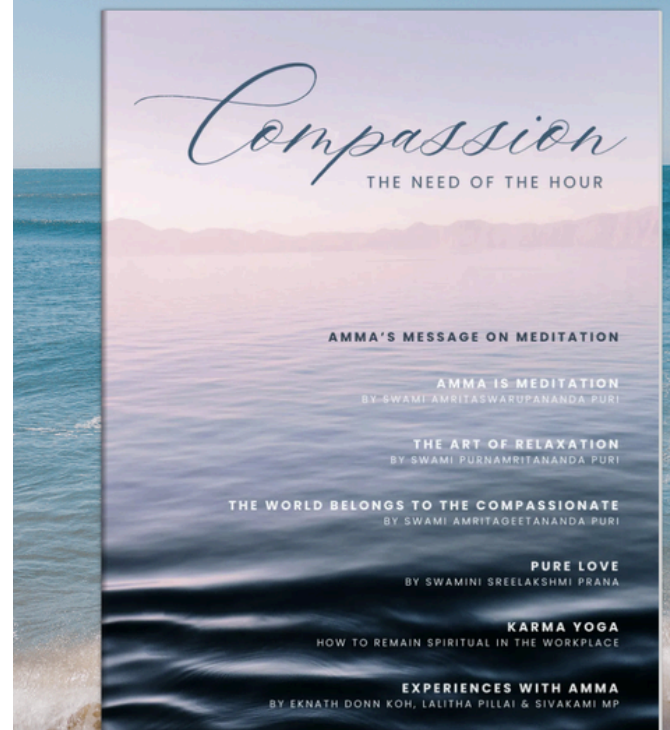
These contradictions made Singapore an ideal location for the first Asia-Pacific Spiritual Retreat,

which drew people from Eastern and Western cultures. Spirituality is as vital as food, air and water. Its teachings are timeless, and yet it must repackage itself periodically to maintain its appeal among people.

Amma says, "The spiritual path begins and ends with compassion." The theme of the retreat was 'Compassion: The Need of the Hour.' Like a leitmotif in a medley, compassion was the keynote of Swāmījī's talks: "Compassion makes humans humane... Compassion is the finest understanding that can dawn in anyone... Compassion is our essence, our true nature... Compassion is the surest way to ultimate success."

'Compassion: The Need of the Hour' was also the name of the digital souvenir magazine released to commemorate the occasion. Swamiji launched the magazine on the first morning of the retreat, and at the point of writing, it has already been accessed by readers from 27 countries across the globe.

One of the most poignant images that Swāmījī painted was that of a bent, old woman feeding birds. He said that he found this scene even more arresting than the Kanchenjunga, the backdrop of this scene and the third highest peak in the world. It reminded him of the value of 'parasparam bhāvayantaḥ' – 'acting in consideration of each another,' quoting Lord Kṛṣṇa (Bhagavad Gītā, 3.11). Kṛṣṇa states that acting with mutual consideration is the only way to prosperity for all.



▲ Digital Souvenir Magazine including Amma's message, messages from Senior Disciples of Amma and devotees



▲ Digital Souvenir Magazine launched by Swami Amritaswarupananda Puri during the opening ceremony



Working hand-in-hand is also the only way to sustain and nourish the newly formed Asia-Pacific Amṛta Kuṭumbam (Amṛta Family) or APAK. The day before the retreat, when Swāmījī presided over a meeting of coordinators from the APAC countries, he suggested ways in which Amma's children in the region could collaborate with each other. He said that APAK can be a step towards the goal of Vasudhaiva Kuṭumbakam—the world as one family—because of the many opportunities it presents to work together like members of one family.

The event had an unmistakably global feel to it. Participants came from Japan, China, Hong Kong, Malaysia, Australia and, of course, Singapore. Devotees from the United Arab Emirates, the United Kingdom and the United States of America also flew in. Online registrants included people from all these countries as well as New Zealand, Thailand, Canada, Kuwait, France, Finland, Germany, Belgium, Denmark, Iceland, Spain, Mexico and Mauritius.

APAK's multi-cultural mosaic was evident throughout the retreat. It began with a Dragon Dance, which is held to usher in good luck and blessings. The AYUDH performance featured a medley of Malay and Chinese bhajans, whereas Swāmījī's sets featured bhajans in Indian languages. His talks, in English, were translated into Chinese, Japanese, French and Spanish. The lingua franca that united everyone though was love and compassion, that signature blend of the Divine.

No doubt, the highlight of the retreat was Amma's onscreen appearance on the second evening of the retreat. She expressed happiness at seeing this gathering of onsite and online participants from around the globe. She has often said that the cosmopolitan mix of her children reminds her of a garden of variegated blossoms, its profusion of colours the mark of beauty.

Amma did something curious: gazing into the monitors in front of her, Amma seemed to be counting off each person with her index finger. Every few seconds, she would flutter her fingers, as if waving at her children, and make a gesture of embracing them. As she counted off the participants, many felt as if their hearts had been touched. Not a few retreatants were moved to tears.

The last day of the retreat dawned with a rainbow. Those who were out for their morning walks stopped, arrested by its celestial beauty. It seemed like a good omen, a portent of inclusivity and diversity, a symbol of wellness and happiness.

Though the retreat lasted only two-and-a-half-days (three-and-a-half, including the Regional Coordinators' Meeting), it left behind unforgettable memories and the lingering fragrance of spirituality. Like the venerable tree in the heart of the hotel, the retreat was centred around Amma —rooted in compassion, inspired by love, and redolent with grace.



May her wish be a commandment for all of us: "Children, may the tree of our lives be firmly rooted in the soil of love. May good deeds be the leaves on that tree. May words of kindness form its flowers, and may peace be its fruit. Let us grow and unfold as one family united in love."





AYUDH



Japan is known for its aging population. Consequently, there have been few young Japanese devotees of Amma. Until recently, there was no AYUDH in Japan.

However, following Swamiji's suggestion during the recent Asia-Pacific Spiritual Retreat, AYUDH Japan was formed and the first Zoom meeting of AYUDH Japan members was held on May 3, 2024. During this meeting, members discussed the importance of young devotees uniting to support Amma's mission. We shared our experiences with Amma, highlighting the diverse paths that led us to Amma. Despite being spread across different regions, we felt a strong sense of community and shared purpose.

To kickstart our activities, we decided to plant tulasī seeds individually in our own areas. This symbolic act not only connects us with nature but also serves as a reminder of our commitment to growth and unity. We look forward to future initiatives and projects that will allow us to contribute positively to our communities and support Amma's vision.





April 22, 2024: In preparation for **Earth Day 2024**, AYUDH Singapore dedicated a Sunday morning to educating the public at Woodlands North Plaza.

The focus was on the simplicity of growing micro-greens and repurposing kitchen waste into multipurpose bio-enzymes for washing and cleaning. Inspired by Amma's quote, "Many people talk a lot about environmental preservation, but true greatness lies in putting these principles into practice and actually doing something about it," our AYUDH team aimed to encourage practical environmental stewardship.



May 11, 2024: AYUDH members spent the day baking more than 50 eggless brownies and writing heartfelt thank you notes to celebrate **Mother's Day**. These brownies were distributed during the morning Satsang to all mothers and mother figures, honouring their contributions and expressing gratitude for their unwavering support.

June 8, 2024: AYUDH Singapore raised awareness about E-Waste management at Admiralty Hawker Centre for **World Environment Day**. This event educated residents on the proper disposal of E-Waste, attracting 65 participants, including Ms. Mariam Jaafar, Member of Parliament in Sembawang GRC. The session was particularly beneficial for elderly residents who gained valuable information on E-Waste disposal.



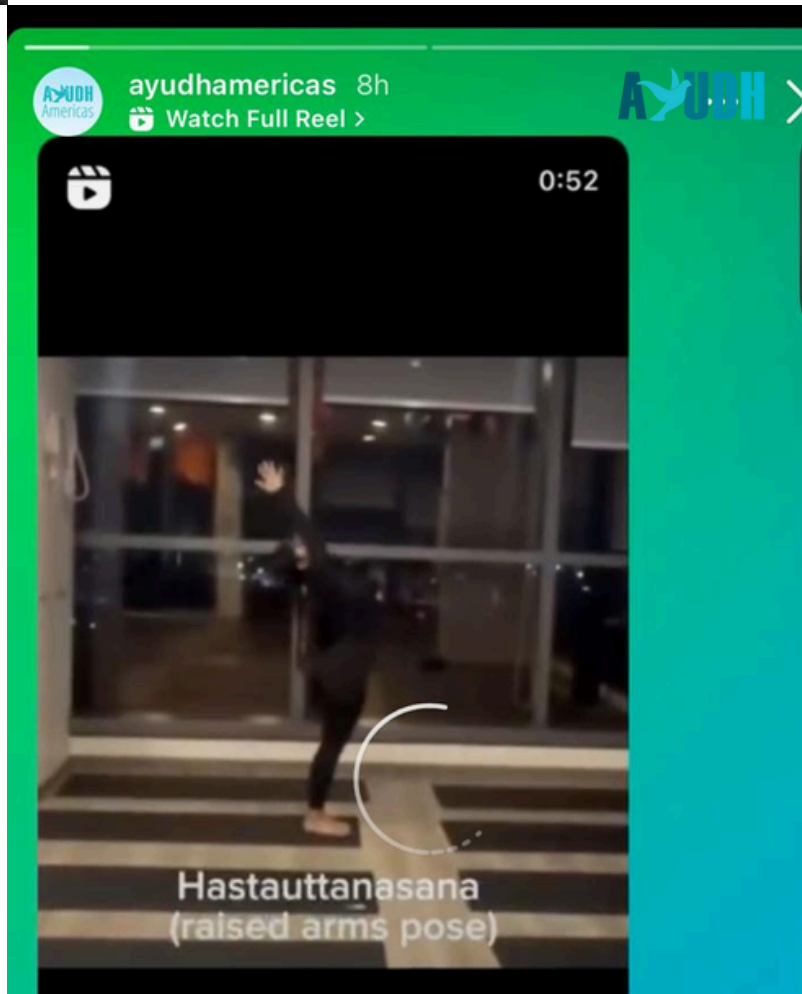
June 15, 2024: AYUDH members gathered for a day out and enjoyed a day of rejuvenation and camaraderie. The event began with yōga stretches and a morning walk in nature, followed by bhajans led by Br. Mādhavāmṛta. The day included games, laughter, and concluded with a heartwarming lunch of biryāṇi and pasta, prepared by volunteers.

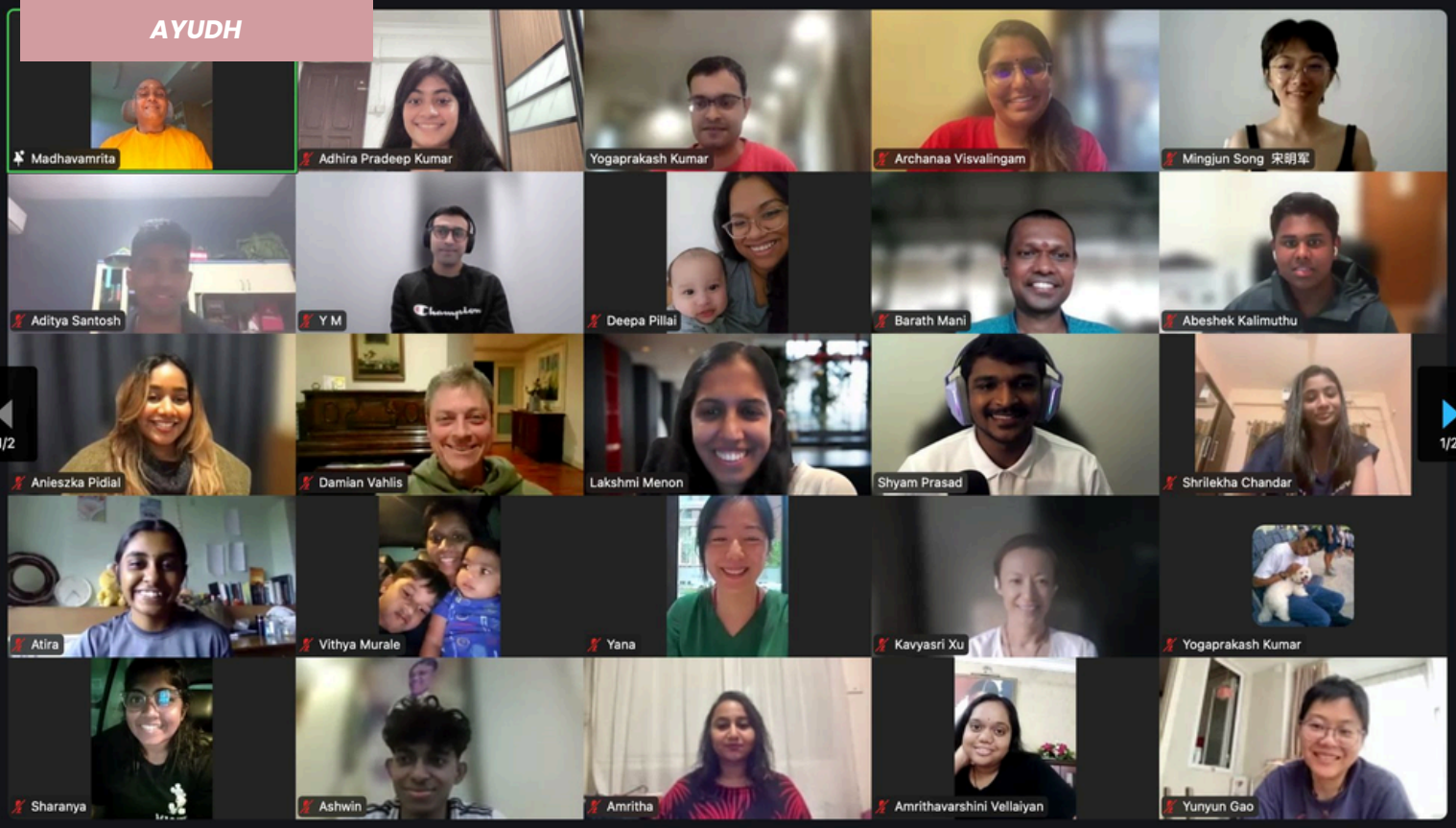


June 16, 2024: AYUDH Singapore celebrated **Father's Day** with cake and handwritten notes of appreciation for all fathers. A volunteer baked two Nutella cheesecakes, and other members wrote notes expressing gratitude for the fathers' care, provision, and teaching.



June 21, 2024: In observance of **International Yōga Day**, AYUDH began the day with Sūrya Namaskār. Encouraging global participation, the team invited other AYUDH groups to share their favourite yōga poses with the hashtag #AYUDHflowswithyōga. Inspired by Amma's words, "Every action can become yōga if done with awareness," the initiative aimed to spread the joy and benefits of yōga. This was shared widely by the AYUDH Americas team as well, much to their delight!





June 22, 2024 saw the launch of AYUDH APAK (Asia-Pacific Amṛta Kuṭumbam). This initiative was introduced during the Asia-Pacific Spiritual Retreat following a suggestion by Swāmī Amṛtaswarūpānanda Puri, who recommended that the AYUDH chapters across the APAC countries collaborate more closely.

Prior to this launch, the Asia-Pacific region had been the only one not fully integrated into the global AYUDH network. Inspired by the significant achievements of AYUDH Europe and AYUDH Americas, the APAC chapters decided to unite under AYUDH APAK to create a similar impact.

The launch event took place via Zoom. The session provided an overview of the purpose and objectives of AYUDH APAK, outlining the goals and aspirations of the initiative. Br. Mādhavāmṛta delivered a short talk, after which members joined different break-out rooms to get to know each other better and discuss future steps and initiatives.

AYUDH APAK plans to hold "AYUDH Unite," a series of monthly online Q&A sessions with Br. Mādhavāmṛta. The focus will be on fostering growth both as a unified region and within individual countries.



***If you're 15 - 35 years old
click on the link here and join
our AYUDH APAK community
for the latest updates!***



ELDERLY



Members of the **Adelaide Satsang** have been visiting elderly relatives and friends, helping them with shopping, spending time with them, and checking in regularly on them. Encouraged by the positive response, the Satsang hopes to provide more care services to the elderly in the community in the days to come.



Members of the **Hong Kong Satsang** collaborated with volunteers from the Kwun Yum Temple, Hung Hom, to distribute food packets to the elderly.



In April 2023, the **Amriteswari Foundation of Malaysia (AFM)** launched a project to distribute free vegetables to low-income families in the Klang Valley. The initiative is being conducted in collaboration with various food security organizations. When volunteers discovered that there were elderly people who were too infirm to collect the vegetables in person, AFM organized volunteers to deliver the vegetables to the homes of these elderly people. AFM has been continuing with this project since its inception.



COLLABORATIONS WITH LOCAL ORGANIZATIONS



June 9, 2024, Adelaide: M.A. Centre Adelaide enlisted the aid of the **Amicus String Quartet** to perform the melodies of Queen, a British rock band, to raise funds for 'Embracing the World,' a global network of charitable projects that the M.A. Math established. The Quartet performed at Clayton Wesley Uniting Church in Kent Town.

This is the second time the Quartet has donated its time and talents to perform pro bono for the Adelaide Satsang fundraiser.

The members of the Satsang served in various capacities to make the event a success. By Amma's grace, around 70 tickets were sold and close to AUS\$6,000 was raised for '**Embracing the World.**'





April 6, 2024: The **Divine Life Society** in Rawang invited the KL Amma Centre Bhajan Group to participate in the akhaṇḍa bhajan program.

April 17, 2024: The KL Amma Centre bhajan group participated in the Rām Navamī celebrations at Sai Darshan, Kajang. This joint celebration is part of a collaboration with the **Sai Darshan bhajan group** that has been going on for six years.

May 12, 2024: The KL Amma Centre hosted a Mother's Day Celebration in which the **Sai Darshan group** of devotees participated. Apart from paying a heartfelt tribute to Amma, the Universal Mother, participants also honoured 11 single mothers with a gift basket each.





May 12, 2024: AYUDH Singapore partnered with **Vivekananda Seva Sangh** to prepare, pack,

and distribute over 150 food packets to residents of one-room flats in Taman Jurong and Marsiling. This initiative, set to continue every Sunday afternoon, reflects volunteers' commitment to spreading compassion through sēvā.

May 22, 2024: On Vesak Day—which commemorates the birth, spiritual enlightenment, and passing away of the Buddha — AYUDH members gathered with other volunteers at the **Bo Tien Temple** to assist with various activities including bathing the Buddha, ushering visitors, and cooking for the temple community. Inspired by Amma's quote, "True happiness is when the love that is within us finds expression in external activities," the volunteers contributed to the spiritual and communal celebrations.



Ma Om White Flower Meditation (APAC Region)

Conducted by Swami Atmananda Puri

May 12, 2024 via Zoom

- Singapore/Malaysia/HK - 4:00 PM
- Japan - 5:00 PM
- India - 1:30 PM
- Australia (AEST) - 6:00 PM
- New Zealand - 8:00 PM

MEDITATION

Following the Asia-Pacific Spiritual Retreat, two Mā-Ōm – White Flowers of Peace meditation sessions were conducted via Zoom for members of the Asia-Pacific Amṛta Kuṭumbam (APAK). The first, conducted by Swāmī Ātmānanda Puri, was held on May 12, 2024, and drew about 150 participants from Australia, China, Japan, Indonesia, Malaysia, New Zealand and Singapore. The second meditation was held on June 8, 2024. Led by Br. Mādhavāmṛta, the meditation drew 113 participants from the same countries.

The response has been enthusiastic, with participants expressing delight and gratitude at being able to take part in a group meditation virtually.



The Adelaide Satsang conducts guided and silent meditations on the second and fourth Friday of every month.



April 10, 2024: During his visit to Malaysia, Br. Kamalēśwarāmṛta conducted a day-long spiritual retreat at the KL Amma Centre, which included the IAM-20 (Integrated Amrita Meditation) refresher course as well as a guided walking meditation.



Meditations are conducted monthly at the homes of various devotees. Those who cannot attend the meditations in person join these sessions via Zoom.

