

Quarterly Newsletter (Q4 2024)

# ASIA PACIFIC AMRITA KUTUMBAM



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## AMMA'S MESSAGE

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### Prayer

Children, many people ask, “What is prayer? How should we pray?” Prayer is the process that leads us from the narrow world of selfishness, arrogance and disquiet into the expansive realm of selflessness, humility and peace. Praying with an understanding of what is eternal and what is ephemeral, is true prayer.

God isn't a power that is confined within the walls of a temple or someone who controls the universe from a golden throne somewhere high up in the skies. He is the pure consciousness that permeates this universe, and which inheres in everything. We must have this awareness when we pray.

Praying merely for the sake of fulfilling our desires cannot be considered real prayer. A mind filled with desires is like a bucket full of holes.

Water poured into that bucket will drain away completely. Such a mind will never know peace and joy. However, a selfless mind has only love for God. Such a mind prays only for inner purity. Peace and joy will always illuminate such a mind.

To enjoy the full benefit of prayer, we must have the right attitude. Instead of praying only for our own needs, we ought to pray for the peace and happiness of everyone. The ideal prayer is, ‘Lōkāḥ samastāḥ sukhinō bhavantu’ — ‘May all beings in creation be happy.’

Once, Rukmiṇī, Lord Kṛṣṇa's consort, thought, “There are so many women who are rich in virtue. Yet, the Lord chose me to be his queen. It must be because I love him the most.”

As soon as this thought arose, the ego reared its head in Rukmiṇī's mind. Soon after this, the Lord went to fight a battle. After some time, Rukmiṇī noticed that there was no one else in the palace. She thought they might be out somewhere.

She reflected again with pride on the greatness of her love for Lord Kṛṣṇa. When the Lord returned from the battle, Rukmiṇī welcomed him joyously, saying "O Lord, as soon as you left, everyone in the palace went off somewhere. I couldn't find any of them here."

The Lord smiled and said, "All of them had built huts by the riverbank and were fasting and praying for my victory in battle." When she heard this, Rukmiṇī hung her head in shame.

The essence of every prayer in the world is the same: "God, I am nothing. You are everything." What does it mean? We must grow in humility and modesty. If we bow down our heads before the universal power, we will feel its presence within us. This is the principle of prayer. Prayer enables us to start living in the heart and not in the head. Then love for all creatures, moving and unmoving, will awaken within us and make life blessed.



*"God isn't a power that is confined within the walls of a temple or someone who controls the universe from a golden throne somewhere high up in the skies. He is the pure consciousness that permeates this universe, and which inheres in everything. We must have this awareness when we pray."*





## AYUDH

### ‘AYUDH Unite and Reflect’

**December 21, 2024:** For the first time ever, AYUDH APAC (Asia-Pacific) and AYUDH Americas came together online. The session, attended by youth and others from many countries all over the world, including those outside the Asia-Pacific and America, began with a guided meditation practice led by Br. Mādhavāmṛta. Br. Rāmānandāmṛta ended the meet with a rendition of ‘Abhīṣṭa Varadāyikē.’

The larger part of the meet was dedicated to discussing the topic, ‘How to Live with Amma’s Presence When You’re Not Physically With Her.’ The relevance of the topic was underscored by the awareness that most of Amma’s devotees cannot always be with her physically, and that feeling her presence isn’t contingent on being with her physically. Among the issues discussed were the nature of authentic closeness to the Guru; how to balance the desire for closeness to Amma with reverence for her;



whether or not remembrance of the Divine is quickened by sorrow and suffering alone; whether the desire to be near the Guru's physical form is attachment; practical steps that one can take to cultivate Amma's presence; how to use bhajan singing as a way of communing with the Divine; and how those who are unable to be in Amma can cope with feelings of jealousy towards those in Amma's physical presence.

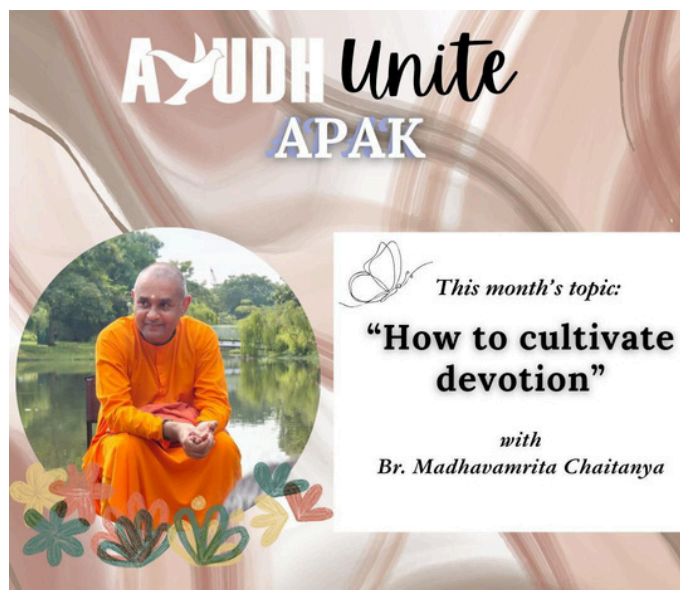
The enthusiasm of the youth was evident in the many questions they asked and in the fact that the meet extended well beyond the hour set aside for it. Many expressed a keen desire to come together more often with youth across the world to discuss spiritual topics.

**January 18, 2025:** The AYUDH Unite APAK (Asia-Pacific Amrita Kutumbam) meet was based on the theme, 'How to Cultivate Devotion.' Br. Mādhavāmṛta spoke on both why and how one can cultivate devotion. He stressed that in a world that is seeking spiritual solace through secular substitutes, devotion is ever more relevant, as it quenches the thirst that people all over the world have for love.

The meet was also attended by devotees, including youth, from outside the Asia-Pacific, including the US and South Korea. Those who attended suggested inviting people from other geographical regions as well.

**Australia** 

**November 23, 2024, Melbourne:** Members of AYUDH Melbourne spent a memorable day with Swāmī Ātmānanda at Heronswood Gardens in Dromana, Victoria. The gathering gave the Swāmī an opportunity to meet and bond with the youth and engage in meaningful discussions about future AYUDH activities. Surrounded by the beautiful scenery of the garden, participants shared inspiring conversations and experiences, and had lunch at a local café. This event launched AYUDH Melbourne. It is hoped that many such events will follow in the near future.







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## ELDERLY

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### Australia



The Adelaide Satsang is continuing to support lady Val, who is almost 90 years old, with her cushion making. Devotees help to deliver the cushions. This time, the cushions were given to Lutheran Crisis Care, which packed the cushions and other essentials for needy people.



### Singapore



**November 16, 2024:** In conjunction with Deepavali, the Festival of Lights, members of AYUDH Singapore, the youth wing of Amriteswari Society, brought light and joy to the residents of Meranti Home, a residential home for elderly and destitute men with psychiatric conditions. The youth were inspired by Amma's teachings, "The more love we give, the more our heart is filled with peace."



AYUDH Singapore presented a song-and-dance program aimed at bringing happiness to the Meranti Home residents. Interactive games added an element of fun.



The residents exuded joy and confidence, as they participated in the celebrations, singing their hearts out and dancing along to the songs.

AYUDH members then served a spread of perennial culinary favourites, including cakes, savoury curry puffs, chips and coffee packs. Seeing the joy that these simple gestures brought to the residents was a heartwarming experience, reminding everyone that even small acts of kindness can have a profound impact.







## LOCAL COLLABORATIONS

### Australia



At Christmas time, the Melbourne, Sydney, Sunshine Coast, Adelaide, Perth and Byron Bay Amma Groups provided special Christmas hampers and gifts for families in need. This is a joyful annual sēvā and a special opportunity to express Amma's love in Australia.

The **Melbourne Satsaṅg** donated Lego and other toys to Community Support Frankston, which supports vulnerable families in the Frankston municipality including Carrum Downs, where Amma's Melbourne Āśram is located.

The **Sydney Satsaṅg** collaborated with the Black Santa organization, an Aboriginal humanitarian project that provides Christmas hampers and toys to disadvantaged communities throughout Sydney. The Sydney Satsaṅg provided financial support and went out with the Black Santa team to meet people in the community to get a better idea of how they can better support the project in the future.





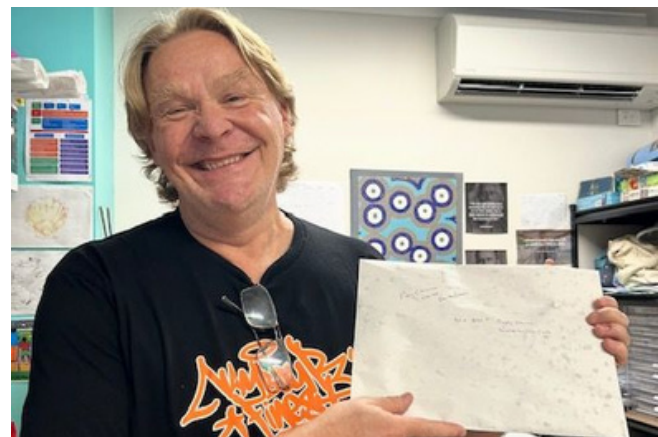
The **Byron Bay Satsaᅅ** delivered 28 hampers filled with essential food, treats and gifts to families in need. Generous donations came from the wider community, including Mullumbimby Uniting Church, Mukti Beauty Rooms, Mullum Hire, Trinkets Bead Shop, the Nia dance community, and devoted Amma followers.



The **Adelaide Satsaᅅ** made special gift packs for Indigenous patients from the Renal Ward in a major Adelaide Hospital and for Lutheran Crisis Care. The Adelaide Satsaᅅ also prepared boxes containing tubes in which tree seedlings were sown, to support a South Australian organization called 'Trees for Life.'



The **Perth Satsaᅅ** provided 32 special gift packages for clients of Naala Djookan Healing Centre, an organization that seeks to give women affected by family and domestic violence, easy access to trauma-informed therapeutic services.



The **Sunshine Coast Satsaᅅ** assisted the Nambour Community Centre by providing 30 \$100AUD grocery gift cards.







Japan

## Book Mama

**January 23, 2025, Hyogo Prefecture:** I read a book to fourth graders at a local elementary school. I selected the picture book ‘Mayu and the Ogre’ to read on this day. The story is about a clumsy ogre and Mayu, the incredibly strong daughter of a mountain witch.

I am a volunteer with ‘Book Mama,’ which reads picture books to students from first to sixth grades, twice a month. Each ‘Book Mama’ is assigned one class at each grade level and reads to a class of about 30 students for the first 10 minutes of their first period. It was the belief that raising children well requires a strong partnership among parents, the school and the community that led me to join the ‘Book Mama’ volunteer program.

As children today lead busy lives, I select books that are warm, comforting and relaxing. I hope to spread Amma’s love to the children and read with this pure intention. I pour my heart into every storytelling session, feeling grateful to the children for this opportunity.

—Tejasvini



## Earthquake Relief

**December 15, 2024, Osaka:** Amma’s devotees from the Osaka Satsang participated in a charity event to support the disaster relief of the Noto Peninsula earthquake. The victims of the earthquake, many of whom used to produce the ‘Wajimanuri lacquerware,’ a traditional Japanese craft, had been forced to give it up because of living in cramped, temporary housing. Devotees received the lacquerware from the disaster victims, helped to clean and sell it, and donated the proceeds for disaster relief.

The Noto Peninsula earthquake occurred in Ishikawa Prefecture, Japan, on New Year’s Day 2024. On September 21, 2024, heavy rains affected Oku-Noto. The region is still recovering from these natural calamities. Amma’s devotee, Srikripa, is involved in local reconstruction volunteer work and she works under the guidance of alpinist Ken Noguchi. Two other devotees, Sashvata and Prabha, also joined as volunteers.





Malaysia 

**December 26, 2024:** The KL Amma Centre Bhajan team was invited to sing at a 10-day prayer gathering at Persatuan Kebajikan Sri Sai Akshya Centre. The deeply devotional atmosphere made the singing of Amma's bhajans a truly meaningful experience.





**January 30, 2025, Rumah Panjang, Petaling Jaya:** As part of our ongoing efforts to support underprivileged families, KL Amma Centre donated school uniforms and shoes to 13 children from low-income families. The initiative aimed to ease the financial burden on families and to ensure that the children can progress on their academic journey with confidence and dignity. This act of kindness was made possible by Amma’s grace and the generous support of well-wishers.





## Mother's Kitchen

**November 24, 2024:** Amriteswari Society once again collaborated with Kampong Kapur Community Services Centre to provide a sumptuous vegetable biryani lunch to underprivileged families living in and around Kitchener Road, where there is a significant concentration of underprivileged families. Posters announcing the distribution of free lunch were put up a week before the food distribution. Many of those who came to receive the lunch-and-drink packets expressed gratitude to Amma's devotees. We were reminded of Amma's teaching that every act produces two kinds of fruits: *dr̥ṣṭa phala* ('visible fruit'), the satisfaction on the faces of beneficiaries, and *adr̥ṣṭa phala* ('invisible fruit'), the *punya* (spiritual merit) one gains from a kind deed.






## Gita Jayanti

**December 7, 2024:** As part of the Gita Jayanti celebrations, organized by the Hindu Endowments Board, Singapore, Sagar Dharan, Chairman of Amriteswari Society, was invited to deliver the Welcome Address during the Finale Session, presided over by Swāmī Satyalōkānanda, Vice-President of Ramakrishna Mission, Singapore. In his talk, Sagar Dharan shared Amma's insights into the Bhagavad Gītā, saying that it takes one mahātmā (spiritually illumined soul) to understand and appreciate fully the message and teachings of another mahātmā.

ONLINE  
**GĪTĀ PĀRĀYAṆA & SATSAṄGA**  
**FINALE SESSION 2024 (#09)**  
07 Dec 2024 (Saturday), 11:00am (Singapore, UTC+08:00)



Welcome Address (Session #9):  
**Śrī Sagar Dharan ji** (Chairman, Amriteswari Society)  
Session Lecture : **Śrī Swāmī Satyalokananda ji** (Vice-President, Ramakrishna Mission, Singapore)




**Programme:**

- Invocation
- Welcome Address
- Śrīmad Bhagavad Gītā Pārāyaṇa
- Session Lecture
- *Śānti* mantras
- Q&A

**How to join:**

- Join for the online Parayan sessions by registering, just once, at: <https://tinyurl.com/GitaParayana2024>
- Chanting materials and access details will be emailed to all registrants by chanting session day morning.
- Programme is Free. Register ASAP ! Do NOT miss!

Event organised by:



[www.gitajayanti.org.sg](http://www.gitajayanti.org.sg)







## MEDITATION

Amma says, “Meditation is as precious as gold. If along with our meditation we develop compassion, it is like gold with a fragrance, something priceless and utterly unique.”

Amma has bequeathed to humanity two powerful forms of meditation: the ‘Ma-Om Meditation’—which teaches us how to synchronize our inhalations and exhalations to these sacred sounds—and the ‘White Flowers of Peace Meditation’—aimed at calming the agitation of the mind through a visualizing of world peace.

Devotees from APAK meet online monthly to practise both these forms of meditation. Over the last three months, the meditation sessions were held on November 17, 2024, December 22, 2024, and January 12, 2025. Swāmī Ātmānanda and Br. Mādhavāmṛta took turns to guide the meditation, which were well-attended. Instructions in Chinese and Japanese apart from English ensure that the simple meditation instructions are accessible to all in the region.

Asia Pacific Amrita Kutumbam

*Ma Om White Flower  
Meditation (APAC Region)*  
Conducted by Br Madhavamrita Chaitanya

**Ma Om White Flower Meditation (APAC Region)**  
November 17, 2024 via zoom  
Time:

- Singapore/Malaysia/Hong Kong/China/Bali 04:00 PM
- Japan 05:00 PM
- Australia 07:00 PM
- New Zealand 09:00 PM

Asia Pacific Amrita Kutumbam

*Ma Om White Flower  
Meditation APAC Region*  
Conducted by Br Madhavamrita Chaitanya

**Ma Om White Flower Meditation  
(APAC Region) January 12, 2025 via zoom**  
Time:

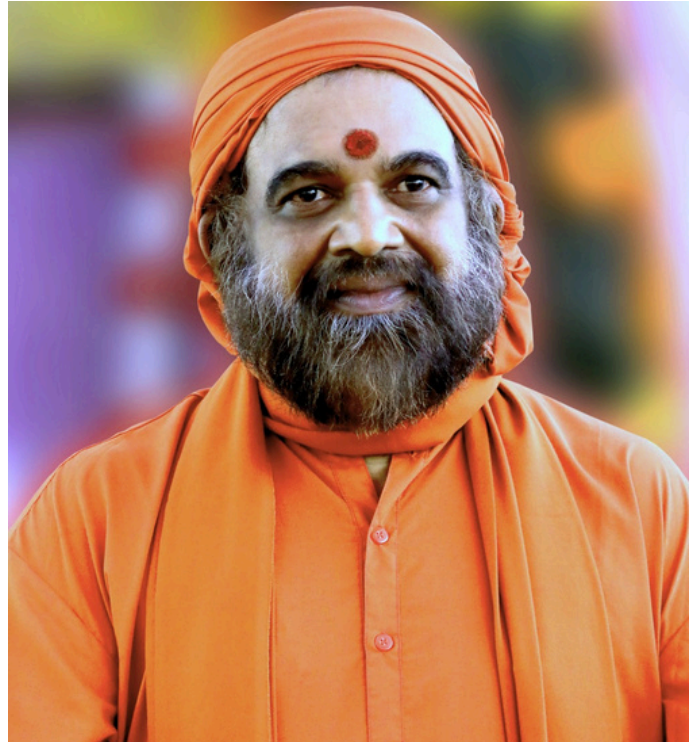
- Singapore/Malaysia/Hong Kong/China/Bali 04:00 PM
- Japan 05:00 PM
- Australia 07:00 PM
- New Zealand 09:00 PM
- Kochi 1:30 pm





## Spiritual Retreat with Swāmī Pūrṇāmṛtānanda

**November 22 – 24, 2024, Tokyo:** Swāmī Pūrṇāmṛtānanda led a three-day retreat in the Hachioji Forest, located in a suburb of Tokyo. The retreat included discussions on the importance of the Lalitā Sahasranāma as well as questions and answers with the Swāmī. The day started with the morning archana, IAM meditation, Amrita Yoga, and a silent meditation. There were also cultural programs and a dance meditation. The retreat ended with a Saraswatī Pūjā.





## Spiritual Retreat with Swāmī Pūrṇāmṛtānanda

**December 1, 2024:** Swāmī Pūrṇāmṛtānanda led a day-long spiritual retreat at Changi Cove. More than 200 devotees—including both 114 onsite and 93 online participants from Australia, Canada, China, Finland, France, Germany, India, Japan, New Zealand, Spain, UK, USA and Singapore—attended the retreat.

Swāmī Pūrṇāmṛtānanda spent an hour guiding participants through steps to a meditative state. This was followed by a ‘flute meditation,’ which filled the space with divine vibrations. Later in the evening, Swamiji took the retreat participants for a meditation by the beach. While the walk to the beach and back was revitalizing, the sounds of nature filled our hearts with joyful silence. Everyone sat quietly as the waves gently lapped the shore and the sounds of birds and the wind made for perfect meditation companions. Even a sole bell that rung intermittently from a boat close by added its own melody to the moment.



The retreat also included a talk on the nine forms of the Divine Mother, as well as a question-and-answer session. The retreat culminated with the heartfelt singing of bhajans. The retreat was manna for the soul, a reminder of the rejuvenating power of sādhanā (spiritual practices).

