

SMSF Newsletter

Volume II No.4-2007

SMSF Newsletter is a quarterly newsletter that will provide updates, announcements and notifications on SMSF activities and events.

In words of our Rev. Master,
"This publication will essentially focus on the spiritual needs of human beings, how they are being or trying to be fulfilled by the Sahaj Marg philosophy and practice ..."

Archives of these newsletters will be available on SMSF website
<http://www.sahajmarg.org>

For suggestions on the newsletter, contact
Smsf.newsletter@sahajmarg.org

Featured in this issue

Spiritual training: CREST Bangalore hosted its fourth batch from November 18 to December 1. We provide an update on this program. STP 2007 is currently underway in CREST. We feature this program.

Health: We cover the medical center activities organized by Free Medical Centre of Manapakkam, and Satkhol.

Retreat Centres: We feature SPURS ranch retreat centre and its upcoming programs.

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**Best wishes for a
HAPPY NEW YEAR
2008 !!!**
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Rev. Master at CREST, Bangalore during the fourth training session

Fourth Batch at CREST Bangalore

We will try to put in words the experiences we have had at the CREST IV BATCH PROGRAM. The Center for Research Education Sadhana and Training (CREST) has been prepared by Master for all abhyasis around the world and we encourage each of you to seriously consider this wonderful seminar. Each of the Delegates would like to express our heart felt appreciation to Master, Director R. Jagannathan, and the entire CREST Staff for an exceptional educational and spiritual program.

Around fifty abhyasis from nineteen different countries were present. The feeling of a small United Nations of abhyasis, all at peace and one with Master existed during the entire seminar. CREST catered to all aspects of existence: intellectual inquiry, spiritual practice, physical service and communion with Master. This course

was conducted under the ancient Gurukula concept, with trainees living under ashram conditions, providing for a comfortable life in a spartan-setting, without luxury, but spiritually enriched.

CREST is located on the outskirts of Bangalore in a small village known as Kaggalipura far away from all the hustle and bustle of the city. The CREST site is almost like a resort surrounded by an orchard of chickoo and coconut trees. The ambience is quite intimate with a meditation hall which is an open structure surrounded by Master's cottage, dining hall and kitchen, Director's residence, dormitory, classroom, library, and administration office.

The compound is like the friendly neighborhood where the focus is Master's activities; whenever they opened the door of the cottage

CREST Centres are resident schools where abhyasis in batches of 50-100 undergo intensive training for one month. First training took place in August 2006, second during Dec 17 to 29 2006 and third during May 20 to June 1 2007. Interested Abhyasis / Prefects may propose a subject and deliver a lecture at a CREST training seminar. Application forms can be downloaded from <http://www.sahajmarg.org/welcome/crest/CREST-FacultyApplication.doc> and emailed to crest.faculty@sahajmarg.org.

Topics

- Character Development, How We Communicate With Each Other?
- Environmental Consciousness and Spirituality
- Spiritual Influences in the Medieval Times in Europe
- Study of Meditation and Other Self-development Techniques for Effective Management
- Architecture in the Light of Spirituality
- Organizational Change and Spirituality
- Para Bhakti of the Gopis in Light of Sahaj Marg
- Patanjali's Ashtanga Yoga and Sahaj Marg
- Pramanas, Means of Valid Knowledge in the Indian Philosophy and Sahaj Marg
- The Ego and How to handle it in Spirituality

everyone rushed to visit him. As mentioned earlier the setup is similar to that of a Gurukula concept where the disciples live for a period of time with the Guru to obtain his teachings. We can perceive the atmosphere that Master has created; it is as if a dome had been put over the ashram full of transmission. Following the daily routine creates a discipline in our practice.

Master came out and sat on the porch of his cottage on some evenings and personally conducted three Satsanghs. Several times he came out in his golf cart and shared his views about the lecture/presentation given that day, interacting with kids and blessing them with his walking stick.

Director R. Jagannathan skillfully introduces each and every lecturer and wraps up their fantastic presentations. The themes of the lectures were of a wide range of interest in this batch.

As one of the presenters pointed out, valid knowledge can be obtained directly from the Guru. Only when the connection is established with the Guru do we receive pure, unaltered knowledge. Unlike other batches, Master this time did not deliver a

valedictorian speech instead he requested Brother Patrick Fleury to give the speech.

Having gone through the course, we perceive Master's intentions of imparting not only knowledge about the system of Sahaj Marg but also make us a complete human being by exposing to us how Sahaj Marg influences all spheres of life, thus bringing an equilibrium and balance in our lives. Just like a father desires for his son to become a knowledgeable and successful human being in this world, Master looks after his abhyasis the same way. The lectures making the most impression on the delegates/students were the ones that touched the heart of the abhyasis and evoked the feeling of being one with the Master.

All delegates expressed gratitude for all that Rev. Master, Director R. Jagannathan, and the CREST Staff have done for us, for giving us this wonderful opportunity to grow and see Sahaj Marg from a different perspective. It has been an invaluable experience that we wish and invite everyone to participate in this program.

Source: Rob Klinger & Vikas Saxena



*STP 2007 underway at CREST, Bangalore***About STP**

Scholars Training Programme (STP) is a yearly program supported by SMSF where selected abhyasis from around the world travel to India for a period of around a month to be trained in many aspects of Sahaj Marg.



(above) Scholars of STP 2007 at CREST during Christmas

The 2007 - 2008 International Scholarship Training Programme (STP) is currently underway at CREST, Bangalore. We have 25 scholars from 17 countries and 4 different continents, and translation available into six languages: Spanish, French, Russian, Farsi, Indonesian and Chinese. The scholars have been warmly and lovingly welcomed by our brothers and sisters at CREST, and feel blessed to be the first of the STP to have the opportunity to study here. For many of the scholars, it is a first experience of being together with abhyasis from so many different countries. There has been a spirit of communication and brotherhood, and an amazing ability to communicate where the limitations of common language have been surpassed with simplicity and understanding.

A defining characteristic of this group has been an openness and flexibility: a willingness to change, to discover new things, and to involve themselves fully in what is on offer here. In this way the

whole course of study has been a kind of volunteer work. Scholars have worked with commitment and discipline to absorb and understand: asking questions, taking part in personal reflection and reading, and of course working in the gardens and kitchens of CREST as part of the programme.

The daily programmes have drawn to a close with the charged atmosphere of 'He, the Hookah and I'. It seems that this opportunity to discover the depths of what Sahaj Marg and our beloved Master are able to offer is being experienced fully and joyously by those present.

When asked to describe what they have experienced here, many scholars have expressed not only a broadening of their knowledge of Sahaj Marg, but also a deepening: a way of feeling, understanding and being that has brought them a new condition they had not expected or known before. One scholar described it as a 'new level of connection, like a wireless signal which I

thought was connecting before, but is now much stronger’.

On Christmas Eve all were delighted by our Iranian ‘Santa Claus’ wearing a dhoti and a Christmas hat and repeating ‘ho, ho, ho’ with much vigour, who distributed presents and laughter to all present. He was maybe the first Muslim Santa to take on the role! On December 25th the scholars were joined by brothers and sisters from Bangalore, who shared in a multicultural performance featuring songs, dance and poetry drawn from the rich cultural heritage represented here. There was a real family atmosphere, the whole campus was lit with candles and all present spent some time in the open heart of Master’s cottage where we were reminded of His constant presence with us here.

The group has also visited the Bangalore city ashram in Banashankari, Mysore and Lalbhag Park, taking a group photograph under ‘Master’s tree’, which He has referred to as his ‘Big Brother’.

The group has been constantly mindful of our beloved Master’s presence in Europe, and has enjoyed hearing reports and seeing photographs of His visit there. The scholars will board the bus on 28th of December back to Chennai full of anticipation and wonder at the possibility of meeting Him there

After arriving in Manapakkam, the STP 2007-2008 will spend one more week together experiencing the ashram life while Master is there, before returning to their respective countries to absorb and share the experiences they have lived here.

Source: Anna Dearden



SPURS Retreat Ranch for the Americas, Austin, TX

SPURS Retreat Ranch Update - 04 Oct 2007

The information on SPURS is available on the web at: <http://www.sahajmarg.org/spurs>.

Abhyasis may now submit the participation requests online at <http://www.sahajmarg.org/spurs>. Once the requests are processed, the abhyasis will receive a confirmation along with a welcome package that contains detailed information on the program and the facility

- The Retreat Program is open to abhyasis who have maintained regularity with their practice for 2 years or more
- The retreat will accommodate up to 20 abhyasis at a time.
- The batches will be separated by Men and Women.
- The months for Men are Jan, Mar, May, Jul, Sep, Nov
- The months for women are Feb, Apr, Jun, Aug, Oct, Dec
- Abhyasis may stay from 3 to 30 days.
- Abhyasis coming for the 3 day program will do no activities at the ranch.
- Abhyasis who wish to make donations may do so via cheques to SMSF on arrival at SPURS.
- Transportation to and from the Airport to SPURS may be requested in the participation request form.

Please e-mail austin@sahajmarg.org for any questions or information.

SPURS Retreat Ranch is a Sahaj Marg Spirituality Foundation Retreat Center located in Austin, Texas. This facility was opened for participation on 4th September 2007.

It is located amidst the serene surroundings of the Texas Hill Country in an atmosphere that facilitates introspection and reflection and provides a unique opportunity for abhyasis to "retreat" from the daily life, focus on the depth of their spiritual practice during their stay and bask in the atmosphere that Rev. Master has created.

The SPURS Retreat Center, located in Austin, USA opened for participation on 4 Sep 2007. Since then the facility has been fully operational and the retreat program has been in full swing.

In a world where we long for an atmosphere that is conducive for spiritual growth where we can lose ourselves from the daily life for a period

of time to focus on our spiritual practice, and refresh and rejuvenate ourselves, the SPURS Retreat Center offers an excellent facility where Rev. Master has created a subtle and spiritually charged atmosphere in serene natural surroundings.

The Retreat Center now has a resident preceptor and care takers. A library is available at the facility with books and material on a variety of subjects ranging from Mission literature, books on Spirituality, Religion, Philosophical thoughts from around the world, Science, Arts and Self-Development. The facility also consists of a "Sanctuary" which is a place that Rev. Master has created where one or two abhyasis at a time can go and lose themselves in deep meditation without any external distraction. Retreatants prepare their own food during their stay here with the available ingredients at the kitchen - simple, vegetarian, nourishing and in conformance with the nature of the retreat. Retreatants can stay for a minimum of three nights up to





30 days. Those staying for just the 3 nights spend their time typically in silence with no reading or other activities. They spend time meditating, and going deep within themselves in reflection and introspection. Those staying longer than 3 nights may read in the library and participate in some light maintenance work at the retreat center.

About 25 retreatants have participated in the retreat so far. Invariably the retreatants have expressed that their participation has made them regular in the daily practice. Many have expressed the sentiment that they found it refreshingly easy to meditate for a long time. They have expressed the ability to be in remembrance, a heightened sensitivity to their inner condition, new meanings revealed from the literature, removal of sadness and bitterness, and a sense of peace that they have never felt before. They have also expressed a renewed affirmation of the Goal of Life and a renewed enthusiasm for the same.

Retreat Program and stay at SPURS

- The accommodation will be simple consisting of bunk beds and mattresses. Abhyasis are requested

to bring linens, towels and pillows per their individual needs.

- Food will be simple, and attended to by the retreatants themselves. The kitchen at the ranch will contain the required supplies.
- There will be no training activities at SPURS.
- There will be a library containing Mission literature and books on several subjects.
- There will be a resident prefect at SPURS available for sittings if required.
- Retreatants may choose to participate at Satsanghs that will be held on Sunday. No other satsanghs will be held during the week.
- Visitors are not permitted at SPURS without prior permission of the SPURS Management.
- Abhyasis are encouraged to participate as individuals rather than groups in order to promote the true "retreat" nature of the stay.

Source: Br. Sai Krishna

Free Medical Centres (FMC) at Manapakkam, Satkhol and Allahabad have been undertaking many activities towards imparting medical services to the needy. Medical Camps are regularly held in Madurai.

Sahaj Marg Physicians Group (SMPG)

SMPG is an initiative involving physicians, medical students, residents, nurses and others in the medical community to offer medical services to the needy through SMSF Medical Centers. As part of this initiative, a database of names of the physicians from all branches of medicine has been completed. A group email address has been set up - smpg@sahajmarg.info.

Source and SMPG Contact is Murthy Gokula (rgokula@hotmail.com or murthyg@msu.edu).

Medical Centre News

Free Medical Centre, Chennai

The Free Medical Centre has treated a total number of 7421 out-patients for the quarter July to September 2007

General medicine

Department	No of Patients	Panel of Doctors
General medicine	5854	Dr. U. Ravindran Dr. R. Sulochana Dr. S. Sabithakumari Dr.N. Ethiraj Dr. Palaniappan Dr. G. Jaya Prasanthi

Speciality Clinics

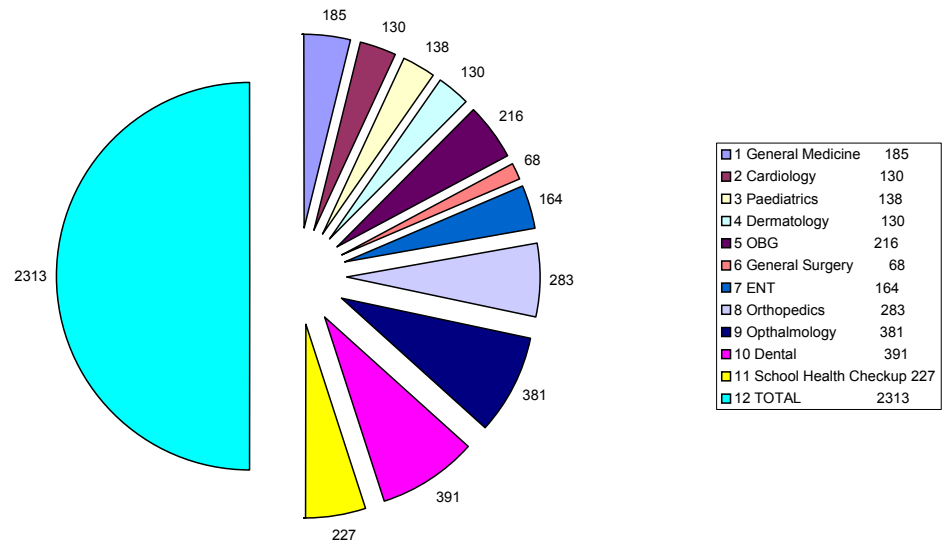
Department	No of Patients	Panel of Doctors
Dentistry	286	Dr. Swati N. Bhagat Dr. Jagadish Kumar Dr. T.S.R. Anjaneyulu
Dermatology	193	Dr. M. Jayaraman
Gynaecology	40	Dr. B.Thripura Sundari
Homeopathy	878	Dr. S.Balaji Jayasankar Dr. Malathy Mohan Dr. S. K. Ram Subramaniam. Dr. Sudha Jagadish
Ophthalmology	112	Dr. Harshitha Bakshi.
Paediatrics	58	Dr. B.I. Sasirekha Dr.Natwar Sharma
Total	1547	

FMC has served 20 in-patients for the quarter July 07 to September 07.

Supporting Team

Staff		Volunteers	
Dr. S. Sabithakumari	K. Thenmozhi	V.Rajapurna	D. Rajeswari
R. Rathi	S.Thangam	A.Radhakrishnan	

CASES TREATED AT SATKHOL SPECIALIST CAMP DURING SEPTEMBER 2007



DENTAL CASES TREATED IN SPECIALIST CAMP AT SATKHOL DURING SEPTEMBER 2007

