

Reflections On My Travels...

INDIA



By Michael J Tamura



WHY INDIA?

**If you want to know where you are going, where you will end up,
you have to go back to where you began.**

You could say I was destined to go there. I've known for years that one day India would call me and I would go to her to fulfill a part of my destiny. The only question was, when?

Last April, a pair of remarkable women answered that question for me. They asked if I would consider coming to India to teach and help awaken souls there. I knew, then, that my time had come.

One of the two visionaries that invited me, Padmini Ramesh, is the

Founder and Director of the Annanagar Pranik Healing Home as well as Co-Founder of e4a, the sponsor organization for my India events. She is an extraordinary healer and teacher, a devoted wife and mother, and at once, a traditional Indian woman and a revolutionary pioneer. The other trailblazer, Wilja Witcombe, is Padmini's business partner and Co-Founder of e4a. Internationally known as a business consultant she helps small to medium enterprises in developing countries, while she passionately



Opening Puja

I light the ghee-soaked wicks of the puja lamp to open the seminar event in the morning with Rajini assisting me.

SCENES



Scenes From Chennai

TOP: Vegetables for your cooking pleasure! Colorful display on the streets of Mylapore district of Chennai.

MIDDLE: I'm enjoying every delicious morsel during breakfast at the hotel.

BOTTOM: Healers at Padmini's Pranic Healing Home listening to my talk.

pursues her study and practice of alternative healing, reincarnation and past-life regression therapy. It was the great work of this dynamic duo and their staff and volunteers who make up e4a ("Energy For All") that paved the path for me to revisit the vast treasures of wisdom and power safeguarded in this ancient land of mystics, sages and saints. For this, I am ever so grateful.

Before I accepted Padmini's and Wilja's invitation, however, I knew this was not to be just a simple hop over to another country to teach a new group of students. Not only would I end up traversing 14 time zones around the globe and rack up 67 total hours of driving, flying and layovers just to reach my destination, but I knew I

would be committing myself to completing a journey begun lifetimes ago. India's destiny and my own were inextricably intertwined. She called to me to remember so that I could help usher in the new energy she needed to fulfill *her* destiny.

When Jesus' disciples asked him, "Tell us how our end will be," he said, "Have you already found the beginning, then, that you seek for the end? For where the beginning is the end will be. Blessed is the one who stands at the beginning: that one will know the end and will not taste death."

As I prepared to travel to India, I found myself returning to several "beginnings" tracing back to previous incarnations there. Of



Look at the orbs in this photo!

Michael signing copies of the Indian edition of his book, *You Are The Answer*.

them, two were foremost in my awareness: That of having been Buddha's disciple, personal attendant, and guardian of the master's teachings and that of being the disciple that Jesus sent to India to teach, heal and establish the message of the resurrected Christ some two thousand years ago. From one lifetime to the other, I was to help create a bridge to span the gap between renunciation and resurrection, between Buddha's gift of the science of awakening and Jesus' gift of the science of eternal life. What I wasn't aware of prior to my trip was that by realizing the fulfillment of those two lifetimes, I would also be opening the door to a new and joyous celebration of life and Maitreya's coming gift to humanity of the science of universal abundance. I now know that in the coming times, we are to return to this ancient cradle of civilization for the birthing of a radically new society.

Atma

Namaste!

Hari Om!

The Divinity within me welcomes the Divinity within you - we are the same Spirit. There is nothing but God, The All. With one of these two greetings, the Indian people greeted and welcomed me throughout the seventeen extraordinary days during which I had the great fortune to teach, heal and live among them. Of course,



almost every Sanskrit word - even every syllable - has many meanings. *Namaste*, for example, is made up of *namah* and *te*. *Namah* can mean "to bow" and *te* means "to you." In common daily use, *namaste* is a respectful greeting. Yet, it connotes a reverence to the indwelling spirit within each person. *Atma* can mean our innermost true self that is beyond all phenomena. So, as we greet one another with *Atma Namaste*, we are in essence saying, "I welcome and revere the true spirit within each of us - we are that same spirit."

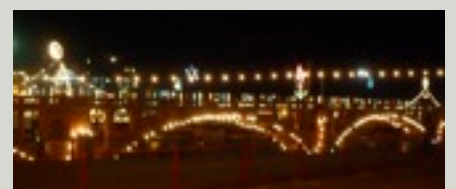
Hari is considered to be the 650th name of Lord Vishnu, or more generally of God, and means "the one who steals or takes away." When we are devoted to God, God removes the veils of illusion from our eyes that we may realize truth and become free of the wheel of rebirth. *Om*, of course, is the primordial cosmic vibration, the source from which all of creation sprang forth. Thus, *Hari Om* as a mantra and a greeting serves to validate that there is nothing but God - and, once again, that we are all one and the same being.

We all long for the profound peace and bliss of intimate contact. Yet, we cannot begin to experience that with one another until we are willing to realize the oneness of our spirit and surrender the barriers we've erected in our attempts to protect ourselves from each other. The more we come to realize that there is nothing but God, the more That Which Is All removes from our mind's eye all that obscures that

ultimate truth. This journey of our experience, discovery and realization we call our spiritual awakening, healing, and growth. One of India's invaluable gifts to us is this greeting that reminds us daily to validate Spirit and to always communicate spirit-to-spirit.

First Impressions: India's Gift

Just after 10 o'clock Indian Standard Time on Saturday, February 20th, 2010, I stepped out of Singapore Airline's Airbus 777-300 ER onto Indian soil for the very first time in this lifetime. Immediately, I was struck by two things. First, the India I saw, as a country and as a people, lived in the midst of bridging vast dichotomies. Second, was that the ancient spiritual heritage of India would provide the basis for her to transform herself into a new nexus for global collaboration and progress. As India learns to gracefully bridge the gap between ancient tradition and cutting edge invention, the old and the young, the family and the individual, men and women, spirituality and commerce, the poor and the wealthy, religion and science, and technology and art, we will return to this cradle of civilization to midwife the birth of a new kind of



society. This will be India's next gift to the world.

No Time for Jet Lag

No sooner than I had collected my two checked bags from the baggage carousel at the Ana International Airport in Chennai, I



faced a smiling Indian man handing me a bouquet of Spring flowers while taking the luggage trolley handle out of my grip. From that moment on, for the next 17 days, my transportation, nourishment, and general well-being were in the hands of my various Indian hosts and hostesses. Since the tightening of airport security the world over, I've never been welcomed by anyone prior to exiting the baggage claim area. Yet, here was Sampath, one of the members of my greeting committee who used his credentials as a commercial airline captain to enter the restricted area to welcome and assist me. Before I knew exactly what was happening through the delirium of 67 hours of travel to reach Chennai, I was whisked off to a world outside the confines of

airports, airplanes, and transit hotels. Now, Narasimhan, Bina and Arup joined forces with Captain Sampath to navigate me safely to their awaiting vehicles through the high seas of bodies, cars, motorcycles, bicycles, rickshaws and the deafening noise that only a population of nearly 1.2 billion people could produce. My luggage and I then found ourselves in the quiet air conditioned comfort of a small SUV heading presumably toward my hotel. After a short drive (at this point anything less than 13 hours at a stretch is short) I find myself being escorted into the lobby of the Hotel Savera in Chennai. I stand there looking around the hotel environs while Narasimhan and Sampath check me into the hotel and get me my room key. Next, I notice that the five of us are standing in the middle of my hotel room and the clock ticks toward midnight. Each of them offer to procure for me everything from hot tea in my room to a full dinner at a nice restaurant with great enthusiasm and radiant smiles. I realize I'm experiencing the mobile version of the legendary Indian hospitality. At this point, however, all I wanted was a hot shower, a cool room and a warm bed. They promised to be at my



service in the days to come and left me to rest. It was a wonderful way to arrive in a new land. My adventure in India had begun.

To be continued on following pages.



First Day

To my delight, I awoke fairly refreshed at 6:30 am Indian Standard Time after a five-hour coma. I naively believed that I had three full days to rest, acclimate and prepare before my first scheduled event on Wednesday. After all, there was a chance that jet-lag could still sneak up on me. Flights get delayed, why not jet-lag? Nonetheless, I looked forward to meeting with Padmini for a relaxing lunch at one of the nice hotel restaurants during which we would go over plans for the coming week. At least that's what I remembered her saying on the phone, "I'll meet you at the hotel at 11 am for lunch." Of course, I had no idea how things worked in India!

After an hour of yoga in my room and a shower, I headed down for my complimentary hotel breakfast buffet. I figured it would be a continental breakfast plus perhaps some eggs and fruit, if I got lucky. I hadn't yet realized what it meant to eat in India either: The breakfast buffet offered some 15 - 20 different selections of vegetarian and non-vegetarian Indian hot and cold dishes along with juices, fruits, cereals, pastries, and both a make-it-to-order Indian pancake and an omelet chef ready to serve.

When I got to the restaurant, Oxana, one of my healing apprentices and a medical doctor, had flown out a couple days earlier from Hawaii to participate in the India events and was already enjoying her exotic breakfast, jet-lag, and growth period, so I joined her at her table. It was great to see

a familiar face on my first morning halfway around the world from home! Catching up with Oxana, I dipped the white, sponge-like "idli" a type of steamed rice-flour bread, into the delectable South Indian *aviyal*, a saucy, coconutty concoction with exotic vegetables, like "drumsticks," snake-gourd, elephant yam, and other more common ones like carrots and beans, along with curds, coconut, curry leaves, and other spices. Then, there were other yummy gravy-soupy dishes of various colors, textures and flavors like *sambar*, *daal* curries, and coconut chutney to scoop up with *naan*, *roti*, and *parathas*. I also enjoyed the various *paneer* dishes - Indian style cottage cheese cubes marinated and grilled or cooked in various other sauces. The *murgh* (chicken) kebabs and beet *halva* hit the spot, too. And, the yoghurt and *lassi* (yoghurt drink) were delicious. California might boast happy cows producing good cheese, but you can't top the yoghurt from India's sacred cows!

My culinary strategy was to try a little taste of everything to see what I could have that didn't require a fire extinguisher on hand. Well, by the second day, I surrendered. Forget the extinguisher. I put the Indian fire department on my speed dial. Asking for "not spicy" meant absolutely nothing to anyone. "Does this contain chili peppers at all?" I would ask the waiter or cook. "This dish has no chili peppers at all," he would answer with great conviction. "Are you sure?" "Yes, of course!" One taste

and I was speed dialing the entire fire department. Once I even ordered a mac and cheese just to avoid chili peppers for one meal. But, to my great amazement - and amusement - it, too, had hot jalapenos!

Once I was done with breakfast, it was time to meet with Padmini for lunch. Well, that's what it seemed like in India - the end of one meal signifies the beginning of the next! I did not go hungry.....not for a minute.

When I came back down to the hotel lobby to meet Padmini, she was there with her delightful daughter, Indira, and another couple, Savitha and Raj. She told me that we are all invited to have lunch at one of the healer's homes, but had a few minutes before the driver would pick us up.

"Have you ever had a parrot reading?" She asked. And the days adventures began.

Padmini and entourage led us to a small dark-skinned Indian man with three white horizontal stripes across his forehead and a circle with a dot in the center over his third eye sitting in front of the fanciest restaurant in the hotel. (The lines and circle make up the particular *tilaka* that meant that he was a devotee of Shiva). He's playing with a green parrot. Indira sits in front of the parrot and the man to go first so that I get to see how it's done. The man turns out to be a card reader. He tells the parrot to pick a card out of the stack to represent Indira. The

parrot looks at Indira, turns around and picks a card off of the top of the stack, considers it, and then tosses it over to the side. He picks up another one. No, not this one either. Then, another and another. Finally, the parrot settles on the fourth card and takes it over to the reader. The reader tells the parrot to go take the card to Indira and turn around three times in front of her. The parrot shrugs and follows the reader's instruction. I think it was a prayer or getting a blessing or something before the reading. The reader then takes the card out of the thin jacket it's held in and shows it to us. It's one of the Hindu deities. It's like the Indian version of the "Angels and Saints" cards. He proceeds to give Indira a 5-minute reading.

He was actually quite good. He had two guides standing behind him working with him. He brightened up considerably as I looked at who he was and how he was reading. It seemed that he normally didn't get much recognition or validation from most people - tourists generally took him for entertainment value rather than for real communication. This time, he had several healers and a clairvoyant paying attention to what he did and said. So, he was warmed up by the time I sat in front of him.

I had fun with the parrot. He got pretty rambunctious throwing the first several cards into the reject pile. The card he picked for me turned out to be Baby Krishna. "Ah! Very auspicious card," the reader said. He proceeded to tell

me that I had two wives - but, not at the same time. Now, I have the one wife. (Raphaelle would be relieved to hear that, I thought.) It was interesting to watch what he was saying at the same time listening to the words he used. I could see that he meant that I was married before to a different wife and now I'm married to another wife. It was very true. I felt that it was his way of showing me that he actually was a real reader. I don't think Baby Krishna had anything to do with that part of the reading. Then, he went on to say that after one month what I had been working toward for a long time will start to come into fruition. He repeated that after a month things would start getting much better both in terms of success in the world and financially. He talked about me being a teacher and leader of people and helping many people around the world. He also mentioned that I would have several homes in different places in times to come. That would be nice...especially if the homes came with caretakers, cooks, and such. I had fun with my first parrot reading!

The most interesting thing about the parrot reading was that when I woke up suddenly in the middle of the night that very night, there was a giant green parrot standing in the middle of my hotel room. He was just standing there. He didn't say or do anything. About an hour later when I woke up again, he was still standing there in the same place! It was a very peaceful and calming feeling. But, he was gone when I woke up in the morning. I

was told later that parrots in spirit are often thought to be guardians in India. It made sense since I had somewhat of a rough night that night. I was glad that someone was looking after me.

After our parrot reading, we all piled into a chauffeured car and were transported to our luncheon. Upon arrival, I was introduced to a succession of people and led into a nice home. I then found myself sitting on the couch with some dozen people all around me while servants brought juice and water.

"Speak to us," someone said. I laughed and thought, "OK, here we go already. I thought my seminars start in three days. I knew you lose a day coming over to India, but three days?" So, I spoke. I had no idea of how long I spoke. Then, everyone started to ask questions. So, I answered.

About six hours after I wake up on my first day in India, I discover that there will be no lack of interest in what I have to offer. I enjoyed getting to know a little more about the culture and the way people go about things here. The hospitality of the Indian people was everything I've ever heard it was and more. Everywhere I went, I received the red carpet treatment. It was easy to reminisce about my various royalty lifetimes.

The luncheon was a delightful feast for the senses. Each dish had a distinct set of flavors, textures, temperatures, and colors. Once again, I enjoyed the various taste treats, amazed at the time, care,

and love that went into preparing each dish. It appeared that in India, no one ever throws together a sandwich for a quick bite except the fast-food vendors at airports and train stations.

Speaking of the wonderful colors in Indian cuisine, I loved the ever-present colors in India: The beautiful women's *saris*, flowers, *malas* (various leis and neckwear), and the colors of the *tilaka* (various markings with sandalwood paste, vermilion, or other material on the *ajna* between the eyebrows) and *bindi* (the red spot on the forehead of married women or decorative jewelry there for women).

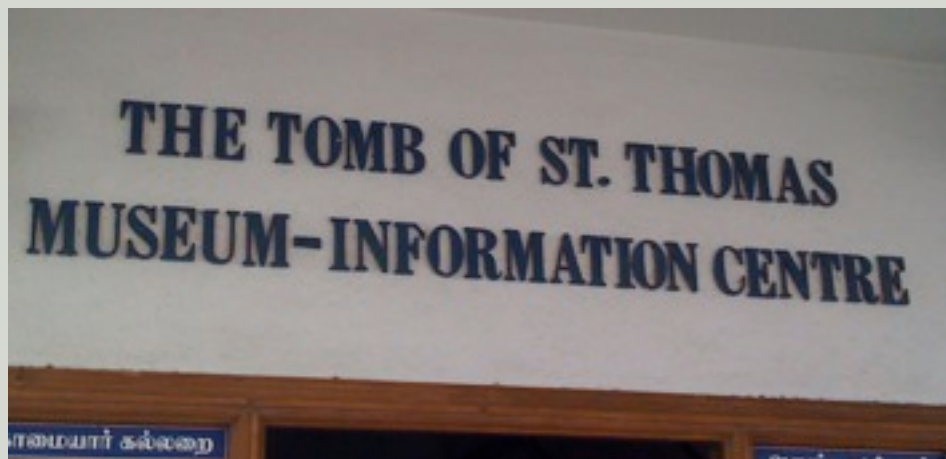
After the sumptuous lunch, we're back to questions and answers. Again, I notice the great dichotomies that present themselves everywhere I look in India. On the one hand, intense and immediate inquiry and seeking of guidance, answers, and solutions. On the other, a leisurely luncheon and unparalleled hospitality. Outdoors in a garbaged-strewn, grid-locked traffic and deafening noise-dominated, beggar-lined streets, women draped in gorgeously colored *saris* gracefully make their way. Within the vast Indian family networks, obligation collides with autonomy, tradition with progress, parents with children, women with men. On the one hand, the long-standing tradition of close-knit family brings an immediate mobilization of the whole clan at the first sign of a crisis. Yet, on the other, each individual finds him or herself bound to the family so

tightly that there is little breathing room for autonomy and the space to pursue unique paths, personal dreams. India considers herself a "secular" nation, yet, spirituality is woven into the very fabric of its society. It is a country rich with a heritage of countless saints, swamis, sages, and other spiritual leaders, yet on the other side of all its enlightenment and power we find the depths of poverty and suffering on the streets and unbelievable corruption in various levels of its government. All of these dichotomies exist not only side-by-side in India. but often in the very same places, in the very same people. Once I observed a man treat me with utter respect prostrating himself to touch my feet seeking my blessing only to turn around and cut his wife down as if she were of no consequence. Yes, India is a country, a culture and a people with vast and extraordinary treasures desperately in need of a bridge to unite and balance the two extremes. When she can reconcile her various dichotomies, the sleeping giant within her will awaken to help lead the world into a new era.

After a few hours with everyone at Deepika's and Nittin's lovely home, I ask Padmini if she would take me to the two places associated with St. Thomas: The San Thome Church and the St. Thomas Mount. But, before Padmini, Oxana, and I take our leave of our hosts, Nittin's parents, Shakun and Prem offer to take us on a tour the following day to Auroville and Pondicherry. Although I knew very little about them, I've been interested in the work of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother whose ashram was in Pondicherry and whose community was Auroville. So, I happily accepted their invite. Then, off we went first to experience San Thome Church.

St. Thomas

As most of you know, I had a prior incarnation as a disciple of Jesus as the one known as Thomas. During that lifetime, following Jesus' resurrection, I was sent out to teach and heal, to spread the "Good News," to various parts of the Persian Empire (Syria, Parthia, etc.) and India. Starting generally from the northeastern areas, I eventually ended up in



southeastern coast of India in what is known today as the city of Chennai. Literally, my life ended there. You could say that I lost my head there as a martyr.

When Padmini and Wilja first invited me to India to teach, I knew it was no coincidence that they were inviting me to Chennai, my final “stomping ground” in that lifetime - until I got “stomped,” and stopped, by order of a local king. I recalled feelings of reluctance when Jesus appeared to me after his resurrection to instruct me to go ultimately to India. Whenever I thought of India in this lifetime, it was always with great excitement mixed with trepidation. I really liked the idea of going to India, but I wasn’t so sure of the reality of it. When I first started to prepare for this trip, I had to look deeply into my life as Thomas and would discover time and again dying with feelings of failure, of having disappointed my master, and of not having been able to complete my mission. There was so much more to do. I know that I spent a considerable portion of my next incarnation in bouts of depression, a carryover of unattended emotions, from my life as Thomas.

Revisiting even the general vicinity of where I taught and healed, as well as where I met my execution as Thomas, I knew would be a profound experience. On one hand, it would be like revisiting a place of childhood trauma and invalidation as an adult and getting to discern the truth from the childhood perceptions of the

experience. What would I discover?

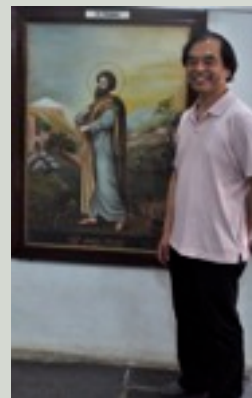
We first visited the San Thome Church in Mylapore, which had been designated as the Basilica of the National Shrine of St. Thomas.



It’s distinction is that it is one of only three basilicas built over the tomb of an apostle, the other two being the Basilica of St. Peter in Rome and the Cathedral of Santiago de Compostela over the tomb of St. James in Spain. It was good to retrace my footsteps backwards in progression: First, I got to experience the resting place of my body, which didn’t mean much in itself compared to where I lost my body.

The basilica is newly renovated (completed in 2004) and is stunning in its all-white, towering gothic architecture, contrasting with its terra cotta roofing. With its two main spires, one crowning the main church and a smaller one above the tomb of St. Thomas

above the back chapel, the cathedral reaches heavenward. First we explore the main church with its statue of St. Thomas greeting us on the left as we pass through the main entrance. My first thought was, “I didn’t look like that.” But, I felt happy to be there.



Although the main church was beautiful, I was more interested in the underground Crypt Chapel behind the main church that was built over the tomb of Thomas. I descend the stairs to find the chapel and immediately sat in one of the pews to meditate. As soon as I closed my eyes, I experienced a tremendous brightness and the prayers and gratitude of so many souls. This was the beginning of



my experiencing something different than the sense of failure at the end of that lifetime.

So often, we do not see in our short-sightedness what we have truly accomplished in a life. I was starting to have the first glimpse into what I actually accomplished by the end of that life instead of the disappointment of how much more I could have and should have done. Regardless of how much anyone that I taught in that lifetime had learned from me, I had helped unlock a huge door and it had swung open to let in a new energy, a new awareness, and a new way of living one's life. Sitting in a church dedicated to that life's work, I experienced the great numbers of souls that walked through that doorway in the centuries hence. I was starting to see my life as Thomas in a whole new light. Even more importantly, I was able to contextualize other life experiences, which heretofore I had considered inadequate, as necessary steps in the fulfillment of a greater purpose. I felt a surge of my energy returning from a tomb buried deep within me.

Walking out of the chapel renewed, I was now ready to climb the Mount of St. Thomas to revisit the memorial to the place of my untimely demise. Padmini, Oxana, and I hopped back into the chauffeured car and headed to our next destination: St. Thomas Mount.

In the southwestern part of the city of Chennai, not too far from the airport, we arrive at the foot of St. Thomas Mount. After being dropped off by our driver, we climb the 160 steps to the top of the Mount, passing by the fourteen stations of the cross along the way, to reach the church built commemorating the martyrdom Thomas. Legend has it that the altar was placed on the spot where Thomas died.



Here the energy was much more present of my incarnation as Thomas. Visions of teaching in this area, especially outdoors upon hillsides, came to me as I approached the church.

As I first entered the church, I felt a rush of overlapping emotions: a joyful homecoming, sadness and

disappointment, the enormous grief of those who were devoted to me in that lifetime, a sense of completion. Behind the altar, encased behind protective glass, stood a cross carved in stone with dark reddish stains. It is known as "The Bleeding Cross" and believed to have been chiseled by Thomas himself. One story has Thomas holding on to the cross while he lay bleeding to death. Since its excavation in the 1547 it is said to have "bled" several times and even when the stains are scrubbed clean, they miraculously return.

I felt that I didn't "lay bleeding to death" in my final moments of that particular incarnation. Although, everywhere there are references to Thomas dying by being lanced - even the tip of the lance was on display at the San Thome Church museum - my recollection is one of having died from a blow to the back of my neck by a sword. When I meditated on the spearhead at the museum earlier that afternoon, however, I felt that there may have been a secondary injury delivered by one of my executioners. It appeared to me that there were four soldiers who reached me on an open hillside, sent by the king. One stood behind me to my left as I knelt down on the ground. He dealt a single blow with his sword to the back of my neck that entered somewhat diagonally from the right side at the base and sliced toward the left. It seems that there may

have been a slight hesitation on the part of the soldier, disarmed by my willingness to die and forgiveness of what he was to do, and he failed to decapitate me fully. Then, another of the soldiers standing behind me to my right delivered the spear into the right side of my back between the ribs about the area of my liver. But, by the time the sword entered my neck, I was long out of the body.

The funny thing, however, was that as I sat in meditation in the St. Thomas Mount Church that first time, I felt acutely all of those specific areas of my body. In fact, I realized that the right base of my neck and right shoulder were often tense and at times in agonizing pain starting shortly after my decision to travel to India, but cleared up just before my actual trip. Then, as soon as I started my travel to India, I felt one of my back ribs on the right side pop out while I was just sitting.



As Thomas, I knew ahead of time that my end was near. In a vision, I was instructed to escape from my dwelling place when the soldiers had been dispatched to kill me. When they finally caught up with me upon the hillside, I made my decision to go willingly and told

them to finish what they had come to do. Then, I knelt down and went into prayer. Forgiving the soldiers was easy. They were merely carrying out orders. Forgiving myself was much more challenging.

I felt that I had failed Jesus - again.

But, this time, sitting in that church, as soon as I entered into meditation, Jesus showed up standing behind me. He put his hands on my shoulders - I could feel him smiling at me - and he said, "We're going to have to put your head back on." I laughed and said, "OK." Then, he proceeded to heal the remaining wounds I held from that lifetime.

I intensely felt my head being sewed back on around the base of the neck and shoulders. I felt another surge of energy returning to me from that lifetime. I was also aware of Gary Renard (author of *Disappearance of The Universe*), my "soul brother," another aspect of the same soul that had incarnated in that life as Thomas. He was receiving the healing as well, but it was much more than that.

I don't as of yet have adequate words to describe all that transpired that evening at the Mount. As profound as the experience was, however, Jesus

said to me, "You need to return here once again before you leave [Chennai] to complete this healing." I heartily agreed to do so on my next open "between events" day.



Auroville & Pondicherry

Starting my second day in India at 5 am after four hours' sleep, I decided, was a part of my cure for jet-lag. As promised, Shakun, Prem, and Deepika arrived in a chauffeured crossover SUV at 6 am to pick up

Oxana and me. This time I would be treated to a three-and-a-half hour "faith driving" experience along the scenic coastal route to Auroville, a township envisioned by "The Mother" and devoted to an experiment to realize human unity in diversity. Endorsed by both the government of India as well as by UNESCO, delegates from 124 countries attended Auroville's inauguration ceremony in 1968 and mixed the soil from their respective homelands in the urn at the center of the amphitheater.

Navigating our way through the sea of tour groups, pilgrims, and residents, we arrived at the starting point for our tour of the *Maitrimandir*, the Temple of the Mother, and "the soul of the city." Normally, obtaining a ticket to enter into the amazing structure required several weeks advanced reservations. Yet, to our great fortune, Prem called in some favors for us to get us in right away.



The giant (95 ft. high, 118 ft. diameter) golden slightly flattened spherical temple on four pillars is impressive from the outside, but it is the inside that is truly remarkable in its design and energy. On the outside are 1400 convex and concave disks covered with 2 million small glass tiles sandwiching 24-carat gold leaf. This is what gives the temple its golden radiance.

On the inside we were treated to white-and-gray marble stairs and benches on which we sat to pull on a pair of white socks before proceeding in complete silence. From the second level, we follow a gradually spiraling white marble ramp up to the inner chamber. There is a pinkish-golden luminescence permeating the whole inner space. Water trickles down a narrow channel lined with gold leafed tiles as we walk up the ramp. Tranquility and grace welcome each of us who enter. Our final destination is the large, 12-faceted, spacious circular inner chamber meditation area. The center focus of this chamber is the over 27-inch diameter optically

perfect Zeiss glass globe that has a stream of sunlight directed into its center controlled by computer during sunlight hours.



I find three empty mats in a section and pick the middle one to sit on. As soon as I close my eyes in meditation, a thundering roar overtakes my hearing. Then, the roar gives way to an exquisite choir of angels. Finally, the celestial music fades into profound silence and peace. It felt like hours, yet it could not have been more than 10 or 12 minutes, since we were only allowed in for 15 minutes.

An interesting sidelight was that while listening to a talk given to a group outside by a guide about the Maitrimandir prior to entering it, I noticed a bright young girl who was a student of mine in a past life listening, but restless and somewhat lost. I wanted to have a chance to talk with her, but, due to the group arrangements and time limitations, I knew it would not be possible even to approach her. Yet, when I opened my eyes from my meditation in the inner chamber, there she had materialized on the formerly empty mat immediately to my left! I laughed to myself and closed my eyes once more to communicate with her spirit-to-spirit since we

were not allowed to make a sound within the Maitrimandir. When it was time for all of us to exit the Maitrimandir, I noticed that the girl was in a very different space than before. It appeared that she, too, had a profoundly moving experience during her brief meditation. I felt then that she would find her way in due time.

My time in the Maitrimandir was definitely the highlight of my long, varied, and fascinating day trip. After enjoying a walk through a few other parts of Auroville, we headed out to visit Sri Aurobindo's Ashram in Pondicherry along with his and The Mother's tomb.

Then, leaving the Ashram, I follow along with the others as they weave through a jostling of people in a littered, crowded, and noisy street. Next, I'm standing in front of an elephant and Shakun hands me some rupees and tells me to give it to the elephant and that she'll bless me. I offer the donation to the elephant and she grabs it with her trunk. After passing on the bill to her handler, she curls up her trunk and rubs the top of my head several times in blessing. It certainly was a new experience - and quite a wonderful one.

Once again, I observed the dichotomies ever-present in India. Here was a magnificent, sensitive, and highly intelligent female elephant, tiny bells around her front legs, shackled to a concrete platform to prevent her from running, and performing a kind of repetitive circus act all day long.

When I communicated with her telepathically, I felt the depth of her loneliness, sadness, and boredom. Yet, I experienced such love and power from her as she blessed me. It was truly a blessing, not a circus act. Meanwhile, her handler, also in boredom and loneliness, did his job mechanically day in and day out.

The more I communicated inwardly with the elephant, the more she started to come alive. By the time I made my rounds in the main temple and came out, her handler was sitting on top of her to keep her in check! She was now literally slapping her heavy but soft trunk on top of people's heads.

Within the Manakula Vinayagar Temple dedicated to the elephant god Ganesh, I also stumbled upon a profound and surprising experience. When I first entered, people crowded into the area leading to the altar, where priests were perfunctorily performing their rites. Amongst the mix of people squeezing into this space, I noticed everyone from people with great devotion and sincerity to those who were there to fulfill their obligatory *pujas*. There were priests whose only interests were to collect money from ignorant worshippers as well as those who truly believed in their calling. The overall outer scene and feel were, however, one of a carnival.

Yet, I was deeply impressed with the pilgrims whose devotion shone through brightly. It didn't matter to them that not everything or everyone there was pure or

spiritual. The purity was within their own hearts and nothing else mattered. I was admiring them and I closed my eyes in prayer.

I always loved Ganesh. He never failed to bring a smile upon my heart. The Hindus consider him a remover of obstacles. To me, the obstacles he removes are the divisions we hold in our hearts. As I moved deeper into prayer in the noisy, congested area in front of the altar, suddenly I was filled with a golden light and a voice proclaimed, "I am everywhere and in everything. I am with the poor as much as I am with the wealthy. I am with sinners and crooks as well as with saints and the innocent. I am available always everywhere and to everyone."

I heard nothing else than the voice. All the cacophony engulfing me moments before fell silent within me. I felt nothing but a deep peace and stillness. And, when I opened my eyes, an exquisite golden light permeated everything. At once everything and everyone was illuminated from within. A radiance filled my entire view. Everyone continued to do what they were doing moments before, yet, they were no longer separate, a scam artist here, a devotee there. They were all the same. God is with and in, the lowest and the highest. It is as simple for a sinner to realize God as it is for a saint. It only takes an instant.

When I exited the temple and found myself back out in the street

by the elephant, putting my shoes back on, nothing had changed in the world, yet everything was transformed. The elephant was more alive but still had the depth of sadness in her. Yet, her blessing continued to transformed those whose lives she touched. God is everywhere and available to all.



The choice is always ours as to when we shall open our eyes and our hearts.

Through a wonderful lunch at the Rendez-Vous Restaurant to a grand private tour of one of Prem's steel fabrication factories complete with a blessing at the company temple to the three and a half hour faith driving back to the hotel, I



treasured the beautiful and loving radiance permeating the whole of life. I retired to my hotel bed late that night a new person.

A Reception at Padmini's Pranic Healing Home

After another Indian breakfast feast at the hotel buffet on my



third morning, I introduced Oxana to my parrot friend while we waited for our ride to Padmini's Healing Center. Even with a slight cold, the reader gave each of us a pretty good reading. He may have been in a growth period himself!

Renu from the Pranic Healing Home came to fetch us. As soon as I stepped out of the car upon arrival at the center, many new, shining and smiling faces welcomed me alongside a few



familiar ones. They had lined the pathway to the front door with a variety of flower designs and rose petals. Then, I was honored with a *tilak* on my forehead made with



kumkum - a red powder applied in a stroke from the ajna (between eyebrows) upward to the forehead. This particular *tilaka* signifies a follower of Vishnu. I found this to be quite appropriate since Vishnu represents the Christ aspect. Through all of my teaching and healing, I was bringing the updated



Good News of the resurrection of the Christ within.

I so appreciated the sincere greeting and welcoming of "atma namaste" from each person. I felt very much at home. Everyone at Padmini's Pranic Healing Home seemed familiar. It appeared that we

were gathering for a reunion and a graduation: a completion and a new beginning.

Several of the healers escorted me into the main room and led me to the honored place at the front. As I sat down, others filed into the room until the entire space filled up with enthusiasm and shining new faces: some smiling, some intent, some curious, some expectant, some just happy to be there. I laughed at myself as I looked around the room at the more than forty healers gathered there to welcome and honor me. I thought I was just coming in for a little private tour of Padmini's

Healing Center! But, of course, this was India. Why wait till tomorrow what we could begin today? It was time to teach.

I don't know how long I talked for that day, but, you can't go on forever because there's always

food! Somehow, after my talk to the group, I was whisked away into another room and introduced to a few people. Among them were a distinguished looking couple,



introduced to me as Drs. Badrinath. Both husband and wife were prominent doctors who were not only pioneers in ophthalmology



and vision research, but healer-philanthropists who founded Sankara Nethralaya, "The Temple of the Eye," a world-class not-for-profit eye care hospital, teaching, and research facility. On the average, 1200 patients walk through their doors and over 100 eye surgeries are performed daily. Some have declared theirs to be "the best managed charitable organization in India." They founded their organization in answer to a call for India's need for "hospitals with a missionary spirit." I believe it is not only India, but the world that cries out for true healing sanctuaries and hospitals with a loving, spirit-guided foundation. I found it more than synchronistic that the founders of "The Temple of the Eye" would be sitting in on my very first talk in India to healers and that I was preparing the healers for my upcoming seminar on "Seeing the

Divine, Living the Miracle: Learn to See With The Eye of Spirit."

I would have liked to visit the doctors at their Sankara Nethralaya had my schedule permitted. Next time. I know that these brilliant but humble physicians and educators have some of the answers as to the direction our healing institutions must take. Just the opportunity

to communicate with them over lunch gave me great hope and inspiration: Extraordinary paths are being paved in different parts of the world.

Lunch reminded me of lifetimes of having cool grapes peeled and dropped gently into my mouth. I don't think grapes were actually on that days menu, but, the feeling was like that. It seemed that every time I turned my head, a new delicacy was being offered. One could get accustomed to this way of living quite easily. Of course, one could also easily turn into Jabba the Hut.



I would have enjoyed spending more time with each

person there, but I knew that there were four full scheduled days of events coming right up. So, a joyous introduction. It was a delightful prelude to Wednesday morning's mass healing session. Padmini's Pranic Healing Home was truly a home for healing and for healers. I felt at home with everyone there.

Mass Healing Session

I knew that the first scheduled event, the Mass Healing Session, was going to be powerful. I felt myself charging up all through the night, working with the souls who were going to attend. It would also

be an interesting mix of participants. I saw that there would be those who had serious ailments and illnesses, parents with children, as well as the

curious. There would be many healers and students of healing. There would be wounded healers. And, there would be those who wouldn't know why they had to come, but they just had to.

Narasimhan was my personal body guard during all the events in Chennai. He would be like the secret service agent guarding the president, speaking into the transmitter on his collar, "The Eagle has landed." Only in his case, it was his cell phone. "Yes," he



would say looking up from his phone at me, “Madam Padmini says they will be ready for you to come down in 5 minutes.”

Each morning before an event, Narasimhan, and on occasion, Sampath, would come up to my



hotel room to assist me in any way and then escort me down at the right time.

On the first morning, I didn't know why that was so important. I could just come down early, I would say to him. Oh, no, that would not be



advisable, he would reply. I would find out why soon enough.

When I did finally get to the entrance to the ballroom, I was welcomed with a spattering of holy water out of a brass *kindi*, then,

honored with the smearing of sandalwood and *kumkum tilak* from my *ajna* to forehead. As I stepped onto the



stage, I received a sumptuous



mala of exquisite white jasmine flowers and red carnations along with a gorgeous red-orange and golden silk *puja* shawl around my neck. As

well, several of Padmini's staff healers and students, had lovingly adorned the stage with

chrysanthemum, rose, and marigold flowers and petals in gorgeous designs. And, to open the day, I received a lit oil lamp with which I was to light the four wicks of the four directions on the large brass oil lamp on stage.

Just a few days before, there were 200 people signed up for this 2-hour mass healing session. That morning, 375 people showed up for it. The grand ballroom was

filled to the walls on every side. I had so much material and energy to work with, it was amazing. It truly became like conducting a grand symphony orchestra. The healing just poured forth as I spoke to the gathering, telling stories, nudging here and there, waking up a few, calming down some, and the music of the soul reverberated throughout the hall. Even the hotel staff came in to be in the energy.

I used the enormous energy of the group to loosen up the knots of karma. It was like applying WD40 to loosen a jammed bolt. Big souls in too tight of spaces were freeing up at least some elbow room. Some were really coming out the body to take a look around. I just kept reminding everyone that they



were spirit, limitless, eternal and immortal.

I loved the children who were there. A couple of babies, a few elementary school age kids, several teens. There were some really bright ones taking long looks at me.

I witnessed the Holy Spirit descending upon many in the crowd. Profound healing was taking place - much of which no one would recognize perhaps for weeks, even months. Lives were changing for the better. Some were going to be looking at what they've been avoiding for years. It's all part of healing, isn't it?

When I finished with my final prayer for the mass healing session and looked up, the light in the room, full of radiant people, was blinding. Padmini stood up and expressed everyone's appreciation with much grace. And, of course, soon a wonderful lunch would be served.

Blessings

As with the close of any seminar or workshop, a few people migrated toward the stage to talk to me. First was a couple with a blossoming daughter in tow. The mother asked if I would please bless their daughter and she nudged her closer to me. What a beautiful soul this girl was. I was happy to offer the healing and blessings of Divinity upon her. I placed my right hand upon her head as she bowed slightly. We were both bathed in a brilliant light that overflowed in all directions. When I opened my eyes a moment

later, both her father and her mother presented their bowed heads to me. So, I gave them each a blessing.

When I opened my eyes once again, there were twenty or more people now crowding the edge of the stage,

hands in namaste, heads bowed, asking for blessings. I smiled. It was like a baptism. Visions of having done this here in India in centuries past

flashed by vividly. I felt as though I was outdoors upon a hillside with a throng of devoted pilgrims. I began blessing each one.

As I thought I was nearing the last few people to bless, Padmini came over looking concerned for me. "You must take a break and have some lunch, Michael," she said. "If you do this, you will never get your lunch. You've done enough already." I love Padmini, her compassion enriched voice and the grace with which she moves about.

"Oh, it's alright," I told her, "I don't mind if I end up skipping lunch. It feels like I've been eating all the



time anyway!" I laughed. Padmini looked skyward as if saying to the Maker, "Well, I tried."

At the time, of course, I didn't know what she knew about India and her customs. As I resumed giving the blessings, I became aware that the line of people - well, not really a line since there is no such thing in India as cueing up single file, it's

always a mass of people - wasn't getting any shorter. In fact, when I opened my eyes again, instead of the three or four people I thought I had left to give blessings to, now, there were fifty! I knew lunch was out of the question and I was committed to continue. I should be done in just over an hour, I thought,

and my next event is still over two hours ahead.

Once again, it seemed that the number of people wasn't diminishing! I looked over the crowd pressed up to the stage



area and, to my surprise, now it had grown to over a hundred still waiting! I couldn't stop now, I believed, at that point. And, I continued. Yet, after a couple of dozen people later I looked up to discover the bunching of people was now extending to the corridor outside the ballroom. I knew there were 375 people attending this event, but, there seemed to be more than that. In fact, I recognized the hotel staff in their uniforms coming up for blessings and questions and healing requests. The catering manager himself came up with a severely sprained wrist from a recent motorcycle spill. There were family and friends of some of the attendees coming in who were waiting for them outside! I wasn't ever going to leave this ballroom. My life flashed before my very eyes. They're going to bury me right here! Ha-ha!

On the one hand, I was thoroughly enjoying this amazing opportunity to touch so many people's lives. It was at once so familiar and so different. I loved the devotion that so many people had. Yet, I also experienced their great pain buried under all of it that they were trying to get blessed out. And, I understood the millennia-long tradition established here of "touching the feet of the guru" for even a glimpse of grace.

I would have liked to have reached each and every one there, yet, after another half an hour or more with

still increasing numbers of people gathering around me, I had to call it quits. I needed to get ready to go to my next destination, the Apollo Children's Hospital where, I was told, about 30 family and friends of it's founder were gathering to meet me and have a group healing. So, I raised the metaphorical white flag and Narasimhan, my dedicated bodyguard and event photographic chronicler, rushed to my rescue. Like Moses parting the Red Sea, he bodily made way for me to get past the seekers out into the hotel corridor, then, past the seekers, hotel staff, and others along the hallways to the elevator. He saw me safely to my hotel room.

I sat down, looked around my room, a bit spent, but nonetheless joyous at all that transpired that morning. Without doubt, the Hand of God touched everything. Then, answering a knock at my door, I find a waiter bringing in a tray full of mouth-watering Indian dishes. It never ceased to amaze me the attentive care given to me by Padmini and her group of healers.

Group Healing at Apollo Children's Hospital

After my quick lunch, Padmini, Oxana, and I headed out to the Apollo Children's Hospital in Chennai. In response to a request from the founder and his family, Padmini arranged to have me give a group healing to some of the family members and friends at the

hospital. This Children's Hospital was one of their newer hospitals among the 46 hospitals they've established throughout India, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh and other countries. Both the founder, Dr. Prathap Reddy, himself, as well as his hospitals, are highly respected for excellence and have been the recipient of numerous awards.

Immediately upon our arrival, we were welcomed by the staff into the hospital and met by Suneeta Reddy, one of Dr. and Mrs. Reddy's four powerful and capable daughters who direct the hospitals. The first thing that struck me about Suneeta was her light. She was very bright. She also could easily have been a model or an actress. But, she was the Executive Director of Finances for the Apollo Hospitals. Guiding us through hallways and elevators, she led us into a nice conference room with about twenty-five people waiting for us. Again, there was a mix of feelings in the air: Curiosity, excitement, skepticism, interest, hope, respect, welcome, expectancy. As well, there was the energy of people busy at their jobs of taking care of people and the intensity and seriousness of the business.

It was quite a shift of energy and awareness from what I had just experienced at the mass healing event at the hotel. There, about a quarter of the large group were trained healers and students of healing. Here, it was an entirely

different gathering of highly capable professionals and members and friends of a powerful family. At the mass healing event were almost entirely people who were already well on their way in the acceptance and understanding of spiritual healing. Here gathered at the hospital were a whole different breed of healers, who were, with perhaps a couple exceptions, not involved directly in the spiritual and psychic aspects of healing themselves. This would be interesting, I thought. And, it was.

At first, the energy in the room was predominantly the denser, heavier vibration of corporate business, intellectualism, and the focus on the treatment of the physical body, but with the added enthusiasm for and respect given to a spiritual teacher - even one that no one in the group personally knew. That was one of the elements I experienced interwoven into the fabric of Indian life throughout my time there: Respect for the person who is known to be a spiritual teacher or leader. Although not a single person in the group knew who I was or what I really did, because they had heard I was a recognized spiritual teacher and healer, they all gave me a degree of respect reserved for such a person. It was like being considered innocent until proven guilty. Now, it was my turn to demonstrate whether I lived up to deserving that respect.

So often, however, when a person gives respect to a spiritual person, it is a solemn energy. I've encountered that in a group of Japanese people who were at a public lecture I gave once in New York. They were determined to maintain a very serious attitude because they were showing me great respect as a teacher, especially a spiritual one. At first, it made it difficult for them that I was laughing so much and making light of serious subject matters, such as death and dying. Can one laugh and still address serious and important considerations in life? How does one show respect and still laugh and have a fun time? As we all know, familiarity often breeds contempt for that very reason. For many people, if they get too comfortable and chummy with someone, that person becomes too familiar and less deserving of great respect. This comes from not respecting ourselves: If we have less respect for ourselves, then, if we begin to see someone as not too different from us, we begin to have less respect for him or her as well. This is an unfortunate trap into which many people fall.

I talked to the group at the hospital about healing as I told some stories from my life to illustrate a few points. A couple of those in attendance, immediately matched my laughter and started having fun as they learned about healing. Gradually, more people joined in and the energy began lightening up

considerably. And, there are always those who will not believe until they see some specific personally identifiable evidence that I might know what I'm talking about. So, I would pick on a few people to talk about specifically. The person whose inner life I described definitely knew what I was talking about and those who knew that person well knew as well. Then, those who knew those people could see that they were convinced even if they didn't know the person I was talking about and they would begin to open up as well. That's one of the ways how the circle of acceptance expands in a first-time group. After all, as they say, "Talk is cheap." If we are to teach and guide others, we must be able to walk our talk. We must demonstrate by living what we teach.

I remembered an old story I heard about Mahatma Gandhi, a great Indian teacher and leader. One day, a concerned mother brought her young son to Gandhi complaining that her son was eating too much sweets and wouldn't listen to her when she told him to ease off on the sugary treats. She said that if Gandhi would tell the boy to stop eating so much sweets, he might listen. In answer, Gandhi instructed her to come back with the boy in two weeks' time. Although she didn't know what just waiting two weeks and coming back to him would accomplish, she figured that the great master must know what he is

doing so she agreed to do so and left. When she brought the boy back with her to Gandhi two weeks later, Gandhi greeted them both with a smile and said to the boy that he must listen to what his mother tells him and not eat so many sweets. He told him that she was saying this for his own good, that eating sweets all the time would lead to tooth decay, excess weight gain, and other health problems. Humbled by the respected leader, the boy agreed to stop eating so many sweets. Happy, but perplexed, the mother then asked Gandhi why he didn't just tell her son the same thing two weeks ago? To that, Gandhi replied that two weeks ago, he, too, had trouble staying away from sweets. He needed to practice for two weeks to get over his indulging his craving for sweets before he could instruct her son to do the same.

I taught the hospital group how to ground, center their awareness, run the energy, and other important basic tools to help them be able to find their space to be the immortal and limitless souls that they were. By the end of my presentation, those attending knew whether what I had was of interest to them or not. The majority of them experienced a significant shift in their awareness and energy and they were interested in learning more of what I had to offer. The energy of the conference room itself had gone from a thick pasty white and yellow vibration to a

radiant golden yellow and orange. I was heartened to see how many people, especially those who directed major aspects of the hospital, who were enthusiastically learning and making big shifts in themselves. I knew this would be a beginning of more and more of the healing of spirit becoming a fundamental part of the practice of medicine. This is one of the aspects of spiritual awakening that India may take a lead in the world.

Naturally, Suneeta had arranged for a wonderful buffet, complete with chefs making to order exotic Indian dishes, out in the hallway of this hospital floor! I was delighted to see the hallway lined up on one side with the chefs and long narrow tables filled with food and food preparations, while people were lined up on the other side of the tables to pick and choose what they put on their plates and what they ordered from the chefs. In all the times I've spent working in hospitals in the US, I've never seen such a colorful and fragrant fanfare in a hospital hallway. This was one of the delights of experiencing different cultures.

A seat and small table were set up for me in the conference room to have my lunch (or, more accurately, my lunner(?), a meal between lunch and dinner, since it was the third meal of the day so far!) As I tasted the various treats, including a dish lined with small puffed, lightly fried pastry smothered with a richly textured dark sauce finished with

thinly julienned veggies. The fresh pomegranate juice that I was served hit the spot as well.

As hard as it may be for Americans to imagine having a delicious feast in a hospital setting, I enjoyed communicating with many of those who came to this unusual gathering as I partook in the mid-afternoon high tea, Indian style. I had a wonderful time with Suneeta's young daughter, Sindhoori, who happened also to be the director of the Apollo Children's Hospital where we were gathered. Another bright, capable being, she was able to join in on the fun side of spiritual healing and took all my joking about her in stride. This is always one of the tests of how far along souls are in their awakening process - how well they can make light of themselves. It's always a lot of fun when family members can light-heartedly validate what I point out about each other that sometimes can be points of contention between them. We had that going quite a bit between her, her husband, her brother and her mom. On the other hand, I also enjoyed a different kind of exploration with another of the hospital department directors who was a long-time student of spirituality and metaphysics. By addressing his fundamental qualities and abilities as a soul over the lifetimes, I was able to bring the theoretical to the practical for him. His interest blossomed from a respectful curiosity to one of personal

involvement. Of course, as I answered many questions from those who attended, there were always their spouses, children, colleagues, and others who dropped by the conference room to meet me - often with their own questions. Without a question, however, we opened a new door for each of us to walk through for our next step.

Suneeta, the ever-graceful hostess cum hospital financial director, and Padmini, the powerful visionary healer, teacher and leader in a gentle, diminutive person, would arrange for another time for me to meet with Suneeta's father, Apollo Hospital Founder and Chairman, and her mother at their home. Even though there was little open time left in my remaining schedule, I knew that, if this meeting would be important to the furthering of spiritual awakening and healing of greater numbers of people, it would happen. And, within a day or two, it did: They arranged that a driver would pick me up at my hotel on Sunday morning at ten to take me to their home for a meeting and brunch.

My Interview with The New Indian Express

Padmini, Oxana, and I finally took leave of the Apollo Hospital group about 6:30 that evening to head back to the hotel where a reporter from the New Indian Express was waiting to interview me. As soon as I arrived in the hotel lobby,

Sharadha Narayanan, the City Reporter for the Express came to greet me. We found a comfortable couch in the lounge area of the lobby to conduct our interview with the photographer clicking away from across the way using telephoto lens. Perhaps, that was a way to be less obtrusive to the interview. Yet, I knew that his timing was not in tune with me throughout the whole shoot since each time I felt him snapping a shot, I would be in a transitory state - that state when one's mouth and face in general would be most contorted in moving from one expression to another. Well, it's hard to be the director of a photo shoot and be the guest being interviewed at the same time. So, I just stuck with being the interviewee. Of course, the first thing Raphaëlle texted me when she saw a copy of the interview was, "Where did they get that awful picture of you?" I've yet to see the photo. Maybe I'm fortunate!

The interview itself was a different experience as well. I wasn't quite sure of what the focus of the interview was since I didn't have any information on what kind of newspaper this was. As the interview progressed, I could see that this must be for that section of the newspaper that has something to do with "What's Going On Around Town?" kind of thing. I really like giving interviews, but I work to benefit the purpose of the interviewer as much as getting

what I would like to say out there. When there is a clear objective from the interviewer, it makes this easier. In this case, I realized that the reporter didn't know much about who I was or what I do other than that I was in Chennai to heal and to teach. So, this was a lesson for me to ask the reporter some questions before the interview so that I can better speak to her specific audience. All in all, however, Sharadha's write-up touched upon several interesting topics we talked about: Past lives, healing, laughter and spiritual growth, and that importance of realizing that we are not our bodies when we go about solving problems in life. Hopefully, it lit a light bulb for some people. (For the interview, go to: <http://www.expressbuzz.com/edition/story.aspx?> and type in 'Michael Tamura' in the Site Google Search window.)

Thursday, February 25th:

On my fourth day in Chennai, for the first time, I had a morning to myself. After my work-out at the hotel gym, shower, meditation and breakfast, I decided I wanted to explore at least one or two of the more spiritual places nearby. I had heard of a place dedicated to the spiritual master, Sri Ramakrishna, that was nearby. I asked the hotel concierge about the place and how I might get there. Can I walk? She had no idea where this place was so she called someone to find out. After checking around, she asked,

“Do you mean the Ramakrishna Math?” I didn’t know what “math” had to do with Ramakrishna, but I said that if it were close by, that may be the place. She told me that it was a temple and that I can take a taxi there.

When I went out to the front of the hotel and asked the valet if the Ramakrishna Math was too far to walk to, he wobbled his head in that way most Indian people do that says, “*Accha.*” Of course, *accha* can mean a multitude of things ranging from acknowledgement, agreement, affirmation, confirmation, benevolence and friendship, questioning, exclamation, and so forth. I’ve learned later that the Indian head wobble is much more vigorous in South India, where I was presently, than in the far north. And, the more enthusiastic the wobble, the more agreement or confirmation or surprise the wobbler is conveying, as in, “Yes! Yes!” or “Great!” or “Wow, that’s amazing!”

Well, the valet wobbled his head while scrunching his face. I read it to mean, “Ooo, yes, I wouldn’t try to walk it. It’s far enough for you to get run over before you make it there.” Then, he added, “You can

take a *tuk-tuk* from over there.” He pointed to the area right outside the hotel fence. I understood and thanked him, *sans* the wobble.

What’s a *tuk-tuk*? You might ask.

Raphaelle did when I texted her that I went and got a *tuk-tuk* for the morning.

Hyuk-hyuk, I chuckled. It’s a



rickshaw that’s a motorized three-wheeler - a driver in the front with room for one or two Americans, or an Indian family, behind him. I was now officially on an adventure!

“Do you know where the Ramakrishna Math is?” I asked the friendly *tuk-tuk* driver.

“Ramakrishna Math!” He exclaimed, his head wobble nearly spinning his head right off of his shoulder. “Ramakrishna’s my guru!” He added. Then, “I worked at the Ramakrishna Math in the publications office for ten years!” I knew I was in for a good ride.

Driving through town in a *tuk-tuk* is the ultimate in your faith driving experience. At times, I was dodging rear corners of pick up truck beds, motorcycle mirrors and handlebars, and other moving objects suddenly jutting into the passenger area. It keeps you present and alert. The view out the front windshield was a panorama of vivid and colorful living

billboards of activities:

Throngs of people J-walking, X-walking, Y-walking and Z-walking in front, while Honda and Suzuki 50’s to 400’s putt, whine, zoom, zig, zag, and zip past, across, and practically into the rickshaw. A

young woman in a gorgeous pink sari soared past me on the left straddling her Honda 250 entering into the slipstream of traffic and noise. On my right lay a black cow lazily swatting flies with his tail impervious to all the crazy antics of humanity like some yogi deep in *samadhi*. And, straight ahead a big rig is hurtling toward us, horn honking the eternal OM. How can you not love it? The only thing missing from the scene was the street crowd breaking into song and dance a la Bollywood.

“Have you seen the beach?” Kumar, my driver asked.

“Not yet,” I said.

“I’ll take you. Very nice. It’s on the way.” I knew I was in for a longer ride. The scenic tour. The meter was silently ticking in his head. I smiled.

“Sure,” I said.

Soon, we were *tuk-tukking* along Marina Beach, an 8-mile stretch of beautiful, wide sandy beach bordering a fragment of the Bay of Bengal and Mylapore, a bustling neighborhood in the southern section of Chennai. Once again, I breathe in the great dichotomy of this spacious canvas of open air, sand, sea, and sky edged by the sardine-packed humanity of fishermen and their boats, their fishmonger wives with their knives slicing through the day’s haul, and the locals shopping for their dinner entrees, all hemmed in with the ever-present scattering of raw garbage and trash. And the radiant colors of saris and scarves camouflaging the unsightly, like visual perfume masking the stench of seeping sewage.

Turning into the sliver of side streets, *tuk-tuks* all in single file, since there is only room for one lane, I marvel at all the beauty shining through against the backdrop of utter poverty. There is part acceptance, part resignation in the people here from millennia of living within the caste system. If you are born poor, you will die

poor. There isn’t much use in hoping for what you will never have. There is not the stress of trying to get out of the box. And, a gentle flow of creativity to make the most of what is available within the box. In a strange way, I felt most at home in the poorest section of the neighborhood. I knew that, in my life as Thomas, I often worked with and amongst the very poor, as well as with the very wealthy. During my time now in Chennai, I enjoyed communicating with the indigent as well as I did with the very successful and wealthy. And, I felt quite at peace in Mylapore amidst all of its human cacophony.

“Do you want to stop at San Thome Church?” Kumar asked. Ah, here was my chance to sit in meditation and prayer at the basilica once again. Yes, of course.

This time, when I entered the chapel with the tomb of St. Thomas, a priest was conducting a service. I quietly slipped into one of the back pews and went into meditation. Sometimes its good to not understand the words you are hearing. The priest’s intoning became as music in the background of my meditation. I was blessed to experience the sincerity of the priest’s devotion and love for St. Thomas. Across the centuries, Thomas had inspired countless souls to move forward in their spiritual development and his death, I realized, was an

exclamation point to his lifelong dedication instead of a failure to attain. *There is no greater love than this, when a man lays down his life for the sake of his friends.* [John 15:13]

“My wife is Christian,” Kumar offered as we hopped back into his auto-rickshaw. “And I am Hindu.” It delighted me to hear this. I could tell that the couple had gone through challenges with their families to be together. Yet, love accommodates all manners of differences. I was also fascinated in the way Kumar put it. “My wife IS Christian. I AM Hindu.” In America, we most often hear, “She is A Christian, he is A Hindu.” Here the emphasis was on being rather than object. He was saying that one’s faith is part of one’s being and not a separate thing to be. In the West, individualism grew into separatism. To bridge the West and the East, we must transcend the dichotomy of the individual and the cosmic whole. When we can experience being the individual whole, the oneness, the individual ceases to be separate. This is the underlying purpose of developing one’s clairvoyance as well: To see that we, as individuals, are the cosmic whole, and not separate.

“Did you want to go to Ramakrishna Math to meditate?” Kumar asked as he negotiated the ever-thickening crowd. When I told him that was my primary purpose for wishing to go there, he said,

“Do you know the Vivekananda House? It’s a much better place to meditate.” He then explained that in the old Ice House where blocks of ice used to be kept that was brought down from the north before distribution for sale, is where the great disciple of Sri Ramakrishna, Swami Vivekananda, had stayed on one of his legendary visits to Chennai. He said that in the Ice House, which was now a museum dedicated to the Swami, the room in which he stayed during that visit has been preserved as a meditation room.

So, we tootled our way to the Vivekananda House next. There I enjoyed all the paintings, photos, and text that depicted the life, times, and work of the Swami. It was he, through his prodigious output, who brought to the world the teachings of his guru, Sri Ramakrishna. In fact, it was also he who established the Ramakrishna Math and Mission, my original destination on this *tuk-tuk* adventure.

Except for the few minutes that a devotee came to prostrate himself in front of the altar dedicated to Vivekananda, I had the meditation room to myself - at least in the physical sense. I felt very much at peace there and aware of the spiritual presence of the Swami along with those who helped to preserve the energy and sanctity of the space. During my meditation, Swami Vivekananda appeared as a

soft, but powerful radiance of light and said, “All forms of arrogance must be eliminated. A good way to develop humility is to praise others.” I took this guidance to heart and meditated on the nature of arrogance and examined within myself the times I was arrogant in some way. I became aware that arrogance was an energy we produced to override some underlying pain. It included the basic desire to separate, to be in control, to resist what we feel we cannot control that threatens us, to try to be above that which we fear. It also was the energy to avoid facing the underlying fear that we are not enough as we are, that we are lacking in some fundamental way and not acceptable unless we are better.

We become arrogant when we channel our energy to glorify our ego and cover our wounds. If we were to choose instead to praise or validate spirit - or “the other” from the ego’s perspective - we would cultivate humility. We humble our ego selves when we are willing to see spirit, or that which is good, beautiful, and true, in others. In order to be able to give approval to others, we must realize that we have that approval within us to offer. If we are disapproving of ourselves, we find it difficult to give approval to others. Arrogance seems to arise from a deeply held disapproval of ourselves and by practicing praising others, we must come to terms with that inner disapproval of ourselves.

I thanked the Swami for his wise guidance and decided that I would remind myself to explore arrogance and cultivate humility more deeply each day. I knew, too, that our greatest challenge in progressing in our spiritual development was that of continuously reminding ourselves of our newly discovered truth and applying it consistently in our day-to-day lives. At the first gust of emotion or thought that hits us, we tend to forget. So, I started reminding myself right away to praise others often - and, to do that, I had to consistently look for what was good, beautiful, and true in them. What that meant was that every time I got hung up on myself - *I ache; I’m tired; why am I feeling this way? what’s going on with me?* - I had to remind myself and redirect my attention to what was good, beautiful, and true in someone else. Try it sometime. It can be quite like the showdown at the Not-OK Corral. The *poor me* in us gets all huffy and pouty when we start paying more attention to what’s wonderful in others. An ounce of humility will bring a pound of covert arrogance to the surface. Enjoy!

After bidding adieu to Vivekananda House, I thought Kumar would *tuk-tuk* me over to the Ramakrishna Math since our time was getting short. I had to get back to the hotel with enough time to spare before one o’clock so I could get ready to meet up with the group

taking me to lunch. But, wait! There was more. It was time for a commercial break. Kumar set the stage with the tragic story about the 2004 tsunami that devastated the coastal areas of India, particularly the state of Tamil Nadu of which Chennai is the capital, and the extensive government and private sector relief efforts still underway. Nearly eleven thousand people lost their lives and many thousands more were injured in the disaster. Among the private businesses in the area that contributed much to those in need, he mentioned one that has helped keep him in business as well. Even his uniform was provided for each year by this company. He then asked if I would mind spending even ten minutes at their shop so that he could show the owners his gratitude for what they have done for him. I figured that the more enterprising rickshaw and taxi drivers all had a network of merchants that they worked with in order to supplement their income through referral and sales commissions. So, I said, "Why not?" Kumar drove me to the Museum Company.

I was pleasantly surprised with the quality of the two-story shop. It wasn't like many of the tourist stores. I could tell that it was a family-run business with its owners taking pride in the quality of their merchandise and service. Ajaz Ahmad, one of the brothers that were running the business immediately welcomed me,

introduced himself, and offered his services. I browsed through the room devoted to bronze sculptures and statues, then, one filled with wood-carved ones, followed by a quick look at the fine Persian carpets room, and then settled into the fabric room. Here, Ajaz unfurled beautiful, colorful pashmina scarves and shawls for me to feel.

"Feel this one," he said as he held out a gorgeous deep navy shawl. "It's made from the undercoat from the chin section of the pashmina goat. It's the finest pashmina."

Ajaz hailed from Kashmir, a part of the "disputed" territory of Kashmir that fell under India rule. The other two areas were governed by Pakistan and China. The pashmina wool, or cashmere, was spun from the undercoat of the pashmina goat that lives in the high altitudes of the Himalayas. The delicate and warm undercoat grows to protect the goat from the cold in the winter and is combed when Spring arrives. Ajaz's family has been in the business of spinning and weaving pashmina for decades. His eyes lit up as he explained the differences in the various grades of pashmina.

"The test for the purity and quality of the pashmina is whether it passes the ring test," Ajaz continued. He took out a gold wedding band and like a magician, showed me both sides of the ring as if to prove there were no hidden

tricks here. He then, pushed through a corner of the shawl and gently, but quickly he pulled the entire shawl through the ring. "See," he said, "this passes right through the ring because it is so soft and pliable. This is of the highest grade of pashmina." He then tried pulling through the same ring another grade of pashmina, which didn't make it all the way through. Naturally, the highest grade pashmina was priced five times more than the second highest grade. Only the highest grade pashmina came from the chin area of the goat. All the others came from the belly region. Regardless of the grade, all the 100% pashmina shawls made you want to curl up in the corner, caressing the material between your fingers, and suck your thumb.

After my lessons in pashmina wool, I decided to get a beautiful turquoise shawl for Padmini and a gorgeous pink one for Wilja as gifts of gratitude for all that they've done to have me come to teach in India. And, although Raphaele made me promise to not buy any gifts for her, I couldn't leave the store without getting her at least a shawl as well. Yet, here was the conundrum: She was allergic to all forms of wool, especially, cashmere! So, no goat chin stuff for my wife, I told Ajaz. Instead, he brought out an exquisite array of silk shawls. Since one color and style didn't fit all, I settled on one for daytime wear and another for evening. Later, when I gave them

to Raphaele, I told her, "See, they were light, didn't take up much space in the luggage, and didn't cost nearly as much as goat chin fluff!" She didn't seem upset that I bought her a gift, after all.

The ten minute stopover at the shop took up the better part of an hour so I declined Ajaz's invitation to have some tea with him and took my leave with my goat and silkworm goodies in hand. I was happy to support a business that gave back to it's community as well as to be able to give Kumar a gold star for the day with the Museum Store. Once I hopped back into the *tuk-tuk*, however, Kumar said we need to go back to the hotel. Not enough time for the Ramakrishna Math, he told me.

I looked at my trusty iPhone local time: 12:00. "How long does it take to get there from here?" I asked. He told me about 15 minutes there and 15 minutes back to the hotel. I figured that would give me at least a few minutes to look around the temple. I could tell Kumar was juggling his timetable - maybe he had another customer waiting in the wings back at the hotel. Then, he changed the subject and asked me if I liked the store and what I purchased. When I told him, he asked if I thought they were expensive or not so expensive. I could see him going to some quick math, but not the Ramakrishna kind. He was weighing the possibilities of how

much he could expect from me for payment for his services at the end of the ride. So, I told him that what I bought was expensive, so I had no more money to spend. Oh-oh.....maybe he's not going to make as much as he wanted, I could see him subtracting from his figures. Would it be worth his time to take me to the temple anyway? Perhaps, if he went out of his way to take me there, I might throw in a little more for his effort. And, if he didn't take me, I might get unhappy and then not pay him as much as I would have otherwise. A lot of silent transactions go on in the life of those who eke out a living serving others. I admired Kumar's resourcefulness and creativity. In every field of endeavor, there are those who make the most of what they have to work with. He was amongst them in his chosen field, tempering what he's learned through years of hustling on the streets with what he's learned through his spiritual practices. He knew from experience, too, that if he took good care of his customers, usually, they wouldn't shortchange him. Yet, in him I could see the scars of "having been taken" that made it difficult to just do his very best and leave the rest up to Shiva. There was always that bit of niggling doubt.

"OK!" He finally said as we turned down a narrow, congested side street, "Fifteen minutes there, fifteen minutes back, so, five to ten minutes in the temple. Good?"

"Great!" I said. I knew he was going to be able to eat his cake and have it, too. And, I got a chance to see what Ramakrishna Math was about. Of course, it had not much to do with *math*, that must be an Indian term encompassing temples, monasteries, and schools since those were what I found there. It was a complex of sorts supporting a variety of functions to further the teachings and work of Sri Ramakrishna and several of his top disciples. In the few minutes I was able to spend there, I experienced the inspiration, wisdom, and power behind the movement that continues to grow around the world to enlighten humanity. I also saw the enormity of the work it took to carve out what amounts to, in physical terms, tiny pockets in the world to remind humanity of the true purpose for its being. While so much of the world's time, knowledge, and wealth are focused on surviving better, there are a few lighthouses of spirit scattered here and there to educate us about what we're surviving for. For too many millennia, humanity has been putting the cart before the horse. Now, it's high time to have the horse pulling the cart.

As we finally headed back to the hotel, along the way, I saw in passing the huge Kapaleeswara Temple dedicated to Lord Shiva and Goddess Shakthi. I knew my

time to experience various temples would come in the second part of my India adventure when I travel north to revisit my life with the Buddha. For now, I had to get back to my room for a quick change and meet up with a group from Padmini's healing center for lunch and another excursion.

Revisiting Thomas

"We're taking you to Mainland China for lunch," said Indira, Padmini's daughter. Indira, Ranjan, Tanya, Oxana, and I hopped into the awaiting sedan while Indu took charge behind the steering wheel. "Narasimhan and Sampath will meet us there."

"Wow! Things are different in India," I said. "We'll just pop over to Mainland China for lunch!"

"It's a Chinese restaurant close by," someone chipped in from the back seat. "We thought you might like something different than Indian food."



"Is it spicy hot?" I laughed.

"Well, it is *Indian Chinese* food," Ranjan said. "Everything here is Indian: Indian Chinese, Indian

Italian, Indian American. We can't help it." We all laughed.

When we arrived at the restaurant, we joined Narasimhan and Sampath who had already sampled the soup of the day. "It's good," Sampath said. And, the two of them escorted me to the buffet table to explore the various tasty possibilities. Indeed, it was *Indian Chinese* cuisine! But, since Indian food was delicious, the Indian twist to Chinese cuisine was equally *swaadisht!* And, spicy hot.

This specific grouping of souls gathered together at the Mainland China Restaurant were all familiar to me from my life as Thomas. Curiously, both Oxana and Sampath asked me more than once if they

had something to do with my death as Thomas. Blame, guilt, and grief can fester within us over many lifetimes. Four of the souls who were in the large Mass Healing Session on Wednesday were directly involved in my untimely death that ended that incarnation, but, Oxana and Sampath, of course, were not two of them. In fact, they were both students of mine in that lifetime and their questions came from a place of misplaced responsibility and guilt and great deal of grief from what they had experienced from my death in that life. They both blamed themselves after my



death that they should have done something to prevent it. Such are feelings that we often get stuck on after a significant loss. I knew that well from my own experience in that life during and following Jesus' crucifixion.

It's never an accident how we all come together - even for a nice Indian Chinese lunch. Just sitting together, eating, chatting, and generally enjoying one another's company, much can happen on a soul level. And, so it did for each



of us gathered. We updated ourselves from that long ago lifetime together into the one we are living today. It's like that window that pops up on your computer screen that announces, "You have a software update. Would you like to update now?" Just like when we update our software, when we update our energy and information from prior lifetimes, we bring forward lessons learned since that incarnation and fix the "bugs" we've lived with in our system. Then, we can live our lives forward with more wisdom, grace, and power.

This updating amongst our little group continued as we embarked upon the next adventure of revisiting St. Thomas Mount. For me, this was to be the second round at the Mount. Some of the others had been there before and for a few, this was to be their first experience. We all climbed the 160 steps up to the church together as we talked, joked, and laughed. But, once in the church, I went to meditate at the side of the altar, next to where the carved stone "bleeding cross" stood behind protective glass. I noticed that a few feet away from that was a statute and altar dedicated to Mother Mary. I felt quite close to Mary, both in that lifetime and this. It seemed that in both the San Thome Basilica and here, both Thomas and Mary played significant roles.

Within a short time after entering into meditation, Jesus appeared to me and started to help me with the second part of the healing on my Thomas incarnation that he had promised on my first visit here. Physically, I could definitely feel the difference in my neck and shoulders - it felt much stronger and more relaxed. Energetically, there seemed to be more of a connection and communication between my reasoning self in the brain and my feeling self in the heart. The greatest difference I noticed in myself, however, was that I no longer experienced any of the failure, disappointment, or responsibility I had carried regarding what I felt at the time of that death of not having completed my mission then. In fact, I began to experience so much more validation and certainty within myself for what I had actually accomplished in that lifetime and in subsequent lifetimes. And, with this new experience, came new visions for what I might be able to accomplish yet in this current incarnation before curtain call.

A great deal transpired during this short meditation that I knew would unfold over the next several months. I felt a new degree of freedom as a soul as if I were given a more up-to-date pair of wings with which to fly. In many ways, I felt complete - that now I had fulfilled my purpose for being there.

As we exited the main church, we discovered another chapel around

one corner, removed our shoes and entered to meditate and pray. Besides the few of us, there were a couple of nuns and two or three others there to pray. One of them approached me saying something I couldn't make out, but it seemed that he was there for healing. In my meditation, I saw angels around him and an outpouring of healing blessed him. As I was leaving the chapel, he approached me again saying something again I couldn't understand, so I smiled and gave him my blessing in spirit. Oxana came up to me and said, "Did you know that man had tuberculosis and was there for a healing?" Well, he did receive a healing from what I saw. It is amazing, the miracles that happen every day that few people notice in their busy-ness to make it through the day.

After a stroll to the overlook area at the summit to enjoy the panoramic view of Chennai and having an impromptu photo shoot, we headed back down the hill to our awaiting vehicles while sharing our experiences on the Mount.

We rounded up the evening's adventure with another visit to the Ramakrishna Math, this time to experience the evening *arati* (ritual offering light to Hindu deities), meditation, and prayer service. I enjoyed the gradual raising of the energy of the sanctuary through the *arati* ritual and chanting. As the priest offered the flames from

the *ghee*-fueled wicks to the deities, the light in the temple grew brighter and brighter like a growing flame. I also experienced that the rhythmic chanting was orchestrated to progressively shift the energy and consciousness within the temple. Although quite a delightful experience, after the mammoth, *kamikaze* mosquitoes feasted on me for half an hour, I felt that I had sacrificed enough of my blood for the day and it was time for me to leave.

Once in our car, Indira asked if I wished to have some dinner or not. It seemed still that since arriving in India I hadn't had a chance to experience hunger, I opted to skip on the dinner invite. So, instead, she recommended the "hot spot" to have some tea, snacks or other refreshment on the way back to the hotel. We swung by "Amethyst" a nice indoor/outdoor cafe. There, I enjoyed my first *lassi*, a delicious, cooling, and refreshing yoghurt drink. I recall fondly hearing a couple of my hosts asking the waiter to be sure that the drink was made using bottled instead of tap water. As I started sipping my *lassi*, Sampath returned to the table and gave me a tube of mosquito repellent that he bought from the drug store down the street. I was well cared for in so many ways. With a cooled down



stomach, I happily returned to my hotel for night's rest before giving my two-day seminar on clairvoyance.

Seeing The Divine, Living The Miracle: Learning to See With the Eye of Spirit

Friday morning I awoke refreshed, ready to teach. After my morning workout and shower, I headed down to the ballroom at seven to set the final energy before everyone arrived to set up the registration tables and the stage. I discovered



that this was an active hotel with one event coming in right after the other. It's always takes a little doing to clear up the mess of energies left behind by various events that preceded yours. The energy I set for the Mass Healing Event two days earlier was still vibrating, nonetheless. It was a great start for the building of the sanctuary for spirit in which the enthusiastic students would be able to

experience more of Divinity and learn to awaken to their own inner clairvoyant vision, a vital part of beginning to live the miracle themselves.

After setting up the energy and awareness space for the seminar and communicating with the catering manager, I went back to my room to meditate and prepare for the teaching. As I describe myself often as a symphony conductor when I teach groups, just as an orchestral leader would



study the musicians that he is to conduct, part of my preparation for each seminar is getting to know more about the souls I am to teach and their specific needs relative to learning the lessons. And, just as a conductor would have been rehearsing with the musicians over time, I, too, have been



working with those who are to come to my class, even for the first time in their bodies, for some time in spirit. Much of what I do during the actual seminar event is to guide the students to bring into their physical consciousness what I have been teaching them as souls out of their bodies.

The constitution of this group was different than the Mass Healing Event even if most of them participated in that session as well. The orientation for the healing session was for people to receive healing. It was also a “mixed” group ranging from those who were desperately seeking healing for themselves or a loved one to those who were curious to those who were students or practitioners of healing. The group gathering for this two-day seminar were those who not only were already involved in a spiritual practice or the study and practice of healing, but, also, those who could match the energy level of learning to see inwardly. A minority of the world population at this time is able to match the level of energy required to develop their clairvoyance. Coming to this kind of class is not the same as going to an academic or intellectual lecture on the subject of clairvoyance. The energy one would need to match to attend is one of being able to experience the awareness of seeing the truth rather than thinking about it. For some, the mere fact that they could even sit through a day in this high energy is a great accomplishment.

The opening of the third eye capabilities is one of the next steps that humanity as a whole is moving toward. Yet, up to now, perhaps only about two percent of the world population have been ready for this transition. So, one of the first things I had to bring to this

new group was to break the habit of having to go to a clairvoyant or a master to get their answers and start to practice discovering the answers for themselves. It is often a challenge to move from, “I need a clairvoyant” to “I am clairvoyant and can at least first look for myself.”

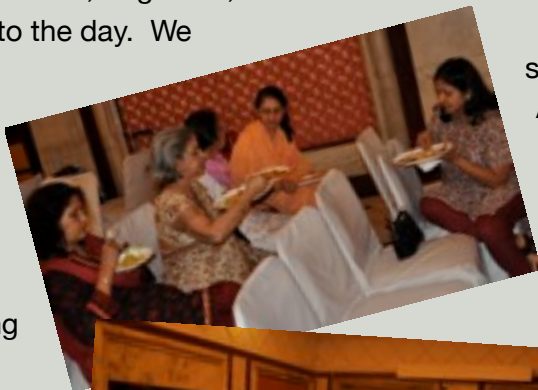
The majority of this group were enthusiastic to do just that. Most were students, active practitioners and/or teachers of Pranic Healing, a system of energy healing developed and taught by Master Choa Kok Sui, who passed on in March of 2007. In fact, at my very first luncheon gathering at Deepika’s and Nittin’s home, while I was talking with Shakun and Padmini, a wonderful being showed up behind them, laughing. When I described him to them, both Shakun and Padmini exclaimed, “That’s our Master! That’s him!” Since then, we’ve had several conversations, especially, when one of his disciples would ask me about things pertinent to carrying on his work and teachings. He also was very present during each of the events, helping, along with all of the healing masters of the students, their spirit guides, and several of the Masters of Wisdom. They all showed great interest, support, and cooperation in making the most of these enthusiastic gathering of healers seeking advancement. It was great fun to see Padmini’s beloved teacher playing in the audience along with

Lewis, my teacher, among other great souls. This is just one of the many wonders we experience when we start living the miracle instead of just hoping for one and begin the work of bridging heaven and earth. Most people are missing out on more than half the fun!

Why I say that I’m like the conductor of the symphony when I teach is that it takes the whole orchestra to make the symphony. There’s a lot that goes into what eventually becomes a beautiful concert. I prepare the energy, the lessons, and the students for weeks before the actual seminar event. I set the energy of the sanctuary and learning space sometimes for days before the event. Then, all the logistics that are taken care of by the organizers of the event. The event facility must be set up legally, financially, physically, and aesthetically. That involves both the staff at the facility as well as the event organizers. Then, on the morning of each seminar, I loved watching Padmini’s wonderful group of healers prepare the stage lovingly with *puja* lamp adorned with flowers and flower petals, the stage lined and decorated with rose petals, marigolds, and other colorful blossoms. The *puja mala* and shawl are prepared along with the *kumkum* and sandalwood paste for the *tilaka*, the ghee or oil for the *puja* lamp, and other details to help set the energy for the day.

Each event opened with a welcoming introduction and the lighting of the *puja* lamp. The musicians have tuned their respective instruments, checked their scores, warmed up. Every step added to the sound and quality of the symphony. A seminar is never just a teacher teaching and students learning. It's always a symphonic production.

And, of course, the delectable luncheon in the middle adds just the right flavors, fragrance, and textures to the day. We all know that



everything always happens in the kitchen or around the dinner table. It's a special space we create for a loving, nurturing community of souls.

That's part of the reason I asked the participants to not ask me to solve or give answers for personal problems or to give personal blessings or sign books during the lunch break. It's a wonderful time to communicate, to get to know one another more, to laugh, to

enjoy each other's company. It harmonizes and allows us to integrate more what we learn and work on intensively during the seminar. It's a time for sharing, not for trying to get more.

It also seemed not to matter to most people that the schedule for the



seminar was from 10 AM to 5 PM. I could have taught till midnight! After I finished the lecture for the day, I was ready to sign books since there were a dozen or so people with new books in hand.

What didn't

realize was that once I announced that I would sign books, more and more people came to the table. Every third person handed me a notepad instead of a copy of my book asking me to sign it for him or her. Then, once I wrote each of the people a little message

in the book, those with the notepads wanted a message as well. Then, it grew even more to signing the notepads and books to multiple members of their family! And, then, they asked me to write a message and give a blessing to each member of

their family! It was a riot.

First of all, I couldn't spell half of their names. The Indian names I was familiar with before going to India were names like Sameer, Ramesh, Shraddha, and Padmini. Simple, easy to spell names. Then, it must have been a conspiracy - almost everyone who brought me a book or a notepad to sign had names with at least 14 syllables, at least they sounded to me like they did. When I would ask the person to repeat his or her name, it didn't seem to help me since I lost it by the second syllable. It also seemed that



whenever I asked people to repeat their name, they would do so much faster than the first time.

Then, I got smart. I asked

them to spell their names. I got even more confused!

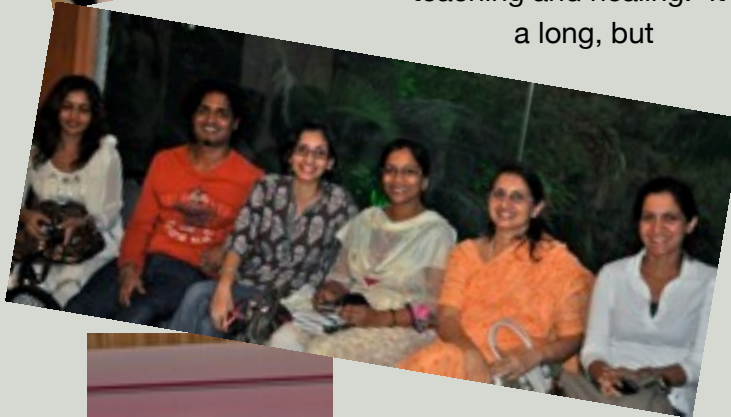
The way many of the Indian people pronounce their “a”, “e”, “i”, and “h” is quite different from the English pronunciations. So, finally, I brightened up and asked everyone to write their names on a sheet of paper

before coming up to me so I could copy it in their book or on their pad. Still, it was a long evening. Yet, I loved the sincerity, devotion, and enthusiasm of everyone. It was also the chance I had to experience many of the souls individually that I had known in other lifetimes and bring myself up to the present with them. It was almost like signing their graduation certificates from the prior lifetime.

After the book and notepad signing/message/blessings and

photo opts, I was ready for a quiet light dinner in my room before heading out onto the astral for more

teaching and healing. It was a long, but



extraordinary day with many more miracles in the making.

The next day, part 2 of the seminar, soared even higher. And, the lecture lasted even longer. It seemed no one wanted to go home. I finally brought it to a close around 7:00 PM following it immediately with more book and notepad signing/blessing/messages and photo opt. Finally, Deepika took me aside and said, “Nittin is on his way to pick us up. We want to take you away from here to a Japanese restaurant for a nice dinner.” I asked her if it would be just her and her husband and myself. She said it was to be. Ah! A quiet Japanese dinner

getaway. I could use that, I thought.

On the way down to the hotel lobby, Deepika turns to me and says that she has a dear friend who would like to meet me, just for a couple of minutes. She’s waiting in the lobby. Well, no rest for the wicked as they say. I agree to see her while we wait for her husband. Then, Deepika tells me, “She has many big problems.” Oh, boy!

But, before I could meet Deepika’s friend, Padmini had someone waiting to see me in the lobby as well. So, I spent a few minutes with her before meeting with Deepika’s friend.

It turned out that Deepika was right. Her friend had major problems. But, she didn’t want to change those aspects of herself that was creating the problems because she liked being that way. She was an extraordinarily capable, creative, and powerful woman who had a good heart and would give you the shirt off of her back, but only if you were on her right side. If not, well then, there was a problem. She was not about to forgive anyone that she felt went against her - they deserved to be punished and crushed into pieces.

If I hadn’t given my all for eleven hours straight to over a hundred people, I might have wanted to talk with her a little more. But, at that point, I was smoothing out the treads running through my aura

from her tires and I needed a full pit stop. I wished her the best and told her to enjoy conquering the world. Fortunately, Deepika's husband arrived.

It turned out that the Japanese restaurant was a ways out of the area. By the time we arrived, it was almost ten o'clock. And, the door wouldn't open. Was the restaurant closed already? Deepika said she called and they said it would be open. She tried the door again with no luck. We walked around the corner to see if there were another entry. Nothing. Three of us stood in front of the restaurant wondering what to do next. I think we were all a bit tired after a long and amazing day. Then, like magic, the door opened from the inside. It was a *sliding* door! We had pushed and pulled but hadn't thought to slide it! It was hilarious.

By the time the food started arriving at our table, it was about eleven and I was starting to fade. Finally, as I got some warm nourishment into my body, I started to return. Just then, Deepika answers her cell phone and announces, they're just down the street and will be here shortly. They who? She says three more family members are coming to see me. They've had a lot of problems. I considered laughing, but I only managed a smile. I didn't have the energy!

When the three of them arrived, they also let in the giant killer mosquitoes into the restaurant. While I was being introduced to the three of them, a married couple and a brother, the mosquitoes were introducing themselves to my circulatory system. They thought it was Happy Hour. It's interesting that I remember all the questions the couple asked me and the answers I gave them and I remember being chewed up by the mosquitoes, but I recall very little about the dinner I was having. I believe it was Indian Japanese food! Finally, I stood up and announced, "I have to go back to the hotel." That was the only time during my entire India trip that I wasn't sure if I was going to make it through the day.

Well, by the time I got dropped off at the hotel, it was the next day anyway. The highlight of the drive back, however, was Deepika receiving another phone call. This time it was her friend that I had talked with in the lobby earlier. She had told her husband everything I said about her and his response was that he wanted to see me! This was a powerful businessman that everyone said never asks for help or is willing to listen to anyone. He heard everything I said about his wife and opened up. Unfortunately, I had no time to squeeze in meeting one more person. And, at midnight at the end of that particular day, I had nothing left to offer. In fact, I was already out onto the astral and my

body was passing out. Even so, it was quite funny what happened with Deepika's friend and her husband. You never know. Miracles come in every color, size and shape. What an incredible day that was!

A Visit with the Apollo Hospital Founder and his Family

A few hours of sleep brought a brand new day. I was recharged and ready to meet with Dr. Reddy, his wife, and other family members who might be joining them at their home. Padmini had pre-arranged everything with Suneeta and gave me a call to let me know that one of Suneeta's staff will meet me in the lobby at 10 AM and drive me over to their home. Once again, all I had to do was to show up. That, I can do well. In fact, what I've learned time and again over the years is this: If you keep showing up fully, the miracle starts to reveal itself to you.

Upon arrival at the Reddys' home, their house staff showed me in and served refreshments. Soon, Mrs. Reddy greeted me and welcomed me to their home. We chatted while we waited for her husband. I could see that she was a woman with a treasure chest of experience buried within her. Soon, Dr. Reddy entered the room, a man of dignity, with the quiet authority and strength of one used to holding the helm of a large ship.

Due to the limited time I had, we got right down to the healing that both of them sought. I began with the doctor. Although he was a man of science, I could tell that he was also a man of faith. Often, in the western world, the two have been kept separate, as if they could exist independently of one another. Here, however, there was much more of an intuitive understanding that, without faith, there could be no science. Even as individual souls, we incarnate first into the heart and then the brain. On our exit, our heart is the final arbitrator of our physical life.

The doctor's openness with which he accepted the healing validated my initial appraisal of his faith in spirit. It heartened me that a highly respected medical authority and the founder and patriarch of an entire medical empire welcomed spiritual and energy healing so wholeheartedly. He later told me that he knew that energy healing worked since Master Choa a few years earlier had successfully healed him of a severe and persistent neck pain when nothing else seemed to help. "It took just one healing," he said.

The pranic healing experience with Master Choa definitely opened him up to wider horizons in healing, yet, Dr. Reddy already had that requisite faith in spirit long before that experience. The medical empire that he envisioned and spearheaded in building throughout his country had the

unmistakable imprint of the hand of Divinity upon it. Of course, the whole operation may be far from perfect, but the underlying vision is carried forth, inspired by spirit. Like everything spirit-guided, the rest is for us to file away the rough edges, fix the bugs with regular updates, and keep trimming the sails to align ourselves evermore precisely to our true destination.

After the healing session, Dr. Reddy shared with me his next vision that he hopes to realize. He called it building the Health Super-Highway. His is a dream that many of us shares: To establish cutting-edge, holistic wellness healing centers throughout the world. Already, he is putting together crack teams from his ranks to probe the world over in search of what healing and wellness centers have to offer. Then, he hopes to assemble the best and most effective therapies, treatments, equipment, facilities, and healers to establish a "super-highway" connecting world-class healing and wellness centers around the globe. It's a mega-vision, but one whose time has come. Dr. Reddy and his Apollo Group has a proven track record in establishing 46 hospitals in India and in neighboring countries, nursing and hospital management colleges, pharmacies, diagnostic clinics, medical transcription services, third-party administration, and pioneered telemedicine. The Apollo Group has also set up a chain of almost 60 branded retail clinics on

a franchised basis across India and the Middle East. It is the largest healthcare provider in Asia and third largest in the world. And, all of this starting less than 27 years ago. There is more than hope.

After giving him the healing, I knew that was to get things started. This was not to be the one healing cure for what ailed him. It was obvious the heavy toll taken in his commitment to provide the best for his family and community. I gathered that a huge portion of any physical distress he may have suffered over the years has been largely due to overriding his deep feelings in order to get the job done. He is a respected leader from the generation that believed that for a good cause, the end justifies the means, that one must "bite the bullet" and get the job done, and that it is a sign of weakness for a man to show his feelings. Now, the time has come for him to have his healing. And, part of his healing is necessary for him to succeed in realizing his vision of building the "Health Super-Highway." For, we cannot hope to provide global healthcare on the shoulders of unhealthy means. Now, we must let the ends blossom out of healthy, happy, and holistic, sustainable means. We need to support individual creativity and freedom in a way that concurrently benefits the whole. We can no longer neglect or abuse one class of people to provide for another. Without mindful and compassionate

means, we cannot reach our true destination.

Dr. Reddy thanked me for the healing and asked that if there would be any way to see him one more time before I left Chennai, he would be grateful. I hoped I would be able to do that and told him that I will see what I can do with my remaining schedule.

Then, I offered a healing for Mrs. Reddy. Although she, too, had physical ailments, I realized that the first order of healing for her was communication. So, I started to tell her about herself. Suddenly, her eyes opened wide and she said, "Please excuse me for a moment." Then, she quickly left the room. Within a minute, she returned telling someone behind her, "You must come in and hear this." Two of her daughters followed her into the room, excited, but somewhat perplexed. *What's going on here?*

Mrs. Reddy sat back down in her chair in front of me, smiling. What I saw was a great soul, a woman with so much wisdom culled from life experience. Her only problem, it seemed to me, was that people didn't listen to her enough - really listen to what she was saying.

Often, a person sharing wisdom may be seen as "controlling" by those who may not understand where she is coming from. But, I could see that this woman

observed everything, especially about those she loved. She instinctively saw things in the larger context of family or community instead of seeing the interaction between two people as a separate happening, just between the two. Her input would often be difficult to digest for those involved in the fast-paced, high-demand life in business, because wisdom gives on its own time regardless of what expectations the world may place upon us. As I described the way she was as a soul to her, both her daughters chimed in enthusiastically to her, "That's exactly how you are!" Nothing I said was new to any of them - yet, it's so easy to forget and allow ourselves to become invalidated. Within minutes, the spiritual matriarch long lost in the shuffle and dust of corporate business, child-rearing, and the often thankless job of taking care of a family of powerhouses busily transforming the world, looked much more her radiant self. She laughed a laugh of joyous celebration. And, her daughters joined in heartily.

"Who wants to be next?" I said. In chorus, they replied, "Oh, no, you must be hungry."

"That's all right," I said. "I had breakfast before I came and my time here is running out quickly."

"Oh, but we've already prepared breakfast for you," said Mrs. Reddy as she excused herself from the

room. Her daughters, Preetha and Suneeta, then invited me to follow them into the dining room next door.

I entered a lovely dining room, the table already set with delicacies with more being brought in every minute by the kitchen staff. Soon, Sindhoori, Suneeta's daughter, entered the dining room and sat to my left as Mrs. Reddy seated herself next to her granddaughter, while Preetha and Suneeta sat to my right. I smiled at four beautiful and bright faces looking at me spanning three generations - with three "baby beings" dancing around Sindhoori, the fourth generation in waiting.

"Some salad? Eggs? Cottage cheese?" Mrs. Reddy offered. Meanwhile fresh juices arrived from the kitchen and she instructed the kitchen crew to bring me the grilled fish. Padmini and Suneeta must have gone over my dietary needs and preferences. Except that wherever I had put an "or" between items, they've replaced it with an "and"! In between my "normal" food list items deliciously prepared came a variety of exotic traditional Indian dishes. "Here try a little pancake," was followed by the appearance of an enormous, yet delicate, loosely rolled-up, shiny and slightly crunchy version of a French crepe. Light, mildly sweet, and delicious. Some fish, paneer, dal, curry...I had a little of everything. A feast for the eyes, nose, taste-buds, and stomach.

It was delightful to just sit, relax and dine, and communicate with and enjoy the company of three generations of powerful and brilliant women. Once again, as at our first meeting at the hospital, I enjoyed joking around and lightly teasing Sindhoori about her baby beings.

The enthusiastic welcome, the kind and gentle hospitality, and the humble openness of these four women inspired me. Here were the Managing Director and next Chairwoman, the Director of Finances, and the VP of Operations of a medical empire and the mother and grandmother who, from the background, supported and guided them through all their ups-and-downs. It can be done, and I was seeing what we all need more of in the times to come.

Over the wonderful brunch, I communicated with each one a little about her concerns. I knew there had to be a next time soon to continue. Already, Suneeta had called Padmini to get permission to stretch our time a half an hour. To give us a few more minutes to communicate, Suneeta offered to personally escort me back to my next rendez-vous point: Lunch at a Thai Restaurant with Padmini and several of her group! It would be my third meal in six hours.

On our drive to my lunch date, Suneeta and I had a chance to talk

about several important things affecting her life and agreed that somehow we'll have to get together again before I headed out of Chennai. I told her I needed to give her father another healing to complete what I started that morning. She said she would call Padmini later to find out if anything could be scheduled.

I entered the restaurant to find a long table of bright and colorful auras and smiling faces. Padmini, Indira, Oxana, Tanya, Savitha, Raj, Amitaabh, Suzzanne, Ranjan, Vikram, and Ajit were already savoring their Thai delicacies. For me, it was like traveling through different dimensions throughout the day. And, like teleporting or time travel, there was a slight disorientation and reorientation experience initially as I passed from one portal to the next. It was hysterical going from an elegant brunch straight into another exotic luncheon. Fortunately, by this time, I had become proficient in eating tidbits. So, eating-wise, it was like a day-long dim sum feast.

Having been born under the sign of the Crab, this was right up my alley. Yum! And, there's nothing that quite compares with sharing stories and laughing with a group of kindred souls over a colorful, fragrant, and delectable meal. With each meal, I had the pleasure of getting to know a little more about each person. From the

unique array of sparkling beads, certain ones naturally cohere into a beautiful necklace. So it was with these little "sub-groups" coming together out of the larger community of healers and teachers.

Each time I had a chance to sit with Padmini, we would catch up and synchronize. It was a joy to work with her - an easy flow, graceful and intuitive. We would also catch up on the day-by-day transformations that were happening in our lives. Miracles were bubbling up.

Before long, a new entourage of Renu, Vikash, and Janani with her son and daughter appeared on the scene with fanfare. They were ready to sweep me up out of the restaurant with whoever else wanted to join in to take me to Mahabalipuram, also known as Mammallapuram, on the northeastern coast of Tamil Nadu. It is known for its historic monuments and temples built



between the 7th and 9th Centuries CE and has been declared a UNESCO World Heritage Site.

With Vikash, Renu's husband, instructing one driver and Janani, one of Padmini's assistants at the Pranic Healing Home, guiding the other, the rest of us, Oxana, Ranjan, Tanya, Janani's daughter and son, and I hopped in one of the two vehicles to get on the road.

Once we arrived at Mahabalipuram, Vikash became my personal guide and regaled me with the fascinating history and legends behind the many remarkable bas relief sculptures. For example, he identified for me who the various characters were that were depicted on the massive bas relief wall depicting scenes from the epic *Mahabharata*. Pointing to an emaciated figure in the classic one-legged Tree Vrikshasana yoga balance, he



recounted the legend of Arjuna's penance to receive a boon from Lord Shiva to win the Mahabharata War. In

response to Arjuna's sacrifice and triumph of mind over body, the relief also showed a legion of angels supporting his efforts. Of course, my favorite reliefs on the monolith were those of a family of beautifully carved giant elephants.

In the exquisitely carved Varaha Cave Temple, Vikash offered me

the backstory for the central carving depicting Varaha, Lord Vishnu's third incarnation as the Boar, holding Bhudevi, the earth goddess. It is told that Vishnu as Varaha defeated the demon Hiranyaksha, retrieved the Vedas, and recovered the earth from the bottom of the cosmic ocean. This story appears to be consistent with the earth and humanity recovering from the last deluge and beginning the next cycle of evolution. Vikash also explained that the Lord Buddha was said to be Vishnu's most recent

incarnation and his final one is yet to come during this current era as Kalki, the Eternal, who will end time. Although many fear that the

significance of the end of the Mayan Calendar in 2012 is the end of the world, it in fact, may represent the appearance of Kalki and the end of

time. As the Hopi have said, it will be the time of never-ending, or eternal, peace. It appears the prophecies everywhere all point to the same thing.

During our enchanting tour of Mahabalipuram, I also got a chance to connect even more with Janani's bright and very psychic 11-year old son, Kannan. We had first met at the Pranic Healing Home and he asked if he could attend my seminars.

Normally, my seminars are geared to adult students, but, seeing his sincerity and desire to learn, along with the fact that he had been



attending my astral classes, I gave him permission to try one out. He ended up

participating in all three days of the clairvoyance and the healing seminars. On the long drive back to the hotel after the tour, he came with me,

Ranjan, Tanya, Renu, and Vikash and alternated between laughing and going through a healing crisis, releasing a great deal of

unattended energies from his past. Miracles show up everywhere and anytime.

Although everyone wanted to gift me with various mementos from the gift shops lining the streets, I told them that I had so little space in my suitcase to carry anything back home and still keep it under the weight limit. So, I settled for one beautiful Ganesh statue gift from Renu and Vikash. If it weren't for space and weight limits, I could have turned several rooms at home into a variety of temples. But, I've long had great affinity for the Elephant God, Ganesh, the Remover of All Obstacles.

My Final Seminar in Chennai

The first day of March brought me my final all-day seminar to teach in Chennai - *Living a Life of Miracles: Spiritual*

Awareness, Tools & Practices

to Heal Yourself and Others. This was the one for healers and students of healing. The ninety or so die-hard healers attended this final seminar. The great majority of them had participated in all of them. Just about now, their massive growth periods should be kicking in, so, it was a good thing that we were having an all-day healing seminar. Although originally scheduled to be from 10 AM - 6 PM, we didn't stop the seminar until past 7:30 PM. After all, it was for most of us, our last day together.

It was a day of healing - and of miracles.

We

began with healing of rooms, buildings, other spaces and worked our way through

communicating with healing masters and

healing one another's auras, chakras and energy channels. All in a days' work as they say. The

light in the conference hall was blazing.

One of the miracles for me was to see almost a hundred healers, most of whom were trained in a particular healing system, enjoying learning about healing from a completely different teacher. Yet, I



heard time and again, how compatible what I offered was to what they've been learning.

Several, including Padmini, told me that I reminded them of their departed Master. He, too, they said, laughed a lot! It didn't escape many of them either when I talked about my death experience related to the heart attack several years back. They told me that their teacher died at 52 with a heart attack. I told one of the students, "See, I had to come back so he could leave!"

I understood that there was some criticism thrown around after his death from some of his detractors: How could he have been a real healer if he got sick and died at a young age of a heart attack? I



suppose many people live under the illusion that healers never get sick - or die. That's why I regularly joke about healers being some of the sickest people in the world. Many people don't realize that the nature of all healers is a deep compassion. We're not that afraid of suffering and others' well-being is at the top of our list of priorities. Even the best of us sometimes take on a bit more than might be good for us in the pursuit of lending a helping hand. And, the further we get along, there becomes less and less to hold us here in the physical. Sometimes, we deliberately take on a bit of another's karma to alleviate some of their suffering.

How difficult would it be for a young and strong person to immediately reach over to take up the heavy bags he sees an elderly person struggling with? Or for a loving parent to pick up an injured child and carry the child to safety. It's not unlike that between a teacher and a student or a healer and a patient. Beneath all the mess, it's love in action.

By this final event of my Chennai visit, we had the lunch thing down. I remember being escorted to a nice private table that was set up for me in the corner of the room and being given a seat. It was nice to have a full

lunch break and still be able to be with

everyone.

A group of healers sat around with me eating their lunches so that we could communicate and enjoy one another's company in a social

more environment than a "classroom" one. It's important to have different spaces throughout the day.

What helped to create this was that more people were learning the concept of giving space to each other - in this case, me being the trial prototype for the experiment was a pleasure. Yes, please, try out your newfound awareness of giving someone the space to be, by finding your own space to be in.

The "Jello Blob Syndrome" that I described in the first couple of events had all but disappeared - at least, during the seminar. Padmini had laughed about the "Jello Blob Syndrome" that I

described about many Indian family members' auras "glommed" together into a gooey, Jello-like blob, especially amongst family groups traveling together.

I first noticed the Indian "group blob auras" in the airport at

Singapore while relaxing in a public area. I would see a blob of Jello-like energy, foggy purples, dark greens, and yellows especially, moving across the open floor among the rest of all the people who were going here and there in the airport. When I examined the bodies that were immersed within the "blobs," most, if not all of them, looked to me to be of East Indian origin. I would watch a cluster of people,



mostly non-Indian, walk across without a noticeable “blob” around them, then, I would see a “blob” of Indian people crossing my view. Obviously, the group of Indian people knew one another and most of them seemed to be related. For me, it became like playing a video game. I then expanded my field of exploration and started looking further down the large hallways in the various directions. I could spot the “Jello Blob” group auras from a distance. As I watched a particular “blob” cluster come closer to where I was sitting, I could make out the ethnic composition of the group. The bigger “blob” formations seemed to be mostly Indian extended family-type groups. I deliberately looked for other ethnic clusters of people that seemed to be family or relatives. I noticed many Chinese groups of people and several of them had an overall field of energy encompassing the whole group, often yellowish in nature, but, not quite in the same “Jello Blob” forms. When I saw groups of Japanese people, there were also overall energies around the whole group, often more of the darker blues and yellows, but again, not quite as thick. It was fascinating.

As we progressed through our various events in Chennai, I noticed less and less of this formation among people. Even when the group I was teaching only had one member of a family attending my seminar, that person in earlier events would display an

overlay of that group “blob” energy around him or her. It wouldn’t be quite as prominent as when clusters of family members got together, but, nonetheless, some of the energy would be around the individual. By this final seminar of mostly all healers, I didn’t see much of the family “blob” energy around anyone. I could also see that each person’s aura was brighter and shining more radiantly. They were practicing letting their light shine more.

Often, when we so closely glom on to one another, we begin to let the others’ energies obscure our own light. Our light is always bright, but, just as clouds rolling in may obscure the sun’s rays, our eternally bright light temporarily becomes covered over and hidden from view when we resist or become attached to it. These students were learning to blow away those clouds. It was delightful to witness.

Another thing I noticed from the healers’ seminar was that when several of us met together the next afternoon for a final lunch before my departure from Chennai, a few of them were putting to good use what they had learned the day before. When I arrived at the Chinese restaurant, I immediately noticed that the energy at the restaurant was different than any other restaurant that I had been in. In fact, the energy was delightful. It was bright and sparkling and full of amusement. It was like

receiving a warm welcome and a healing as I walked through the entry way. The whole restaurant was bright and it took a moment for my physical eyes to adjust to be able to make out who all were sitting at our table.

As I approached our group, Ranjan and Indira, with huge smiles on their faces, said, “Do like it?” Ranjan spread out his arms as if to encompass the restaurant.

“The restaurant?” I asked. “Yes, it’s great.”

“Do you like the energy?” He asked.

“Yes,” I answered, “It’s wonderful. I got a healing just walking in here.”

“We did it,” he announced proudly. “We healed the restaurant. We’re practicing. Do you think it worked?”

It absolutely worked. It was the nicest restaurant energy I’ve been in a long time - and, I didn’t have to work on it! But, the funny thing I noticed around me was that the waiters were not handling it very well. They were running into each other, dropping things, not able to get orders right, and generally buzzing around in circles.

I had the group of young healers who worked on the energy to observe the waiters. They told me that they’ve been to this restaurant before and the waiters were

usually right on top of things. I laughed and explained to them that when they healed the restaurant energy and raised it up quite high, the waiters, not being used to functioning at the higher level became more ungrounded and out of their bodies. Now, that's not a good combination. When we're ungrounded and out of our bodies trying to function in the physical world, we become much more prone to accidents, being uncoordinated, and so forth. So, I instructed them that when they heal the energy of a place and reset it, they need to ground not only the space but those who are in it. The waiters settled down and got more into their groove after we gave them their grounding. This was like a fun field trip - taking the classroom out into the world. I loved it.



At the conclusion of the healers' seminar, Padmini came up to the stage for the first time during the events to speak a few words. Full of grace, she extended her deep appreciation and that of the whole group for what I shared with them that day and throughout the week of extraordinary happenings. Then, she presented me with a gorgeous patina bronze statue, with parts gold-leafed, of the Lord Buddha in meditation. She said

she knew my luggage space was limited, but that it was a small enough piece. It was perfect. It represented to me a new image of the Buddha in meditation - one of joyous abundance.



It felt like a great celebration. After signing books for people, sharing in many photo opts, and laughing until it was going on nine o'clock, a few of the healers invited me to

join them for dinner if I liked. I told them I'd be delighted. They wanted to accommodate my need to stay away from the hot peppers as much as

possible and suggested an Italian restaurant this

time. *Indian Italian*, of course, they added. So, off I went for an appetizer pizza, a mushroom & chicken risotto, and a scoop of vanilla gelato with Amitaabh, Suzanne, Indira, Indu, Ranjan, Tanya, and Oxana. Nothing in my final dinner in Chennai had hot peppers or nightshades! Ha-ha!

March 2 - Final Day in Chennai

The celebratory energy continued into the astral class. As souls, everyone knew they took giant steps over the past few days. The miracles would unfold over the next few months for them in the body. Some would be subtle, others not so.

I had set aside my final day in Chennai to take care of all the logistics and business of finalizing events. But, also, Padmini told me that there would be enough free time to go meet with the Apollo Hospital group once more if I liked. I asked for her to set up with Suneeta a visit at their main hospital this time for her, Oxana, and me after lunch.

I spent the morning at Padmini's Healing Center meeting with her



and her real estate agent to look at some possible properties on the computer for her new healing and retreat center.

Padmini even shared with me the architectural renderings for the center. It's wonderful.

Then, we met with her accountants and while paperwork was going through, I had a chance to communicate with several of the healers. One of them, Rajini, had been quietly assisting me all throughout the events and was one who naturally knew how to maintain her own space well. I wanted to have a chance to give her some communication as well as learn more about her. She happened to be right there, once again helping in the background, and we got to talk.

When she asked me about her son, I told her about what I saw in him and that it would be great if I

could have talked to him myself. Rajini said that she invited her son to come with her, but he decided against it. Then, the door opened with someone showing her son into the room!

As I talked with Rajini's son, one of the things I said to



him when he expressed his interest in computer animation was that it would be good for him to experience being in a real graphics animation studio to get a feel for what really goes on, the energies there, and so forth. For anyone, it's one thing to think about something, but quite different to get the reality of it. Then, I thought about my conversation the night before over dinner with Amit and Suzanne about their business and profession as computer graphic artists,

designers, and teachers. "How about introducing your son to Amit and Suzanne?" I said to Rajini. Then, when we

finished our conversation and started to leave the room, we literally walked right into Amit! This is how the miracle unfolds itself.

After having that fun final lunch I described earlier, Padmini, Oxana, and I rode off to the Main Apollo Hospital in Chennai that houses the Office of the Chairman. We would have the opportunity to complete the healing process I started with him two days ago.

We were welcomed into the fold of the inner sanctum of the hospital immediately. It felt like walking into the heart and brain of the whole empire. One of the first things that Dr. Reddy said as he welcomed us into his office was, "In this room is where it all began." Everything ripples out from the center and this was the center of the Apollo universe. The healing that was about to take place in this room would have a long-term rippling effect throughout that whole universe. After our last session, Dr. Reddy asked if possible that I may come to his hospital and bless not only the pranic healing and meditation room, but the hospital itself. It appeared that we would all work together on that request now.

I went into prayer and I also asked Padmini and Oxana to join me in this healing for the



Founder of the hospital. I won't go into the personal nature of the healing itself, but, I did witness a miracle in the making as I communicated to him what was deep within his soul. When we were finished with the healing and communication, the visionary and pioneer looked up, eyes sparkling, and said with a big smile, "I feel very good. Thank you."

Just then, Suneeta and Preetha walked into his office and in unison declared, "It's so bright in here! Daddy, you look wonderful - you look amazing!" The larger healing had begun.

I thoroughly enjoyed my time with Dr. Reddy and then we moved on to bless the healing and meditation room. I was so happy to see a hospital that dedicated a room to pranic/energy healing and meditation. In fact, many of the Apollo Hospitals have such a room. It's open to pranic healers to come and give healing to those patients in the care of the hospital who ask for them. I was glad that Padmini came and I felt that there was a new appreciation of the role she plays as a healer and a teacher in the greater community. Without her part, none of this would have been possible.

We spent the next couple of hours with Suneeta and Sindhoori in the pranic healing room with Suneeta's mother checking in from time to time. This is the

wonder of developing yourself clairvoyantly - with each encounter with another person, you get to know that soul more and more deeply. And, it doesn't have to take a long time to get to the bottom of something problematic.

Naturally, there's always other places to go to and other people to see. We needed to get back to the hotel to finalize things, so we took our leave from the Reddys and their hospital promising to meet again sometime, whether in India or in the US.

My final hours anywhere can tend to get a bit hectic, but especially in a new place on a visit. While meeting with the accountants in the hotel, the lobby waitress brought me a bottle of water and then asked if I was "Mr. Michael." When I said that I was, she smiled and ran off.

It turned out that the owner of the hotel wanted to meet me. But, taking care of business took longer than anticipated and she had to go pick up her children, so we just got to meet for a minute. She was happy that e4a chose her hotel in which to host my seminars and healing event and hoped that I would return soon. She also wanted to talk to me about more



personal matters, but, that would have to wait for another time.

Over the course of eleven days in this hotel, an enormous amount of healing and transformation took place. On my last day there, I found out that a hotel guest drowned in the pool during an outdoor evening party mishap a year or so ago. Since then, the hotel had experienced many problems. Perhaps, all the extraordinary healing energies we produced cleaned up much of



any residual negative effects from that tragedy. It's always good to see a hotel heal itself.

Padmini and I said our goodbyes in the hotel lobby, but as souls we know there are no real goodbyes.

After all, tweaking the expression a bit, "How can I miss you when you keep showing up as spirit everywhere?" Yet, there was no question about it. It was a remarkable - and joyously overflowing - eleven days.

Before I head up to my room to finish packing, I find Oxana to sync up our schedule to meet in the lobby at 3:45 in the morning to taxi over to the airport in time to clear security checks for our flight to Varanasi via Delhi, where we would join up with Sameer and his cousin Sumeet for a new adventure:

Tracing a few of Buddha's footsteps nearly 2600 years ago.

On to Delhi and Varanasi

To fly from Chennai to Varanasi meant far more to me than just another trip. I was going to travel through time and space, from the lifetime as Thomas following in the footsteps of the Christ back to the lifetime as Ananda, when I followed in Buddha's footsteps as his disciple and devoted attendant. With a sense of completion and fulfillment in the Thomas mission and my lifetime as Jesus' disciple, I was now opening my book of life to the chapter that recorded my relationship with the great Awakened One. A few hours strapped in a Kingfisher Airlines

economy seat, I would bridge the distance between south and north India. Soaring in the luxury cabin of spirit, I would close the gap between my profound relationships with the two great masters and what I have learned from them.

But, before I could make that transition, as I walked past an area of the parking lot toward the airport entrance, I received a sign. It came attached to a movable traffic divider, one of those metal pipe fences. Big black block letters, all caps, spelled out EZRA, on plain white backing. Nothing else. Just EZRA. I looked around the parking area and though there were other movable traffic dividers just like the one this sign was attached to, none of the other ones had any signs on them. Only this particular one did, right in front of me. It just read, EZRA.

First of all, I was still in Chennai, India. The sign didn't say, ANJIT or RAMESH or RAMA or anything Indian. EZRA is a Jewish name. In the middle of an airport parking lot affixed on a traffic divider. It wouldn't have meant much for anyone else. But, for me, that was my name in a lifetime between the one with Buddha, which I was "traveling back" toward and the one as Thomas, from which I was departing. My lifetime as the Jewish priest-scribe Ezra was right between those two lifetimes and in my transit from one to the other, I get this sign! How funny. Spirit "talks" to you in many ways. It was reminding me that I needed to consider how the Ezra lifetime connects some of the dots in my

progression from Ananda to Thomas. It pays to stay vigilant.

Some time ago, Sameer, one of my trusted healers' apprentices, whom Oxana and I were en route to join for this next adventure to distill more of our history into wisdom, made a profound observation. He shared with his fellow apprentices that perhaps the reason that I have always experienced so many miracles in my life was not necessarily due to me being special or unique, but that it had more to do with me being awake enough to notice them happening all around me. Then, he put theory to practice and started paying much closer attention to all that happened around him on a daily basis. Sameer discovered there were so many more miracles blossoming all around him as well.

When a seeker asked the Buddha what exactly he was, it is said that he answered, "I'm awake." By this answer, Buddha was first saying that he was not an object, but, rather, beingness. He didn't say that he was a master or *an* any *thing*. He also was teaching the seeker that the only difference between the seeker and himself was that the Buddha was awake. We are all the same beingness, but only some are awake to that reality.

Before seeing the EZRA sign, I had forgotten about that incarnation relative to my Thomas and Ananda incarnations. Although it was not a life lived in India, it, too, was an integral lifetime in my progress toward realizing oneness. The focus of my lifetime as Ananda was

that of completely turning within and developing the necessary mastery over my mind. That included a complete commitment of my life to serving an awakened master and seeing him through his passing and beyond. In my following lifetime as Ezra, I was to put all that I gained in my life with the Buddha into the practice of inspiring and leading a large group of people on an improbable mission back to their homeland.

It was so reminiscent of the path I chose in a much earlier pair of incarnations in Ancient Egypt. In the first of the two lives, I was a devoted servant boy to the Pharaoh and willingly chose to be buried with my master upon his death. In the following life, I was reborn into the royal family to be groomed as the heir to the throne as well as to be secretly trained as an initiate. In one life I served as a devoted servant and in the next I served as the leader. First, we go to school as students to learn. Then, we go out into the world to put into practice what we've learned. In leadership school, we must first learn humility, forgiveness, and how to faithfully serve others before we can graduate and serve a community as a leader. In teachers' school, we must first master being a student before we can learn to be successful teachers. This has always been the path of an initiate: Learn, Practice, Share/Teach, Master.

It was a pleasant two and a half hour flight from Chennai to Delhi. I enjoyed watching Oxana create her

private cabin whenever she wanted to nap by cocooning herself from head to knees in her colorful shawl. She would disappear from the world. Contrary to what she might think of herself, Oxana is a powerful soul in a petite package. You can't be a weakling and grow up in Siberia. On the other hand, being smart, she moved to Hawaii as soon as she could. It was good to see her thrive in the alternate universe called India. I don't think anyone could have guessed exactly what it was going to be like to travel all the way to India, live in an alien environment, and be in my classes almost full-time for ten days straight (and that doesn't count the astral!). She told me that while she was making up her mind whether to go to India to be in my classes or not, she would think, "Why should I spend all this money, take time out from work, and travel all the way to India to listen to Michael teach all the same things I've heard before?"

Ask her whether it was any different for her this time and whether she learned anything new.

Shortly after our Airbus A320-200's tires (the same aircraft, incidentally, that Sampath captains) bounced on the New Delhi tarmac and came to a stop, Sameer's friendly, shiny, brown head bobbed among those entering the front of our plane. His aura wasn't quite covered with the Indian "Jello-Blob Syndrome", but having had his time with various members of his extended family and a massive growth period coming on, I doubted that he could see me waving at him from the rear

of the craft. After he had a chance to sit down, ground, and find his space a bit, however, he got up and saw me. When Oxana returned to her seat, we had a quick celebratory reunion and were introduced to Sumeet, Sameer's cousin. Sumeet, Sameer. Now, say that fast a hundred times! I learned a chant like that once.

As we lifted off out of Delhi, once again, it felt as if we were going from one pole to the opposite one. I thought that time travel must feel like what I was experiencing. The energy space I had just left was so completely different than the energy space I was coming into. It was like popping over too quickly from one dimension into another one. Whoa, Nelly! Hang on to them horses! Hee-haw! Oh, yeah, this is still India. Moo.



Deer Park in Sarnath

We flew the second leg from Delhi to Varanasi in about 90 minutes. Met by our driver and a tour

organizer from Incredible Voyages (the company owned and operated by Sameer's childhood friend, Munish) we boarded a spacious air-conditioned mini-bus for our trek to Hotel Clarks in Varanasi. There were some fourteen seats in the bus for the four of us! We were cruising.

It's quite amazing that we were somewhat in the middle of nowhere, yet, there's a ton of people

crowding the streets. That's one of the differences being in a country that fits nearly four times the population of the United States into less than one-third it's land mass. 1.2 billion people is a lot of people.



If Oxana thought we were constantly on the move in Chennai, she would soon discover that we're going to kick that up a few notches. We're squeezing into five days a few lifetimes of experiences. At the end of it all, even our resident guide, Sumeet, said, "We covered a lot in a very short time."



Once we got ourselves checked in, freshened up, and fed, our new foursome got our bus driver to shuttle us over to Sarnath to pay our respects to Deer Park, the place where Buddha, after attaining enlightenment, gave his first sermon to five

bikkhus

(monks)

with whom he had lived and studied years before.

Initially, after his awakening, Buddha was reluctant to teach anything to anyone. Yet, once he committed to doing so and opening that doorway here at Deer Park, Sarnath became the birth place of a revolution in consciousness much like the one Jesus started some 500 to 600 years later.

by my feet next to me. I saw as if I were watching a vivid slide show of scenes of various times, often on

verdant hillsides, where the Buddha gave his talks to crowds of people. I was always amongst those listening and meditating

upon his words and upon the energy he radiated. At times, I sat right next to him and at other times, I was among the monks in the front row,

at the ready to attend to him. At times he would send me on errands while he taught and at



I meditated at the base of the mammoth *stupa* (Buddhist structure built to hold relics) built on the spot where Buddha gave his first sermon. A tiny puppy slept

times he would have me teach in his stead. It reminded me a lot of being with my teacher, Lewis, in the earlier years of my current incarnation.

I could have easily stayed there for hours. Buddha appeared to me from behind me and sidled up next to me to my right. It felt a little like we were two ancient friends sitting on a park bench feeding birds and talking about old times.

"Ananda," he said smiling, "there was a 'Doubting Thomas' in you in

your life as Ananda as well.” Although, in my life as Thomas, I wasn’t quite the kind of doubter as portrayed in John’s Gospel, but, I did have doubts about my own capabilities. At both San Thome Church and the Mount in Chennai, I got to see how much I had accomplished during my life there in contrast to the feeling that I carried that somehow I had failed Jesus when I got myself killed there before I was finished. That feeling carried over into my



subsequent life so much that I spent much of that life fighting depression. As Ananda, before my awakening, I felt I had failed Buddha because I didn’t get enlightened even though I had taught many, helped resolve many conflicts between individuals and between groups, tended to him until he passed on, and carried on with the work for years afterwards. It wasn’t until I was able to clear away those images and attain my enlightenment, just as Buddha before his passing had predicted to me that I would, that I was free from those feelings.

Prior to my awakening in that lifetime, Buddha would periodically

tell me to “get over it” when I would fall into an emotional state. It turned out to be even more difficult when I had incarnated into the Jewish body of Thomas and I was known as “moody.” When I said to Raphaëlle, “Well, I’m glad that I’m not that way in this life!” She rolled her eyes and said, “Oh, brother!” What would she have meant by that, I wonder?

I did, however, feel that I made some huge strides in that regard during my meditation in Deer Park. Buddha pointed out to me a few deeply held old regrets and helped me release them. By doing so, I reclaimed a good portion of my energy. It was an amazing healing. Sarnath gave me back a part of myself.



Kashi Vishwanath Temple

Varanasi, also known as Benares, is a spiritual mecca for

Hindus, Buddhists, Jains, and other pilgrims. It is also one of the oldest known continuously inhabited cities in the world. So, when we returned to Varanasi, Sumeet suggested that we go and experience the evening *pujas* at the Kashi Vishwanath Temple in the holy city, considered the most powerful and important Shiva temples in all of India.

In California, we always joke that Sameer is our rickshaw driver as he cheerfully chauffeurs us around

in his luxurious sedan. In Varanasi, however, Sameer said to me, “You can’t go back to the US without having had a real rickshaw experience.” So, he got us two real rickshaws, complete with professional drivers. These were no *tuk-tuks*. These were real rickshaws: A covered wood plank seat for two (barely) over two bicycle wheels connected to (sort of) the front half of a (very old) one-speed bicycle. It came standard with a very skinny (*very skinny*) driver. They’re very romantic, actually. Sameer and I snuggled up on one (not quite fitting all the way on the seat) and Oxana (tiny) and Sumeet (thin) paired up for the other. We weren’t thinking of weight distribution as we paired up for Mr. Toad’s wild ride.

Once we got on the road, I felt bad for our driver. Sumeet and Oxana’s rickshaw whizzed by us effortlessly. Our driver, an emaciated, half-starved forty-something guy, must have had telekinetic powers. I don’t see any other way he could have tricycled Sameer and me over all the deep potholes and gravel mostly uphill through miles of deadly traffic. His body seemed composed of solid bone, sinew, and skin. His total weight couldn’t have been more than 105 pounds. Sameer and I decided that we could import the rickshaw set-up to the US, make a DVD of these drivers doing their thing, and package the whole thing as a quick weight loss and fitness program and make millions.

Literally, these guys not only carried us practically on their

backs for miles each way, but hung out with us all evening while we went and toured the temple. And here was the final kicker: All for about \$7 for BOTH. Outrageously over-priced, don't you think?

Ha! How do these guys survive? They both had families to support! I wanted to give them each a hundred, but I was told that that would upset the way things are here. So, I settled for paying them the equivalent of about \$10 EACH and Oxana threw in a little more for tips. Our driver kept shaking my hands, he was so grateful. I was grateful for what he had given us. I was happy to see him so happy, but, we have to change this inequity in this world. I asked for a boon for these two - may they have fulfilling lives.

The Temple experience itself was surreal. First, just to get to the entrance of the temple, I felt like a rat trapped in a maze with no real cheese at the end. Good evening shoppers, you have never experienced a shopping mall like this one! It's like a bad acid trip into a maze of tiny sidewalk-sized *gali* (alleyways) packed with people, merchants, scammers, police, motorcyclists(!), goats, cows, cow dung, urine, garbage, sewage, incense smoke, and hundreds of tiny shops packed with souvenirs, clothing, snack-like

stuff crawling with flies, religious trinkets and offerings, and deafening noise. This goes on and on and on and the *galis* branch into more *galis*.



out of there by myself! We walked and walked through all of this. When we finally found the gate to the temple, the police with machine guns and rifles told us that Oxana and I would not be allowed through the regular gate to the temple. We were not Hindu. We had to find Gate 2 instead. It was for foreigners. This was not the Yellow Brick Road.

We finally managed to get to Gate 2. Now, we had to take our socks and shoes off. For the first time, I saw horror in Oxana's eyes. *We have to walk through puddles with cow poop and who knows what else bare feet?* They screamed. Naturally, we weren't allowed to keep our socks and shoes. We had to find the locker station. So, we trudge further to dispose of our footwear. Once back at Gate 2, however, we are told, "No cell phones. No cameras." One more time, back to the lockers. This time, one of the police officers

decides Oxana and I can't go in because we're foreigners. Well, this is Gate 2 for foreigners. We're not Hindu.

Sameer and Sumeet come back out to join us and after conferring with a guide, they say we need to go to the police headquarters. We follow the guide and find

ourselves surrounded with armed policemen. Sumeet speaks to one about our dilemma and pleads our case. After a while of discussion, it appeared that we



were going to be allowed to enter the temple after filling out a form. Suddenly, the officer Sumeet was talking with erupts in anger and, pointing at me, declares, "Christian!" "Non-denominational," I said and smiled. I decided I better not wobble my head in any direction. But, I brought in complete forgiveness and remained neutral. The officer went on for a while. It brought into focus how much hatred there was over religion. He couldn't stand that his temple was being desecrated by the presence of foreigners and non-Hindus.

Meanwhile, the more forgiveness I brought in, the more the police officer sitting next to where I stood came alive. His aura matched

mine and turned all golden. Eyes lit brightly, he turned to me and asked where I was from. We engaged in a friendly conversation while the other officer picked up a newspaper and fumed. After a few minutes, the officer I conversed with said for me to just write my name and address in the book. Sumeet offered to write in Oxana's name and address as well. Then, the smiling officer told us we could go in the temple explaining that they had to beef up security due to the terrorist threats.

Back at Gate 2, apparently, Sameer, Sumeet, and Oxana made it through the first "squeeze down" (we didn't merely get padded down for the security), the metal detector, and the second "squeeze." I didn't. After having every pocket and my buns squeezed to insure not a speck goes by unnoticed, I was told to empty my pockets. I had my hotel room key. That had to go. Once again, I make my trek to the lockers to turn in my key. Confident that I could now join my friends "on the other side," I raise my arms for another "squeeze down." Again, they have me empty my pockets. Nothing new. OK, I get to go through the metal detector. Great! Oh, no, not yet. Another "squeeze" search. Empty pockets. I had my emergency heart meds in a tiny plastic pill pouch. Turn back, do not pass go, do not collect 100 rupees. Go straight out of the gate. By now, Sameer, Sumeet, and Oxana are wondering where I am. Sumeet comes out to see what's going on. We go back to the locker to drop

off my pill pouch. After running through the whole scenario all over again, finally, I make it through Gate 2.

Once in the temple, it felt as if we were all energetically tossed into the washing machine during the wash cycle. Tumbling by were others spiritual arms and hands and faces. All around was energetic chaos. I decide to just follow wherever Sameer and Sumeet went. Soon, I'm crammed into a *puja* room, this one dedicated to the Lord Shiva. There is a font of water with offerings of flowers and coins, in the center of which rose up a large shiny black stone *lingam*, representing Shiva. The priest standing above the font motions me to bow down and touch the *lingam*. I go into prayer, bow down, and reach for the *lingam*. Touching the slick, wet stone was like plugging my fingers into a 220 volt socket. The power vibrating in it was enormous. Out of the pure black *lingam* shot out what looked like a miniature lightning bolt into my hands. The *lingam* itself looked like a tower of light shooting up into the heavens.

The shock of touching the *lingam* gave me a chance to find my space amidst the mind-numbing cacophony of energies bouncing around the temple. I realized that all the chaos in this space was the repercussion of most people not being able to manage the enormity of power running through it. This temple was a pressure cooker of power healing.

Then, a priest demanded a donation. It seemed a contradiction in terms. But, I was happy to give my offering. Being in this temple was like taking off in a rocket ship. I imagined the possibilities of what might be accomplished here if people understood it's true significance and were properly taught how to manage the power pulsing within it. Somehow, the experience seemed to me as if I were visiting a nuclear power plant being managed by a tourist agency.

Like cattle (but not the sacred kind), we were then herded into the next shrine. This *puja* room was dedicated to Annapurna, the Goddess of Nourishment and of Kasi (Varanasi), The City of Light. It is said that Pavarti, Shiva's consort, is worshipped as Annapurna. Moving immediately from the experience of the *Shiva Lingam* into the shrine dedicated to the Divine Mother and Goddess of Nourishment, was like being reborn and put to suckle at mother's breasts. From intense masculine power and light, I entered into a cocoon of welcoming, golden love. All the cacophony of noise and energies receded into the background. I felt embraced with laughter and celebration. Yet, in the physical world, a priest droned mantras, ran people through the rituals, and demanded more donations.

The next and final shrine was dedicated to Lord Vishnu, the preserver. Vishnu, incarnated as the avatar, Krishna, says to Arjuna, "I am the goal, the sustainer, the

master, the witness, the abode, the refuge, and the most dear friend. I am the creation and the annihilation, the basis of everything, the resting place and the eternal seed." Almost the same communication that Christ, incarnated as Jesus, gave his disciples.

Sumeet, Sameer, Oxana, and I ended up participating in several rounds of *pujas* in this shrine. Once again, what was happening in the physical sense and what transpired in spirit seemed at opposite ends of the dichotomy. In the physical end, the priest, although a bit more animated than any of the previous ones, seemed more concerned about praying to get Sameer married off as soon as possible and other more worldly concerns, such as how large of a

donation he would be able to squeeze out of us Americans before we left his charge. In spirit, however, a completely different scenario unfolded. It was as if lining every street and alleyway between you and God were merchants set

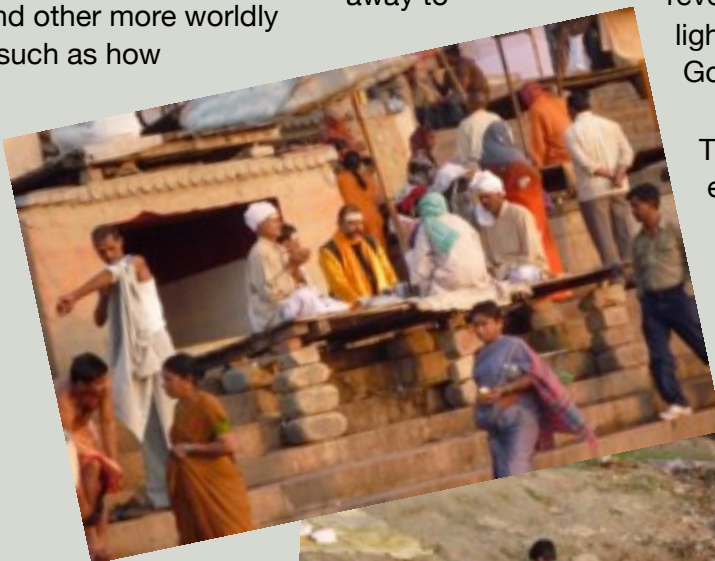
up to tempt you to buy what you needed before you could find God. If you fell into the trap of believing that you needed to buy their wares to find God, you would miss your opportunity to experience God



everywhere. Yet, if you could let all of the visions and hallucinations be, without compromising your certainty in the Divine, they will fall away to

reveal the light of God.

The entire



experience through the labyrinth of congested market alleyways to the police inquisition and through the various *pujas* was very much an experience of death and traveling through the various states of

bardo. When I walked out of the labyrinth of the Golden Temple, I felt that I had lived through Dante's *Inferno* and *Purgatorio* and now ready to start my journey in *Paradiso*. Today, I had drunk from the River *Lethe* when the Buddha helped me release my memories of regrets. Tomorrow I will drink from the River *Eunoë* to restore more of my memories of

goodness, beauty, and truth so that I may make my way to heaven.

Sunrise On The Ganges

Thursday's sunrise, scintillating diamonds on the Holy waters of the Ganges, cast its golden spell on Sameer, Sumeet, and me. We lazily floated down the liquid incarnation of the Goddess Ganga, mother and comforter to and purifier of countless souls, in a long and narrow boat hired for us by our guide. Gliding quietly along the banks of the Ganges that cradled the City of Light, I reveled in the colorful spectrum of the day coming alive. Brahmin priests performing *arati*, individuals bathing in the holy waters,



groups of women performing their morning *pujas*, laundrymen rhythmically dunking towels in the river then *thwapping* them against boulders, and, finally, bodies being cremated. Even the Mahabharata promises, "If only the bone of a person should touch the water of the Ganges, that person shall dwell, honored, in heaven." They are considered blessed to have their ashes offered to Ganga Ma when their earthly term is up. Although the Ganges empties into the Bay of Bengal, the millions of pilgrims who seek the purifying properties of its waters pray that she will help them reach the gates of heaven.

Retracing Buddha's Footsteps

Sameer, Sumeet, and I return to the hotel in time for breakfast to find Oxana recovering from her experiences at Kashi Vishwanath Temple. After checking out from the hotel, we board our minibus for the 6-hour ride to Bodh Gaya and the Bodhi Tree.

Bodh Gaya, of course, is where Siddhartha Gautama attained his

enlightenment, or *bodhi*, while sitting in meditation under a Pipal tree (*Ficus Religiosa*). Gautama then became known as the Buddha, or the Awakened One, and the tree, the Bodhi Tree. The Sacred Fig tree that now grows on the spot where the great awakening took place nearly 2600 years ago, has continued to be propagated from the original tree under which Buddha sat. It is said that he stood facing the tree in meditation for a week after attaining

enlightenment, without blinking, in gratitude. There exist many stories about the love, care, and respect that the tree received over the centuries. To this day, the blessings of the Awakened One continue to radiate all around it.

From the moment I arrived in Bodh Gaya, but, even more so, at the Bodhi Tree, I experienced such expansive happiness. I was just

happy to be there. I was grateful that I could be there. I was grateful to Sameer that he arranged everything so that I could be there. There was nothing more that I wished to do, than just to have a chance to sit and meditate.

As we entered the Mahabodhi Temple grounds, I was first drawn to circle around the perimeter of the actual temple in meditation and prayer. As I rounded the first corner, I observed signs for silence and the way to the Bodhi Tree.

There were monks, young and old, in saffron as well as burgundy robes. It appeared that some were from local monasteries down the street, while others were from elsewhere in India and from various Southeast Asian countries on pilgrimages. There

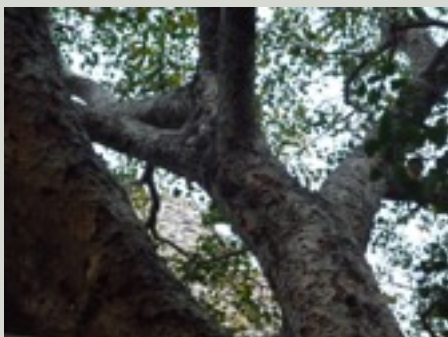


were pilgrims from all corners of the world, many dressed all in white. There were religious tour groups and a scattering of regular tourists. The overwhelming majority of those present, however, seemed sincerely devoted spiritual seekers.

Once again, I observed the great dichotomy there. This could have been another Disneyland scene of crowds of tourists with the multitude of shopkeepers hawking their wares, yet, because



of the very nature of its main attraction, it remained a sanctuary and a place for meditation, prayer, and the profound healing of one's soul.



After several rounds of walking meditation around the temple, I found a spot to sit in and meditate right up near the front of one side of the fencing that guarded the Bodhi Tree. I placed myself on the hard, cool marble floor, saying, "Hello, Namaste," to the tree and to Buddha's presence. As I closed my eyes, everything seemed illuminated. I could see both the brightness of the light of awareness all around this area, but at the same time, I became aware of all the suffering, the seeking of pilgrims, the prayers of the desperate, the pain of the lonely, the determination of those reaching for enlightenment themselves. I asked the Buddha if there was anything I could do to help him fulfill his service here. Then, I was shown that I could help take care of this sanctuary.

In my meditation, I got to work cleaning up the unwanted energies of anguish, despair, pain and other forms of suffering hovering all around the complex. The space

also vibrated with the countless prayers and mantra chanted day and night for centuries. Some protected, some cleansed, some forgave, and some were merely words recited by rote. I sifted around the positive energies of healing set from years of prayers and cleaned up the dust settling around them of the pain that people left behind. I grounded the temple grounds more securely so that the energies left by people could be more readily grounded and neutralized. I also opened up more space for people to be able to have all the blessing and healing that this space and the Buddha provided. I communicated, too, with various of the beings that were present and assisting in this sanctuary.

My meditation kept bringing me to the awareness of suffering. Then, I realized with some amusement that Gautama's intent that led him to meditate under this tree and attain his awakening was that of understanding the nature of suffering and to discover how to liberate oneself from all suffering forever. Of course! And, the suffering that I observed left here by seekers all had its basis in their wanting. I then explored any energy of wanting within myself.

After some time in my meditation, I invited the Buddha if he would like to channel any of his blessing or wisdom to this place or to those who sought him here. Within moments, I experienced his familiar presence entering and a brilliant light passing through me. I don't know how long this

continued, but, when he withdrew from me, I opened my eyes and looked around. The whole area that was mostly empty when I first sat down was now completely packed, almost shoulder-to-shoulder with monks. It appeared that I was the only one in this section without a robe and a shaved head.

Also, I noticed that although normally, I am the main entree at a mosquito feast, this time, I



escaped with relatively few bites considering there were swarms of them coming out at dusk. Some of the veteran pilgrims came armed with long-sleeved shirts, mosquito netting, towels, repellents, and even a few mosquito meditation tents! That I didn't look like bubble wrap was more than a minor miracle.

Bodh Gaya, Second Day

To be able to spend another whole day in Bodh Gaya was extraordinary, considering my schedule in India. Sameer and I so

enjoyed welcoming the sunrise on the Ganges that we decided a sunrise meditation by the Bodhi Tree would be grand. So, we agreed to meet in the hotel lobby at 5:30 AM on our second day.

Walking past the colorful rows of merchants coming to life we entered the temple gates as the sun's first rays of the day soothed the pavement below us. Once again, we walked in meditation and prayer around the temple, circling past the Bodhi Tree several times. Eventually, I found a spot on a long marble bench against a stone fence that was draped in saffron curtains. It was on the opposite side of the tree from the side I meditated on the previous day. Hardly anyone else was in the vicinity at that time, except the mosquitoes. But, this time, I had anointed myself with a pleasant smelling repellent.

I was happily meditating in amusement when I noticed some giggling and laughing to my right. A whole group of monks from Thailand had congregated right next to me and were playing, encouraging each other to go pick up the occasional Bodhi leaf that a



breeze would shake off of the tree. They snapped photos of each other and ran after the falling leaves. Whenever I would raise the

energy, they would laugh harder. I enjoyed their company, occasionally making eye contact with one of them and he would smile back. I felt that I was among friends and a rush of memories of wearing a monk's robe and carrying a begging bowl came over me. I felt very much at home. I meditated until 9 AM when Sameer and I decided to return to the hotel to join Sumeet and Oxana for breakfast.

After our morning meal, all four of us returned to the Bodhi tree. It was such a joy to be able to just sit and meditate all day long. Almost every time I would open my eyes from my meditation, something interesting would greet me. One time, I opened my eyes to find a monk leaning

on my shoulder peacefully. Although a whole section of the bench was empty, the monk had chosen to sit close to me and when he went deep into his meditation, he fell asleep leaning on my left shoulder.

Periodically, I opened my eyes to find monks and other pilgrims chasing after the occasional falling leaf from the Bodhi Tree. I enjoyed the Thai monks doing that during my early morning meditation. I realized that

the leaf must be a prized possession for a devout Buddhist. And, it would make for a wonderful gift for friends or family who could not be there. So, when a few leaves fell around me, I made it a point to pick them up.

By the time I had more than a dozen leaves in my collection, I noticed that a gentle, middle-aged Southeast Asian woman dressed all in white sat down next to me. She was holding a plain envelope with her Bodhi leaves. Every time a leaf fell from a branch, she would jump up, but, often she wasn't



quick enough to get to it before someone else picked it up. I enjoyed watching the people chase the leaves, like little children. As I watched the woman, I realized that she was deliberately collecting the leaves for a group of people back home. It seemed she was keeping track of how many she had and how many more she needed. So, I asked her if she were collecting the leaves for friends. She explained that she belonged to a church group in Thailand and most of her friends in the group could not afford to make the trip to Bodhi Gaya. She said they made her promise that she would bring back

a leaf for each of them.

"How many more do you need?" I asked her. She said that ten to twelve more should do it, but it's hard. It took her a long time to get one. "Would you like to have these?" I said. "I have at least a dozen here."

Her eyes grew into saucers and she said, "Oh, yes! Are you sure?" She couldn't believe that anyone would want to part with their Bodhi leaves, especially a dozen of them. It was delightful to watch her surprise and experience her gratitude. "Now I can go home," she said, smiling. We talked for a bit and she gave me a most heartfelt blessing of gratitude before she left.

A little while later, I opened my eyes to notice a leaf gently slipping off a nearby branch and falling toward where I sat. As it glided in for the landing, I stood up and reached over to pick it up. As I picked up the leaf from the ground, a Chinese man rushed up to me full force, gripped my wrist, and yanked my hand toward him. His faced red and contorted in anger, he said, what I interpreted as, "That's mine!"

A bit surprised at his outburst, nonetheless, amused, I smiled and said, "Yes, this is for you." I gave him the leaf. Disarmed and somewhat confused, he grabbed the leaf out of my hand and rushed away. I returned to my spot on the bench

and thought, "Wow. That was different!" It didn't matter whether it was a leaf from the Bodhi Tree or a pile of gold or a plot of land, did it? We place a value on it and if we get stuck on that, it possesses us. I prayed that the man could experience forgiveness.

A few minutes later, I saw him slowly walking in prayer down the same corridor upon which he had rushed up to me earlier. This time, however, he wore a slight smile and looked peaceful holding his Bodhi leaf. Then, as he passed me, he saw that a young man had picked up a Bodhi leaf and a woman lost out on having that one. He walked over to her and gave him his leaf. These are the miracles that grow all around us.



At one point, Sameer came up to me and asked to borrow my camera. He asked if I saw the young woman that had just gotten up from meditating next to me for the past hour or more. I had noticed that she was deep in meditation earlier. He said that when she sat down she was quite serious, but as she sat there next to me, she started to smile and become brighter and brighter. He said he wanted to use my camera to take a picture of her because she looked like she was in total bliss before she left.

One of the highlights of these little miracles of that afternoon began with

a girl's voice saying, "Michael!" Surprised, I opened my eyes to see a beautiful face of a ten-year old Indian girl beaming at me. She held out three perfect Bodhi leaves, smiling brightly. "Here, for



you!" she said. It was like receiving a surprise Christmas present. Then, a darker-skinned little twig of a boy jumped in



next to her with a handful of leaves, shoving them all toward me saying, "Here!"

As suddenly as these bright kids popped into my life, a breeze kicked up and Bodhi leaves started falling everywhere. The little boy scampered around like a flying monkey picking up half a dozen leaves to every one adults could get their hands

on. He returned victoriously, grinning, "Here, for you!" What was going on? I could barely hold on to the ever-enlarging bouquet of Bodhi leaves. The girl stayed with me and we talked as her brother continued bringing me more and more leaves. How could she have known my name? Before I could ask her that, a temple security guard had come around and chased the kids away, even as I asked him not to do so. He told me they didn't belong here, street kids.

I wished I could have given them a few rupees, if they were street kids. Just then, "Hello!" And, two smiling faces peeked through from between the curtains draped over the stone fence behind me separating the temple grounds from the outside world. They were giggling as only little children can. I asked them to wait a minute and pulled out two ten rupee bills. As I gave each of them one, they giggled gleefully and waved at me happily as they ran off.



Near the end of my meditation in the late afternoon, Lord Maitreya showed up in spirit in a huge way near the Bodhi Tree.

His presence was not only radiant, it was enormous. He turned to me smiling, congratulated and thanked me for what I have been doing. Then, Buddha appeared in front of Maitreya and he seemed to be

passing "the torch" on to Maitreya. I then recalled that it was Gautama Buddha that prophesied that the next Buddha would be Maitreya.

It was an amazing thing I was experiencing. I was witnessing our historic transition from an era empowered by the Buddha through his gift of understanding the nature of suffering and how to free ourselves from that suffering to a brand new era inspired by Maitreya for all of us to live in joy and abundance.

Maitreya then turned toward the gathering of the people and blessed everyone, the temple grounds, and the new era. He said that this temple will continue to be a place of pilgrimage and that those who come here will receive his blessing as well to carry back into the four corners of the world. The entire area flooded with the

light of illumination from Shamballa as well. I witnessed a new chapter in humanity's journey begin.

As I opened my eyes, it seemed the whole place was overflowing with joy and celebration. All the people seemed so much more energized, laughing, and communicating with one another. It was incredibly bright. Soon, when I met up with Sameer, the first thing he said was that this place seemed so much more joyful as the afternoon wore on.

When the four of us got back together, we decided to walk through the Meditation Garden before heading back toward the hotel. Within the beautiful garden area, we came across two giant bells. Since there were no one else

there, the groundskeeper came and unlocked the bells so that we could ring them. The first bell, a mammoth bronze one with the most beautifully carved Sanskrit prayers all around it, was the most



amazing bell that I've ever seen or heard. The moment Sameer sounded it the first time, I was stunned. It moved me so deeply and the tone was the most extraordinary sound I've ever heard coming out of a bell. It reverberated in a perfect "OM."

The plaque next to it explained that a Tibetan refugee had donated the bell that it would ring for peace throughout the world. I know with certainty that the refugee's prayer is being fulfilled each time the bell tolls.



Bodh Gaya back to New Delhi via a stop at Nalanda, the oldest university in the world, meeting Sameer's family, traveling by train from Delhi to Haridwar, meeting Sumeet's wonderful guru, Amaji and her Swami friend, meditating on a rock on the Ganga facing

Mount Shasta on February 17th, spending 16 days in India and returning back home on March 9th. So, although there are the



The Never-Ending Story

Within each of us is a never-ending story. When I first started writing my reflections on my adventures in India, I thought that within a couple of



dozen pages I should be able to tell you the highlights of at least my days in India. Well, I was wrong. I've been writing for days on end, but every time I reread a section, I have so much more to share. I realize now that the longer I stay at this, the more I begin to distill and integrate from the vast expanse and spectrum of experiences I had during the twenty-one days that elapsed between leaving my home in

3 days I spent traveling with Sameer, Sumeet, and Oxana from



the foothills of the Himalayas in Rishikesh, experiencing the preparation for the Maha Kumbh Mela a few days before it began, the red-eye train ride back to Delhi, and more, I will call this a place in the never-ending story for an intermission.

final

Each of the stories within these stories also have their back stories.

Like the labyrinthian *galis* leading to the Kashi Vishwanath Temple in Varansi, we could turn into any one of myriad side alleys in these stories and get lost for days. In fact, that is what we often do from one incarnation to another. We may choose to take the road not taken in our last lifetime this time around.

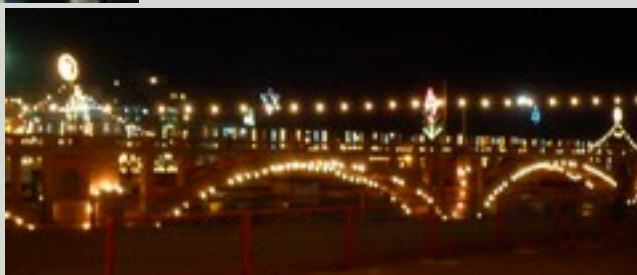


for welcoming me into their home. Many thanks, too, go out to Sumeet who made it possible for us to visit Haridwar and Rishikesh on short notice. It was a wonderful way to complete the adventure in India.

assistance from so many of you in Chennai: Narasimhan, Sampath, Bina & Arup, Janani, Renu & Vikash, Rajini, Savitha & Raj, Amit & Suzanne, Indira, Indu, Tanya, Ranjan, Deepika & Nittin, Shakun & Prem, Suneeta, Sindhoori, Preetha, Dr. & Mrs. Reddy, and the many whose names I just couldn't retain, thank you so very much.

I so appreciated, too, all of you who in one way or another supported me on this journey

If you've stayed with me all the way through this wonderful ride, thank you, thank you, thank you. And, *Atma Namaste*. I truly hope you enjoyed reading this as much as I enjoyed living and writing about it.



I have such appreciation for the many great souls, both in India as well as here in the US, who helped make this adventure possible for me, who I've barely mentioned in this essay.

Padmini and Wilja, thank you once again for your enthusiastic invitation and for organizing everything to make my time with everyone in Chennai possible. Sameer, thank you for arranging our incredible Buddha Pilgrimage and having me as your guest at your family home. And, many thanks to your mother and Suparna and the rest of your family



And, Oxana, the most photographed person on the pilgrimage, and possibly the whole trip - what a trooper you were. I'm glad you decided to come. Thank you for your support, dedication, and commitment to move forward to live the miracle, too.

Once again, I loved all the enthusiastic support, interest, and



here in the US and in other countries. Your love, blessings, and great enthusiasm helped more than you might know.

Many thanks go to Sylvia, our dedicated and wonderful assistant

at Seraphim at Mt. Shasta, who keeps the communication and our office flowing smoothly no matter what I'm up to.

And, of course, my deepest gratitude goes to Raphaele, who not only kept our home and business fires burning, but she was busy the entire time I was traveling

ATMA NAMASTE!

“The journey of a thousand miles begins with a single step.” - Lao Tse

Too often we get caught up trying to get to the end. What is most important, however, is to discover the beginning. We don't solve problems or start to heal unless we can be willing, be kind, laugh a little, and commit to seeking until we find. If we can, we'll get started. I'll meet you at the beginning! - Michael



putting out many fires as well!
Just as no show can go on
without the enormous amount of
work done by dedicated and
talented people backstage,
without her love, undying support,
and tremendous abilities much of
what I have to offer would not be
available.



May the blessings of Divinity
shower upon each and every one
of you that you may fully realize the
extraordinary treasure that is you.



With gratitude, love, and
joyous laughter,

Michael



**For our seminars,
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Reflections On My Travels . . .

INDIA

MICHAEL J TAMURA