

Didi Dr Nirmala's visit to Australia 5-18 July 2017

Didi Dr Nirmala, regional coordinator of the Asia Pacific region, visited five cities in Australia, where her program included a national BK retreat, many BK classes, a few public talks and many personal meetings with BKs which gave a lot of spiritual sustenance. She was accompanied by Sr Sangita.

Melbourne

Australians always enjoy visits by the seniors especially when the whole family is gathered under one roof and receive sustenance from Didi Dr Nirmala. The Centre for Spiritual Learning – Peninsula (Baxter) hosted a national retreat for centre residents, board members and class location coordinators over four days from July 6 – 9, and a day program for all BKs on Sunday July 9. Brothers Charlie and Ken (visiting from Brazil) joined for the retreat and some of the Sunday program with Didi which saw a balance of classes combined with light-hearted fun.

The powerful retreat began with Didi's session on the '*Power of Touching and Catching*'. A number of sessions over the next few days covered topics of '*Silence*', '*Overcoming arrogance and imbibing humility*', '*Preparing for the*

future', '*being a Detached observer of drama, benevolent observer of others, honest observer of self*'

and group talks and meetings with questions and answers. Participants who stayed after the retreat ended on Saturday evening enjoyed the extra Sunday classes. Sr Sona and Br Mohit from Abu Dhabi were also in Australia at the time and joined in the retreat, adding an international flavour.

Left: centre residents, board members and class location coordinators (left) enjoying the sessions over the weekend.



The Baxter BK gathering celebrated the retreat centre's 21st anniversary with Didi and the rest of the Melbourne Family on Sunday. Didi met the Hindi group and newer students had individual chats with her after lunch. She inaugurated the Centre's new motor vehicle (a ute) on Monday morning with the traditional coconut breaking ceremony and tilak before taking leave to travel to Canberra.

Didi with others cutting the cake for the Retreat Centre's 21st birthday.



Canberra

Mon 10 July: A program in the evening at the Centre on "Master of Balance" was well attended. As invariably with Didi's visits, some new people came to the Centre for the first time. The next day, there was a morning class followed by breakfast together and an inauguration with coconut cracking ceremony for one student's new car. Sr Sangita also enjoyed her short stay and saw the ever enchanting kangaroos in the wild.

Brisbane

Tue 11 July: Didi's visit, whilst short and sweet, was all about BK sustenance. There was an exceptional turnout for a deep and well-rounded "something for everyone" class in the evening and a packed class the following morning. After a family breakfast sisters Sangita and Gurpreet were taken to picturesque Southbank by ferry where the public herb and vegetable gardens and the wonderful water features attracted great interest.

Gold Coast

Wed 12 - Thu 13 July am: At Gold Coast, one hour by car south of Brisbane, there was a large gathering for morning class with Didi and Sangita. Didi met personally with many BKs and asked after others who weren't present. Everyone enjoyed her class and company. The main inspiration taken from her visit was 'time is short, we never know what is going to happen so we should be aware of this and it should be reflected in our efforts.' She also visited Tina, a BK of over 20 years who has now moved into a five star retirement village where all her needs are met. Didi remembered how Tina has helped so much over the years and she in return is now well looked after.

Sydney

Thu 13 – Tue 18 July: On the evening of 13 July at Five Dock Centre about 80 guests and BKs attended Didi's evening talk on "The Essence of Things." Sr Morni summarised her talk in a guided meditation experience and all were very happy to receive sweets and a blessing card.

After morning class at Five Dock on Friday, Didi went to the Blue Mountains retreat centre where the BKs were pleased to see her as she was not able to visit last year. Being mid-Winter, the weather was cold (max. temperature of 9 deg C) but Didi gave an inspiring class, had personal meetings, lunch and a tour of the property before returning to Sydney.

The weekend was busy with meeting Class Location coordinators and teachers, personal meetings with individuals, classes and meditations on both Saturday and Sunday evenings followed by supper. Meanwhile, Sangita enjoyed sightseeing including a visit to the beach, a tour of the city by car and a trip to the Opera House and Harbour Bridge by ferry.



Meeting with Five Dock centre helpers



class in the hall at Five Dock centre

On Monday morning, Didi went to the Illawarra retreat centre for morning class and breakfast and to see the newly built additional outdoor dining area which features a wood-fired pizza oven.

Didi joined a Board meeting in the evening and left after class on Tuesday morning to return to Gyan Sarovar. Didi is stable, clean and clear and many things were addressed with her mature, wise counsel. She especially knows the background of service in Australia and most of the BKs, so it was wonderful to have her presence - so much so that she has been asked to visit twice a year!

*Meeting
Hindi class at
Five Dock*

