

# Ramana's Garden News 2016



Another year in memories swirl past changing shape and form like the clouds above me sitting here under the ole chestnut tree struggling to capture it all to share with you. Tears of Gratitude well up..From beginning to end it has been a time of deep sharing among friends new and old.

In 1994 when Papaji sent me to live on Ganga Ma's banks and told me to create Ramana's Garden I felt utterly incapable of doing so. I knew nothing about social work. He said,"Don't worry I am always with you. Follow your heart; I am there and will be sending you all the help you will ever need."

And so it has been all these years and years.....

Beautiful friends from Chile, Alma Multimédios, came to make a documentary on Ramana's Garden and help us bring much needed awareness to the horrible plight of over 17 million children under the age of 15 living and working in the garbage of India. Watch their video here: [Where The River Begins](#)

With each passing hot season since our first summer camping there in the ruins in 2003 (Photo) our Ambiya Paradise mountain retreat becomes dearer to our hearts as it literally now saves our lives being able to escape from the scorching heat, lack of clean water or sufficient power down in Tapovan. But, all was not well in paradise. We have been leasing the property since 2003 with an option to buy and now urgently needed to complete the deal but I still didn't have enough money.

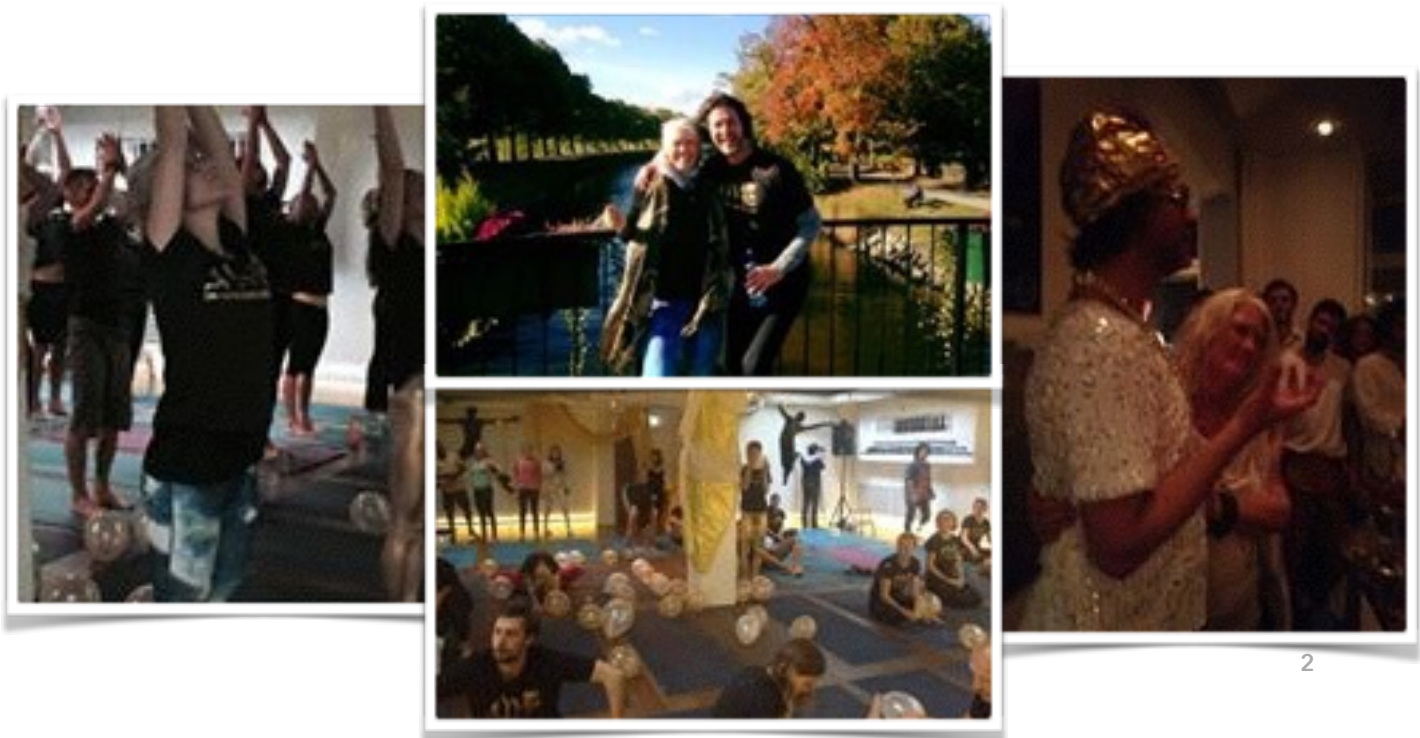


Then Neo, a new friend from Sweden put together a Golden Guru - Yoga's answer to

Iron Man, funding event there in his beautiful Yoga Centre, Urban Om, in Stockholm. I decided to try to cover my air tickets by working in Istanbul on the way. I knew there were problems in Syria but wasn't at all prepared for what awaited me on the streets, and in the park opposite the healing Centre where I work. It was raining the night my late flight arrived at 1:00 A.M. I was shocked when the taxi driver stopped 2 blocks from the centre saying he couldn't go closer? Why? Refugees? I soon understood trying to drag my huge luggage through the sleeping bodies on the sidewalk. As the days blurred into sleepless nights I was pulled further into their desperate plight; mostly families that had fled the Isis bombs that destroyed their homes, killed their relatives, and reduced their once prosperous lives to rubble. They were in Turkey waiting to pay with their last bit of savings to be illegally smuggled across the ocean into Greece. My heart melted into the children's grubby little outstretched hands. I gave all I had and could further scrape together begging at restaurants with them for leftovers at night, but it was never enough. I left them with a breaking heart and a promise I would not give up until I found a way to help them.



In Sweden we shared what came in from the event and raised \$5000 to help the refugee children that were arriving in Sweden. It was such a joyous event. The participants trail ran 12K through a beautiful forest park..... then they did 108 Sun Salutations.. and then we all danced in radiant costumes into the night with my dear friend Rafia guiding us into altered states supported with shots of pure cocoa...



A beautiful young woman from Bristol, Mala, arrived in Ramana's with the gift of hoola hoops to share with the children. In no time the compound was whirling with these magical circles of love and laughter. Next thing I know Mala went home and teamed up with one of my dearest buddies from the past, Kutira, and with Sidika they created "One Night In India" benefit concert, with an Indian bazaar and great India Food.

With my heart and pockets overflowing I flew on to Bristol.

As many of you know I am an Ol' Hippie at heart and Bristol's shades of Haight Ashbury graffiti decorated coffee houses, artsy little street café's and bookshops were manna to my aching heart. They had pulled together an amazing event. Fabulous musicians, I'd never met, carried the full house crowd straight to our hearts. Such a special evening for one and all. They live streamed it so friends around the world could join us.



My dear friend Rob Freidman phoned in the middle and said he would match the donations we were being raised and before the final song we had enough to make Ambiya Paradise the children's summer home.

By the time I was back home again more than 3000 Syrian refugees had drowned trying to reach Greece. I couldn't forget my promise to them and within days our Hero paulo was off to Greece to try to find a way to help them once they reached there. The situation was horrendous there. Many were drowning every nite in the smugglers rotten dingys and creaky capsized boats. For those who did make it their nightmare was only beginning without proper shelter, food, medicine, not even a change of dry clothing.





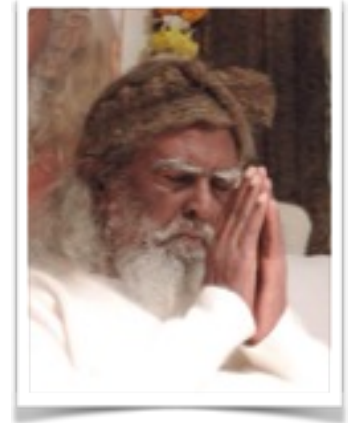
Paulo said the situation was impossible in Lesvos and he felt helpless to change it. You will be guided I promised him.. keep searching. Then he found Tilos Island and teamed up with Toyah Manning who created Refugee Child U.K. What can be said about the Greek people... they had struggled so much yet they were sharing everything they had. Tilos Island had only 600 inhabitants, 300 in the winter. Since June they had willingly looked after 6000 refugees! Can you imagine?! That's at least

10 refugees for every single person on the island. Unbelievably, they were welcoming more. They got no outside help either. They wanted to set up a "centre of acceptance". A camp where families with children will be accepted with open arms to stay in Tilos while their applications were processed. Tilos donated the land and Paulo set off there from the UK driving a huge van full of professional tents donated by LPM Bohemia to help us make this dream a reality.

Christmas was upon us and I wasn't in the least prepared having channeled every extra penny to help the refugees.. Another New friend Tom, from CAN - Conscious Action Network was our Christmas Angel, putting together a campaign to raise funds for blankets, towels and bedsheets for all our kids for Christmas. Our volunteer Kitti arranged for boxes of books for bedtime stories to arrive just in time for Christmas and so many others shared their hearts and gifts to create a wonderful Christmas for the kids. Even Paulo arranged a new leg for our cook Harka.



I Began New Year in Tiru at Ramana's Ashram in retreat drinking deeply from the well of compassion and love of one the most remarkable Saints I've been blessed to sit with, Tuli Baba. He left this earth on January 19th, but will remain in my heart forever.



Last Year when the earthquake destroyed Nepal I knew we weren't in a position to provide enough help alone and I reached out to Bharat Mitra, Organic India. They joined us making all the miracles we created there a reality. Bharat Mitra and team then arrived in Ramana's Garden bringing more gifts to share with our children and the world. They were preparing a CD of music for world peace. After recording with the kids Bharat gifted us with a professional music teacher from Israel and financial help to complete our exquisite new Yoga hall just in time for Ram Desh and Harnam from Sat Nam Foundation. Their lovely group



arrived laden with kilos of gifts and creative inspiration for the for the kids. They inspired the children to paint a beautiful wall mural, create, chant, celebrate and inaugurate our lovely Yoga Hall with daily morning Sadana and a special day with Gurmukh doing the inauguration leading us all in Kundalini Yoga. They culminated their week with a most extraordinary Mela Day of creativity, Lego, games, Salsa Dance, and general madness enjoyed fully by one and all.



Our Beloved Mother Ganga again was again under threat of complete annihilation from the millions of gallons of raw untreated sewage being dumped daily into her. We took the occasion of World Water Day to raise our voices and little creative spirits in a theatre piece set to live music and a media show presented at Parmath Ashram to raise awareness of her dire plight.



By May first Rishikesh was quickly becoming an inferno unfit for human habitation and we fled for shelter to our wonderful Ambiya Paradise mountain farm for the summer. Every year we create a new building. This time Dil's Jungle House project is our masterpiece of creative imagination and love. The kids are all so excited that we will be now able to share our magical mountain farm with you all who want to come play with us here.



Our boys became men, especially while rebuilding the 9 hectares of stone boundary walls. Girls flowered into beautiful women as the mountain worked her magic on us all filling us with her radiance and health. Our lead dancers Prema and Durgi led the dance camp bringing three more dancers: Janki, Renu and Ganga to the Ananda palace stage.



Abundant harvests provided vegetables for us all for winter. When our Italian friend Giulio ran into financial difficulties after traveling to India for a job that didn't exist, our kids jumped in helping him make exotic birdhouses to sell in the craft fair. All too soon school bells began to ring and everyone had to return for school.



Special thanks go to all those who made it possible for Ali to continue his studies at Miri Piri Academy and for Mukul to join him there, for Lokjon to join Mandi and Moina at college in Karnatika to complete his studies in Micro-Biology and enabling Krishna to continue toward her degree in psychology. Special thanks to Susana and Guru Ganesh Band for their benefit concert and all the others who helped the miracles keep happening here.



Gagan became quite the Jet Setter. First flying down to Tamil Nadu to be trained as an instructor for the exciting Visions project put together by Rob Friedman and Greg. In no time our students were busy learning with their new TABLET. Then he was awarded a scholarship to travel to Australia to study Permaculture with Milkwood at Govinda Valley. Before leaving he was hosted by our new friends Jason and Stacey in Perth. They have come back over to share with the kids and help get the roof on Dil's Jungle Penthouse. Sunita was invited again to Washington D.C. where she was beautifully hosted for lunch by Friends of Ramana's John Hurley and Kathy Carroll in her lovely home where she and Steve hosted me so many times.



I couldn't go on postponing. My ole hip was making it impossible for me to work. I traveled to Dharmsala to an extra-ordinary healing couple Ringo and Miranda.. and I'm dancing again.. Yea.. Bone and Body Clinic: [www.boneandbodyclinic.com](http://www.boneandbodyclinic.com). I journeyed back to their homeland, magical Manipur, for an adventure helping them set up their organic farm retreat centre there for all our friends to come for healing and create a space for our kids growing up to have a great future.





All our little witches, ghouls, goblins, and ghosts were out howling on Halloween...

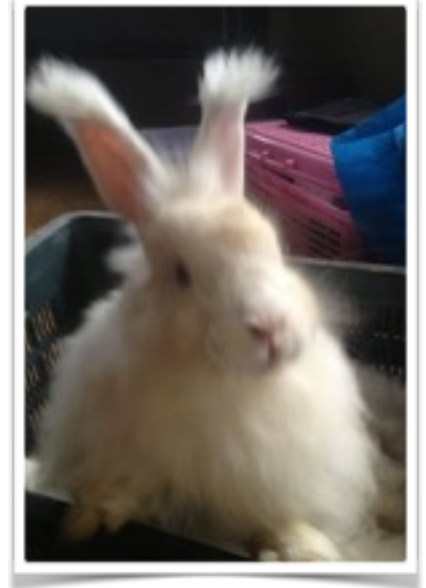


Finally back home up here under the ole tree trying to finish this... and keeping up the losing battle for our precious Bunnies lives. It has been a real horror story for us all. Our Beloved Bunnies contracted the dreaded calisi virus, a man-made virus designed to cull rabbits in OZ that went wrong. Very, very wrong. It causes the bunnies to bleed to death slowly internally.. only 4 our of 21 remain despite all our efforts, daily injections etc.. sooo heartbreaking.

Our WE LOVE BUNNIES project which has provided safe, humane loving, treatment to 100's of endangered Himalayan Angora rabbits as well as vocational training and income generation through hand looming the angora wool for many village women whose families depend on this for past 9 years was in danger of closing. We invested in 6 sweater knitting machines and the women are already busy preparing warm school sweaters with matching hats for all Ramana's students. Tom from C.A.N. came up with wonderful idea for this years Christmas gifts to be that you can give a new sweater to a student and that helps the village women and their families get through the winter till spring when we can try to get some more Bunnies.



The first time I visited Nepal I was a new zealous seeker filled with spiritual ambition always seeking ominous omens, symbols, signs from the other realm to confirm my quest. I arrived at the top of Syambul steps breathless and panting as I knelt in front of the Giant Buddha beseeching him to "give me a sign. What is the true path to liberation?" I closed my eyes attempting to quiet my racing, fidgety mind. I felt I was no longer alone and peeked out to see who was there. The temple was silent and empty. I looked further and saw a tiny wild rabbit sitting calmly in the Buddhas palm staring at me. Frustrated shortly that the heavens hadn't opened calling my name I meandered back down the 100's of steps to go shopping. Living with our precious bunnies all these years I have come to understand that was my "sign". They are my Gurus with fur. You can't hold a bunny still if you are agitated, anxious, fearful, or angry. Only when you rest in silent, empty stillness will they meet you there and remain with you without fear. Going through so much pain trying to help the Syrian refugees who are still suffering and now losing all our precious Bunnies is a real wake up call to live each moment fully..don't waste a moment..you may never have a second left..



Special Thanks to all the wonderful volunteers who came to share their hearts with the kids... especially to Pamela for being our wonderful manager for the past year and to Radha for bringing my mad scribbles into shape. Too many others to mention, but you know who you are and we love you dearly.



*With love from Prabhavati  
and all the Ramana's children....*



MY WISH FOR YOU IS THAT YOU  
CONTINUE. CONTINUE TO BE WHO  
AND HOW YOU ARE, TO ASTONISH A  
MEAN WORLD WITH YOUR ACTS OF  
KINDNESS. CONTINUE TO ALLOW  
HUMOR TO LIGHTEN THE BURDEN  
OF YOUR TENDER HEART.

MAYA ANGELOU