

Realise Asia Tour 2010: Vietnam

tural styles standing shoulder to shoulder, little shops selling all sorts of wares at every corner, wide streets that turn off into narrow lanes that most cars might barely scrape through... But most of all, it is the lightness of the agnya and the overwhelming sense of innocence from the people that brought India to mind for me.

As we approached the home of the yogi where we would have the havan, we were asked to get out off the car and walk. I pulled my bags off the taxi and followed everyone down a lane that snaked between humble homes. Children threw a toy among themselves, their laughter echoing between the walls of a hodge-podge of homes rising on either side. An occasional resounding beep would announce the arrival of a motorcycle making its way past the residences as a lady in the typical Vietnamese pointy hat pushed a cart past us, hawking her wares. We observed that many areas like these were also no-car-zones.



Motorcycles are the main mode of transport in Ho Chi Minh City and most of Vietnam.

We paused at an intersection between lanes, next to an electric pole festooned with a giant nest of black cabling. 3 local men seated on little red plastic chairs appraised our curious entourage before getting on with their evening chatter. Giang stopped before a white gate and announced our arrival.

Bich (pronounced 'Bik'), the Yogini who lived here with her parents, answered and welcomed us into her

Một nguồn năng lượng kỳ diệu đang ngủ yên bên trong mỗi người. Tiếp cận với nguồn năng lượng ẩn sâu này chính là chìa khóa cho tất cả những chân giả trị...
 Nó có thể gia tăng niềm an vui tự tại và giúp chúng ta tự nhìn nhận bản thân, giúp phát huy khả năng sáng tạo và vun bồi sức mạnh nội tâm.
 Hãy cùng đến và trải nghiệm sự thay đổi lớn lao từ nguồn năng lượng này.

Shri Mataji Nirmala Devi
 Người sáng lập Sahaja Yoga



Hãy khám phá những sức mạnh diệu của các trung tâm năng lượng trong cơ thể bạn

Tham gia với chúng tôi tại:
3 Tháng Bảy 2010
 Địa điểm
Khách Sạn Duxton
 63 Nguyễn Huệ, Q1, TP.HCM
 Để đăng ký cho các sự kiện và nhận cập nhật mới nhất, xin vui lòng email:
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Biểu diễn âm nhạc ở bất cứ nơi nào trên thế giới cũng là để mang niềm vui đến khắp mọi nhà. Đoàn nghệ thuật: **Music of Joy của Australia (Úc)** sẽ khởi sáng niềm vui trong bạn bằng một buổi trình diễn âm nhạc, là một phần trong suốt chuyến lưu diễn vòng quanh Châu Á năm 2010 của đoàn.

The War, thick dripping coffee, communism, motorcycles and pointy woven hats. That was the extent of my knowledge of Vietnam until very recently. After my parents started going to support Sahaja yoga programs there, I started to learn more about the place and its people, especially when a Vietnamese yogi family 'adopted' them and started having them over every 2 months for the purpose of conducting Sahaja Yoga programs all over the country. They are such simple, beautiful and extremely loving people.

I was on my way to spend 3 days in Ho Chi Minh City (also referred to as Saigon) in conjunction with Music of Joy's first public program there. My parents greeted me with wide grins upon my arrival at the airport, and although I had never been to Vietnam before, I felt like I was attending a family reunion of sorts. My Vietnamese sister, Giang, greeted with me with open arms and we were soon squeezing down motorcycle-choked roads, on our way to a havan with the local collective.

The streets of Saigon are a fascinating mix of India & China; the traffic and the way only those who drive there would understand the nonverbal cues that indicate road etiquette, the fascinating mix of architec-

home. We removed our shoes in a short entranceway framed with a new wire trellis. 2 steps took us up to a little hall, its walls lined with deep-seated, straight-backed rattan chairs. Bich's mother greeted us with a heart-warming smile and the few yogis there were introduced to me in a blur of names and musical syllables. We were awaiting the arrival of more yogis as Giang did a quick check of all implements necessary for the evening's activity.

Soon I found myself walking down a passage-way by the house, which cleverly led to a rear garage for motorcycles. Just before that, a narrow stairway wound up the four floors to the rooftop terrace where we would have the havan. Little family homes flanked the staircase on every landing; tenants of Bich's multi-story home. At the very top, behind panting aunties, we emerged on a breezy rooftop terrace that afforded us a lovely view of the Saigon sunset. A sea of rooftops surrounded us in every direction. Narrow buildings nudged for access to the sky, their residents staking space with little gardens, a space to hang laundry or simply space to sit for a while.

ment buildings in the distance. Immediately around us lay a colorful smorgasboard of roofs in various colors, levels and materials. A swing graced the flat rooftop of a nearby home. Stately palms rose from bright blue pots in the next. At another, gilded architraves climbed up a newly built residence, its scale undaunted by its desire for ornamentation.

As twilight fell, we intoned the 108 names of Shri Mataji, bathing the Saigon skyline with auspiciousness and eliminating with one fell swoop, any obstacle to the success of the coming programs. The Mahamantras spread over the land, cloaking it in Divine raiment as dusk fell on our little group.

The next morning, we were joined for breakfast at Giang's home by 7 Hanoi yogis who had just arrived. The bright airy kitchen rang with laughter. Hands covered shy smiles. Introductions were made and squeezing around the dining table, we all tucked into some delicious pho noodles together.

2 taxis were called after breakfast and minutes later, we found ourselves at the Tecasin Business Centre, our main base of operations for the duration of the Vietnam leg of the Realize Asia Tour. Giang, the main coordinator of the Vietnamese Collective, also rented office space here. Shortly after she moved in, Sahaja Yoga classes were begun in the gym on Saturday mornings. When she asked to rent rooms for the members of Music of Joy, the management of Tecasin offered her a converted office space, conveniently situated on the ground floor that even came with a kitchenette. All in all, the space was significantly larger than the rooms she initially asked for. When



The Ho Chi Minh City Collective offering a havan before the Music of Joy Program on the 3rd July

As the local yogis set up for the havan, I drank the sights in. I could glimpse distant modern apart-



Vietnamese Yuvas preparing handouts for the evening's program.

she enquired after the cost, she was overwhelmed with joy. Tecasin said she was such a good client, they were gladly giving the space for free for the 3 days, and happily repainted walls, put up curtains, and even provided mattresses, sheets and pillows!

After a deep Collective meditation in the gym, the Vietnamese yogis got going with the folding of leaflets to be handed out. More and more yogis trickled in, the majority of them very young yuvas who were equally young in Sahaja Yoga. Many had only joined the Collective for between 3 and 6 months. Eager and helpful, they assisted in every way they could, rallying behind all tasks handed them. The girls helped with food, the boys flexing over props to be organized and transported. Exuding youthful innocence, they warmed our hearts with their enthusiasm.

By 4.30pm, a small entourage had gathered at the airport to welcome the members of Music of Joy. They eventually emerged, some a little weary, others



Music of Joy musicians and luggage dramas.

bright and alert despite having been on the road for the past 24 hours. We had hoped to whisk them off for tea and a swift change of clothes at Tecasin, but time proved to be a little too tight, and they suggested heading directly for the program venue.

With minutes to spare, the bus pulled into the driveway of the Duxton Hotel in central Saigon. All the luggage had to be unloaded so that the musicians could change quickly. Instrument cases and a multitude of bags were rapidly organized and sent up, even as the musicians asked where they could get ready. Giang quickly arranged some seminar rooms adjacent to the hall for the program, and as the musicians got ready, the hall began to fill.

A little after 6.30pm, Music of Joy began with the Mahamantras. The travel-weary musicians from minutes ago were nowhere to be seen. They had



The Duxton Hotel, Saigon, venue for the Vietnam leg of the Realise Asia Tour, 3-4 July, 2010



Tuyet (left) and Linh (right), the Vietnamese yogis emceeding the event.



On both days, members of the public and yogis alike could not resist the joy which impelled their feet to dance! filled with energy as they sat on the stage, their faces transformed. As auspicious notes filled the air, the crowd settled and attention stilled. Bhajans followed and vibrations flowed. Two Vietnamese yogis emceed the event and introduced the group as well as Sahaja Yoga briefly before Music of Joy took the stage again. At one point 3 TV cameras and several photographers danced artfully around each other, endeavouring to avoid blocking the other's shots.

Even before Self Realization was given, members of the public could be seen closing their eyes in bliss-

ful meditation. The crowd was extremely receptive. Although they came in shy and reserved, they clearly enjoyed themselves and as the evening wore on, their inhibitions also fell away. They took their self realization easily and effortlessly, then slipped blissfully into meditation. Shortly after, seekers were invited to the front as Music of Joy performed again. Starting with the devotional Sahasrara Swamini Durga Ambe, many in the crowd continued to meditate. Then the group, under the direction of John, increased the tempo. Ending with Jogawa and Isi Liye, the crowd was soon on its feet. The Vietnamese yogis joined in joyfully,



The whole event was a huge hit with the crowd!



The event was well covered by the media.



John Smiley interviewed by 'Smile Vietnam', a local TV show about interesting events in the country.

dancing, clapping and remarking that they had never seen their countrymen loosen up and participate so spontaneously. Yogis and seekers alike formed little groups and lines, seekers linked arms with yogis, dancing in newfound brotherhood as Music of Joy took the hall to new levels of jubilation and exultation of the Devi.

John Smiley and Lene Jeffrey were interviewed by a local television station after the program. The young TV presenter had also gotten his self realization and was seen dancing enthusiastically minutes before. He was intrigued by John's harmonium and asked to try it himself. Expressing great fascination, he was delighted in finding out how it worked. Wonder filled his face as he played the first bars of a Vietnamese song.

Giang and the Vietnamese Collective were very successful in conducting a huge publicity campaign for the concert. Their pure desire saw one ad/article taken out in an online newspaper, and this was picked up by more online publications, multiplying eventual exposure to 10 online news sites! Some called this the Sahaja Yoga Music Program, and others The Music of

Joy Festival. Names were irrelevant. The Duxton Hall could accommodate 300+ people, but response was so incredible, upwards of 1000 RSVPs were received! Music of Joy had to perform at another program the following morning to accommodate respondents.

So the next morning, we all had a deep Collective meditation, followed by another delightfully communal meal together in Tecasin. Then it was off on the bus again through Saigon to the Duxton. In the morning light, we could now clearly see the colorful banner announcing the program. By 9.15am, the sound check was complete and the program began. Late comers trickled in, bending at the waist respectfully in Asian style as they took their seats. The music that morning was more introspective, and the crowd responded by becoming stiller, quieter within. When asked to come forward for help, many seekers left their seats, sat on the carpet where they could find a spot, and meditated as if they had done so all their lives. The vibrations, however, indicated that they were finally connected, and the gentle, peace-



More contemplative and introspective than the program the day before, the seekers soon found themselves in deep meditation.

ful smiles on their faces indicated that their Spirits had come home. When the time came to enjoy a few minutes of meditation after the self realization process, the air was so still and calm, and it was obvious that the entire room was in thoughtless awareness. Perhaps due to the change in date, the hall was not completely full, but more than a hundred seekers got their self realization again, and by the end of the program, they too were on their feet, dancing, smiling, clapping and reveling in Divine Bliss! When asked if they would like to attend follow-ups that were being arranged, the response was a resounding yes, with a sea of hands shooting up into the air! Classes will commence the following Sunday.



Yes, they want to attend classes!

The last meal together with the Vietnamese Collective saw us all seated on the floor before rows upon rows of brightly decorated dishes. Sweet fresh fruit, mountains of choice green herbs and vegetables, grilled shrimp rolls on sugarcane sticks, and even a Russian salad! Newspapers had been opened up to serve as placemats, and a feast was arrayed before us, flanked by little ceramic bowls that were topped by bright green chopsticks. The local yoginis had worked together to concoct a truly royal meal and we ate and ate and ate, laughing, chatting and joking like the family we were, although many of us had just met. The local Collective was filled with such joy, they broke into a spontaneous Collective song and dance display and our cheeks tired from laughing and grinning as the young collective performed traditional folk songs and dances for us. The room reverberated with Collectivity and such heights of Joy!!

Soon it was time to depart. A short tour of the city had been arranged for the musicians and a few yogis who were visiting the city for the first time. This Sunday, the normally bike-choked roads opened before us. A bright blue sky overhead proved the perfect contrast to tall, stately trees that lined the wide streets in downtown Saigon. In that short space of time, we saw remnants of the French influence in architecture, contemplated the gigantic Saigon river snaking through the city, then stopped to savor some local flavor at a popular market where some yogis chose to contribute to the local economy, from the purchase of clothes and souvenirs, to cooling coconuts for heated livers.

At the airport later that afternoon, amid many rounds of joyful embraces and fond farewells, Music of Joy left the generous, loving hospitality of the Vietnamese Collective to share their joy with yet another Asian City on their summer tour of 2010. They left behind a growing, excited Collective and a taste of the Universal Joy promised and shown by their Holy Mother, from whom all Love flows. The heart of Vietnam has been awakened and the hearts of many countries will surely follow!



Feasting collectively on the local yoginis' cooking.