



MotherPage » Latest Updates » Independence at Amritapuri

Amritapuri Independence Day Celebrations

14 August 2007 — Amritapuri

The strike of midnight on August 15th marked the 60th anniversary of India's Independence from Britain. The celebrations began in Amritapuri soon after the end of Amma's bhajans on the 14th. Students from Amrita University put on a number of skits, dances and songs celebrating India's freedom and paying homage to the great souls who offered their lives for the country's liberation. At the forefront was the celebration was a Bharatmata Puja. The theme of the night according to the students was: "The freedom to live a dharmic life."

Some highlights included modern and traditional dances by the boys and girls, respectively and a group rendition of the song 'Vande Maataram' The puja involved the reverent placing of oil lamps upon the home cities of various *dharmā-nisthas* [people firmly rooted in dharma] on a gigantic map of India drawn on the floor of the bhajan hall with coloured powders. Included among these were: Raja Yudhishthira (Delhi), Raj Harischandra (Uttar Pradesh), Raj Vikramaditya (Karnataka), Raj Shavaji (Maharashtra) and Rani Lakshmi Bai (Uttar Pradesh).

Watching the students' program were, of course, Amma and all the Amritapuri residents and visitors. At the stroke of midnight, Amma delivered a talked of the importance of truth and dharma in our lives. "There should be truthfulness in the country, in the government and in our words and actions," Amma said. "We need love towards our country and its people. We need unwavering faith in our own dharma. Otherwise, freedom becomes slavery. Independence becomes dependence."

Stressing the importance for humanity to re-establish its harmony with Mother Nature, Amma asked everyone to plant at least one tree a month.

—Tulasi

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