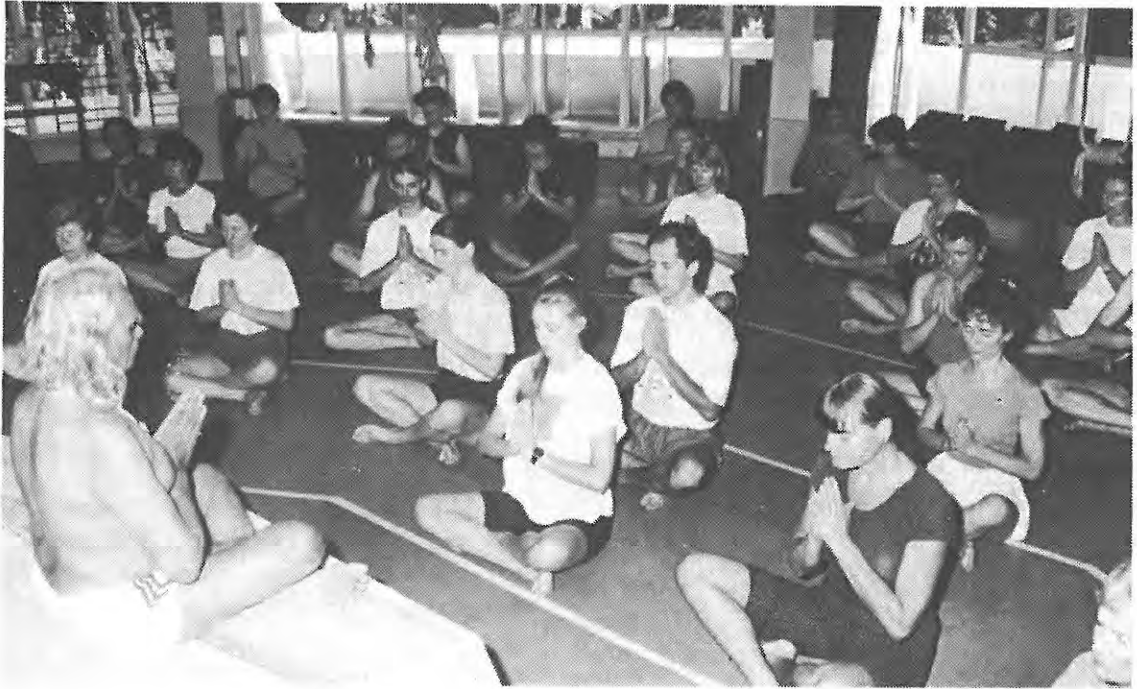




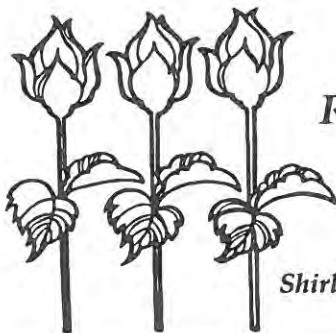
VICTORIA YOGA CENTRE

Newsletter



*"I bow before the noblest of sages, Patanjali -
who brought serenity of mind by his work on Yoga,
Clarity of speech by his work on grammar, and
Purity of body by his work on medicine."*

INVOCATION TO PATANJALI



Reflections

by
Shirley Daventry French

I am entering the new year with a feeling of fullness, not as you might expect from over-indulgence in Christmas, but because I have recently returned from India where I studied with my teacher, B.K.S. Iyengar. I have been given so much. This is both exciting and sobering (a word which always comes to mind on my return from India).

There is much to be done. I am eager to practise, so the new information recently gathered is absorbed, consolidated and begins to mature. I need to devote time to certain areas of my life which have opened up because of work already done and which require time and effort to come to fruition. I wish to live wisely on a day to day basis, in harmony with myself, the world around me and its inhabitants.

These are tangible ways to express gratitude for all I have been given. It is a great gift to be in the presence of a Master, and an even greater one to be taught by him directly.

In the tradition of yoga, the teachings are passed on from teachers who have trod this path

themselves to their students in person. This tradition has been diluted in the West, sometimes for practical reasons. Not everyone can afford the time and money to travel to India, and with teachers like Mr. Iyengar who are esteemed throughout the entire world, it is physically impossible for him personally to teach everyone interested in his work. He has trained others to pass on his teachings, and there are many fine teachers available.

There is something else, more disturbing, which is diluting yoga in the West; that is the tendency to dismiss those from whom we have received the teaching by finding some flaws in their character or their way of teaching, and using this as an excuse not to do the work they are suggesting we do, which generally requires giving up some entrenched desires and attachments.

Take for instance, the desire to become a yoga teacher. You feel you're ready, and have so much to pass on. In a very positive way you feel it's time to give back some of what you have been given, but your teacher may say "wait, do some more work, be patient". If you are already teaching, you may want to teach more advanced postures, higher levels of classes, pranayama, therapeutic yoga, workshops - the limits of ambition are boundless. Perhaps it is time to take on a new challenge but, on the other hand, your teacher may decide that you are not ready for this, and need to mature first in the work you are already doing.

Who wants to hear this? Who wants to wait? Patience is not our strongest suit in the West, especially when we have so much to "share"?

There are many people teaching yoga in Victoria who at one time or other approached me about apprenticing in our Iyengar Yoga program, but only a few who followed through. When they get a glimpse of what is required, how much time and practice is necessary to acquire some rudimentary knowledge of this vast subject of yoga, when they understand that this is an ongoing and unending process of learning, they go off somewhere else to develop their own methods, unsupervised, answering only to themselves. Some time later I see an advertisement offering a "unique new method" of yoga. Yoga is not new, it is very old and only those steeped in its teaching know enough to make adaptations without losing the essence.

Then there are those who claim to be following a strong masterful inspiring teacher but prefer to do so at a distance. When you never see your teacher you can safely interpret his or her teaching to your own satisfaction. This is a lot easier than standing face to face, letting him or her assess your work, inviting criticism. In the West we don't deal very well with criticism, even when it is constructive. Somehow the idea has arisen that you should only practise as long as you are comfortable. God knows where that came from! Change, growth, developing awareness, all

fundamental to yoga, are almost always difficult and very uncomfortable.

Another trap is the "I have to follow my own inner guru" school of yoga. Ultimately that is true, of course, in that my practices are practised within this body, interpreted by this mind. I am responsible for my own life, my own soul. A true Master will not inhibit this process but rather support you on this journey to freedom, giving you the basic training necessary for survival on this spiritual venture, redirecting you when you lose the way, helping you to refine the skills you will need to achieve your goal.

Strength on many levels and tremendous will power are necessary to stay on this path. A common problem is how to distinguish between that wilfulness which leads to selfishness and self-centredness, and that aspect of will which sustains a steadfast effort to get in touch with the Higher Self. I appreciate the help in this regard I have received from Swami Radha and B.K.S. Iyengar.

Once, during a difficult period in my life, I had a conversation with Swami Radha. First she asked me how I would respond if she were to suggest some very radical changes in my life. I told her I would listen. She made her suggestions and, although it was difficult for me, I did listen and told her I would think about what she had said. Then I left, and there followed a

tremendous struggle with my emotions: anger, fear, resentment, questioning her motives. It was some time before I felt any gratitude for the many options she had presented, and the freedom of choice. I didn't make the physical move she suggested, but the upheaval caused by her intervention generated growth, inner change and a letting go of some emotional attachments which she could see I was holding on to. She opened my eyes so that I could see this too. Now I am grateful.

Sometimes it is appropriate to make a physical move, go somewhere, do something different, while at others it's better to stay put and persevere. Yoga will provide you with the discrimination to make this decision, and it probably doesn't matter which you do, as long as in the process you learn and grow.

This Fall it was time for me to return to India, the source of yoga, and England, where my personal roots lie. I had planned to go to India next year with the Canadian group, but felt an intense pull to go sooner than that.

My intuition was right. Although Mr. Iyengar's daughter, Geeta, had intended to teach this intensive she was unable to do so and her father took over. Sometimes, when working in an asana, we learned ways of pushing and pulling ourselves into new places and spaces. This push/pull is part of what a guru does. A guru will give you a push so

you can gather the momentum to get out of a sticking place, in just the same way that if your car is bogged down in mud or deep snow, you need a helping hand to push the car so that instead of spinning futilely and digging deeper into trouble, the wheels will grip the slippery surface and propel the vehicle forward. A guru will also pull you in a variety of ways towards the light of knowledge, wisdom and intelligence. This may be in the form of a sharp tug to free you from inertia, or a tantalising glimpse of stillness and peace of mind, or steady encouragement to persist with the work. All of this and much more is in each asana practised under the tutelage of B.K.S. Iyengar.

With the passing of time, he seems more eager and impatient than ever to pass on as much as he can from his vast store of knowledge. He told us that he was tired, and then taught for three hours at a time with single-pointed concentration and consummate artistry. His teaching was fresh, keen and incisive, sometimes seeming harsh but ultimately being revealed as compassionate. Many students who had spent the first week or so questioning whether this was a valid way of teaching yoga, ended the last day by touching his feet with tears of love in their eyes. B.K.S. Iyengar is a true master who demands that you confront your fears at the same time as offering you the means to overcome them and move on a little less encumbered. For this I am truly grateful.

YOGA IN METCHOSIN

with Shirley Daventry French

Ongoing Asana Classes

*morning and evening classes
plus an afternoon class for
people with special problems*
Classes commence January 14th

Pranayama

*for experienced students –
Saturday mornings*
January 11th, February 8th
March 14th, April 11th, May 9th

Shirley is a student of B.K.S. Iyengar
and an experienced teacher of his method of Yoga

Brochures with full details available on request
Phone: 478-3775

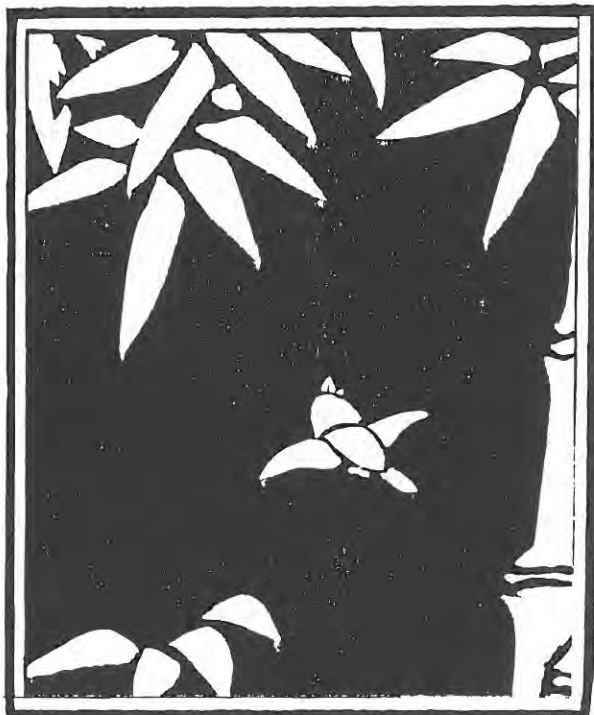
FROM THE EDITOR

Those of you who usually receive the newsletter will have noticed by now that you didn't receive your December, 1990, issue!

I planned an issue that was to acknowledge 10 years of newsletter publications. I gathered excerpts from past newsletters, found photos of people who had been involved, typed up credits from the back pages over 10 years, put it all together and it didn't work!

As we have always strived for a high quality publication, we decided not to mail out the December newsletter. I'm making a list of the reasons why it didn't work, we'll be discussing those reasons - and others - to figure out what happened. Of course, we'll also be working hard to make sure it doesn't happen again.

Thank you for your understanding.



PUNE RETURNED

In the Fall of 1991, three of our local Iyengar Yoga teachers travelled to India to study at the Ramamani Iyengar Yoga Memorial Yoga Institute in Pune. This institute which opened in January 1975, was named in honour of Mr. Iyengar's wife who inspired her husband to propagate Yoga throughout the world. She died in 1973, so unfortunately did not see the realisation of this dream, but the Institute has become a mecca for students from all over world. In fact, so many people apply to attend classes that it is not easy to earn a place. Before going, students are expected to prepare themselves by studying with senior teachers from their own part of the world.

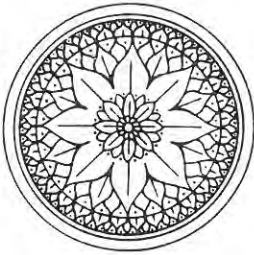
The first time in India is almost always overwhelming with the impact of India itself plus the demands of working with teachers of the stature of Mr. Iyengar, his daughter Geeta, and his son Prashant. On subsequent visits, although it never becomes easy and, if anything, even more is demanded of you, you are able to absorb much more. It is a great asset to a yoga community when teachers travel to study in India, and its important not to waste this resource on their return. When they come back and pass on what they have learned, we all benefit.

Celia Ward, Jim Rischmiller and Shirley Daventry French are the three teachers who have recently returned from Pune. For Celia and Jim it was their third visit, and for Shirley her fifth. They are all teaching regular classes in Victoria. Celia currently teaches at the Gordon Head Recreation Centre, the University of Victoria and in her home. Jim and Shirley teach in the comprehensive Iyengar Yoga programme at the "Y". Shirley also offers classes in her home studio in Metchosin, and gives workshops throughout North America. In addition, each of these teachers will present a Sunday workshop at the "Y": Celia on January 26th, Shirley on February 16th, and Jim on March 8th.

In the days of the British Raj, it was not uncommon in India to see an announcement saying that so and so was "England returned". Now the tables have turned and the flow is in another direction as we travel to the source in our endeavour to understand the teachings of Yoga and integrate them into contemporary Canadian life.

Next Fall another group of Victoria teachers is planning to study in Pune, and so the process goes on.

Yoga Centre of Victoria
presents a



New Years Yoga Workshop with Celia Ward

Sunday, January 26

10 a.m. – 1 p.m.

Yoga Studio

Victoria, YM-YWCA

Fees

\$15.00 Yoga Centre Members

\$18.00 Non- Members

Refreshments included

“Your body is the child of the soul.
You must nourish and train your child.”
-B.K.S. Iyengar



Celia has been studying and teaching Iyengar yoga for ten years. She has recently returned from her third session at the Iyengar Yoga Institute in Pune, India.

This workshop is for both beginning and experienced yoga students.

Registration and Information:

Phone Celia at 388-7839 or Leslie at 383-6301. Mail cheques payable to Victoria Yoga Centre to Celia Ward, Upper Suite, 3012 Quadra St. Victoria, B.C. V8T 4G3.

YOGA CENTRE NEWS

At the Annual General Meeting of the Victoria Yoga Centre Society, the following people were elected as directors for 1992:

Linda Benn, Wendy Boyer, Shirley Daventry French, Derek French, Marlene Miller, Jennifer Rischmiller, Jim Rischmiller, Jerrilyn Wass.

After the AGM the directors elected the following people as the Yoga Centre Executive for 1992:

President:	Jim Rischmiller
Vice President	Derek French
Treasurer	Jerrilyn Wass
Secretary	Wendy Boyer

The next meeting of the directors will be held in the Futaba Restaurant on Friday, January 10 at 6pm.

The next meeting of the Yoga Centre will be held at the Y on Friday, January 17. Please join us for a practice at 6pm led by Jim Rischmiller, followed by a potluck supper and discussion.

Victoria Yoga Centre Annual General Meeting.
December 7th 1991.

Presidents report.

We continued our policy of having as few business meetings as possible in fact only four. We also continued our successful 'practice eat and talk' monthly general meetings here at the YMCA, which have been well attended.

Response to our short workshops has been good but variable with the longer workshops. I feel this reflects the general slowdown in the economy.

The newsletter continues to be well received and I would like to thank the team who give freely of their own time and energy to produce it.

Through our scholarship committee we offered a number of scholarships to workshops during the year. Interested persons should make enquiries through their teacher for scholarship information.

Jerrilyn Wass has offered to take on the position of treasurer and Wendy Boyer that of secretary for 1992. I look forward very much to working with them in the coming year.

Finally I would like to thank my fellow directors for their support and also those others who contribute to the continuing function of the Yoga Centre.

Victoria Yoga Centre Annual General Meeting.
December 7th 1991.

Treasurers Report.

Financially 1991 was an average year. Our provisional results indicate that on revenues of \$17348 we had expenses of \$18268 resulting in a loss of about \$900.00 As of today's date our bank accounts balances are:

Chequeing account =	\$1345.00
U.S. account =	\$363.00
Savings account =	\$1762.00
Scholarship account=	\$1059.00
Donations=	\$5000.00

With the help of a professional accountant our federal tax status has been brought up to date, and we are in process of completing our year end balance sheet. We also have available a provisional comparison chart of our finances compared to 1990 and 1989.

The majority of this work has been done by Jerrilyn Wass who volunteered to take over the treasurer position from myself in September. My heart felt thanks to Jerrilyn.

New 4-Hour Canadian Video

B.K.S. Iyengar Master and Student



TAPE #1 HEALING ASPECTS OF ASANA

Mr. Iyengar demonstrates techniques to alleviate discomfort on all levels through asanas.

"Health is a state of complete harmony of the body, mind, and spirit. When one is free from physical disabilities and mental distractions, the gates of the soul open."

Wisdom of the Master - Maxims by Shri B.K.S. Iyengar

TAPE #2 LIGHT ON TEACHING

Mr. Iyengar, the master, shares his interpretation of hatha yoga by teaching asanas to his students.

"Teaching is learning also — learning to refine your body, nerves, intelligence and self, so that you can refine those who come to you."

Wisdom of the Master - Maxims by Shri B.K.S. Iyengar

Please clip and include with your order.

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Province or State

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YOGA CALENDAR

JANUARY:

- 6: Winter session of Yoga begins at the YM-YWCA.
- 10: Yoga Centre Directors meeting, 6pm at Futaba Restaurant.
- 10-11: Kundalini workshop at Radha House. 595-0177 for more information.
- 11: Pranayama Class/Asana Practice in Metchosin with Shirley Daventry French. Call 478-3775 for details.
- 12: Open House at Radha House, 1500 Shasta Place. 3-5pm.
- 13: Classes begin at Radha House.
- 17: Victoria Yoga Centre gathering at the Y. Practice from 6-7pm followed by pot luck dinner and discussion.
- 18: Iyengar Yoga Teachers meeting at the Y. 9.15am to 1.00pm.
- 25: Hidden Language workshop at Radha House.
- 26: Workshop at the Y with Celia Ward, 10am to 1pm. See ad this issue.

FEBRUARY:

- 1-2: Workshop with Hart Lazer in Sooke, contact Steve Foster for details, 642-6821.
- 2: Guru Puja at Radha House.
- 8: Pranayama Class/Asana Practice in Metchosin with Shirley Daventry French. Call 478-3775 for details.
- 14: Victoria Yoga Centre gathering, 6pm at the Y.
- 16: "Inspiration from India" a workshop with Shirley Daventry French at the Y. 10am to 1pm. See ad this issue.
- 17: Registration begins for Term 1V at the Y for Y members (register at the Y or call 386-7511).
- 20: Registration begins for Term 1V at the Y for non-members (register at the Y or call 386-7511).
- 22-23: Mantra Ritual and Reflection workshop at Radha House with Swami Padmananda.

- 28-30: Workshop with Shirley Daventry French at the Yoga Centre Winnipeg. Contact Val Paape or Hart Lazer, 204-783-8040.
- 29: Iyengar Yoga Teachers' meeting 9.15am to 1pm at the Y.

MARCH:

- 2: Term 1V classes begin at the Y.
- 8: "Inspiration from India" workshop at the Y with Jim Rischmiller 10am to 1pm. Contact Jim at home 474-5630 or at work 382-6464.
- 14: Pranayama Class/Asana Practice in Metchosin with Shirley Daventry French. Call 478-3775 for details.
- 27: Victoria Yoga Centre gathering at the Y.
- 28: Iyengar Yoga Teachers meeting 9.15am to 1pm at the Y.
- 27-29: Life Strategies workshop at Radha House with Swami Padmananda.

APRIL:

- 3-5: Workshop at the Y led by Donald Moyer. Contact Marlene Miller at home 389-4651(pgr) or at work 656-7271.
- 6: Registration begins for term V at the Y for Y members (register at the Y or call 386-7511).
- 9: Registration begins for term V at the Y for non-members (register at the Y or call 386-7511).
- 11: Pranayama Class/Asana Practice in Metchosin with Shirley Daventry French. Call 478-3775 for details.
- 17-21: Faeq Biria, Director of the Iyengar Yoga Institute in Paris, will be teaching for the first time in Canada at the Tejas Centre de Yoga, Montreal. Classes in French and English. Contact Marie-Andree Morin at 514-277-6100 or Tejas 514-528-8288.

22-24: Shirley Daventry French will be teaching in Ottawa. Contact Donna Fornelli at 819-685-0491 for details.

24: Victoria Yoga Centre gathering at the Y. Practice at 6pm.

5: Iyengar Yoga Teachers meeting at the Y. 9.15am to 1pm.

7: Term V classes begin at the Y.

JULY:

3: Wheel of Life workshop at Radha House with wami Gopalananda.

8: Victoria Yoga Centre gathering at the Y. Practice at 6pm.

Pranayama Class/Asanan Practice in Metchosin with Shirley Daventry French. Call 478-3775 for details.

5: Iyengar Yoga Teachers meeting at the Y. 15pm to 1pm.

AUGUST:

5-7: Weekend Yoga Retreat led by Shirley Daventry French at the Saltspring Centre on Saltspring Island.

6-7: Rose Ceremony at Radha House.

SEPTEMBER:

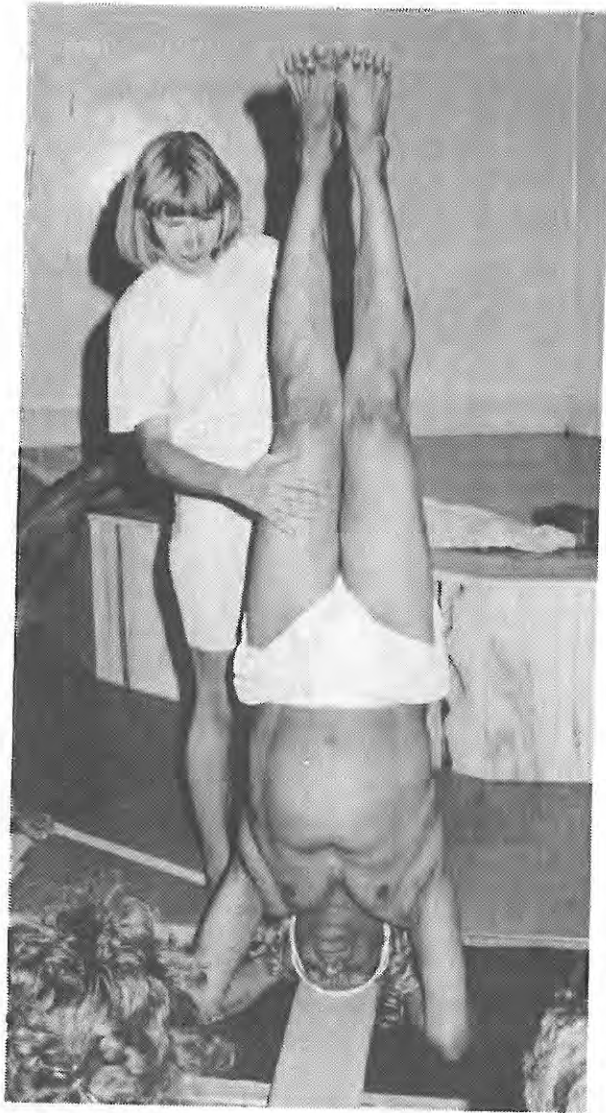
2-5: Canadian Iyengar Yoga Teachers meeting on the Sunshine Coast. Contact Gioia Irwin 604-734-596.

6-11: Iyengar Yoga Intensive at the Y with Liz McLeod and Shirley Daventry French, Guest Teacher: Derek French (see ad this issue).

24-Aug 2: Teacher training and a weekend workshop with Ramanand Patel at the Yoga Centre in Winnipeg. Call 204-783-8040 for details.

SEPTEMBER:

1-14: Workshop with Ramanand Patel at the Y.

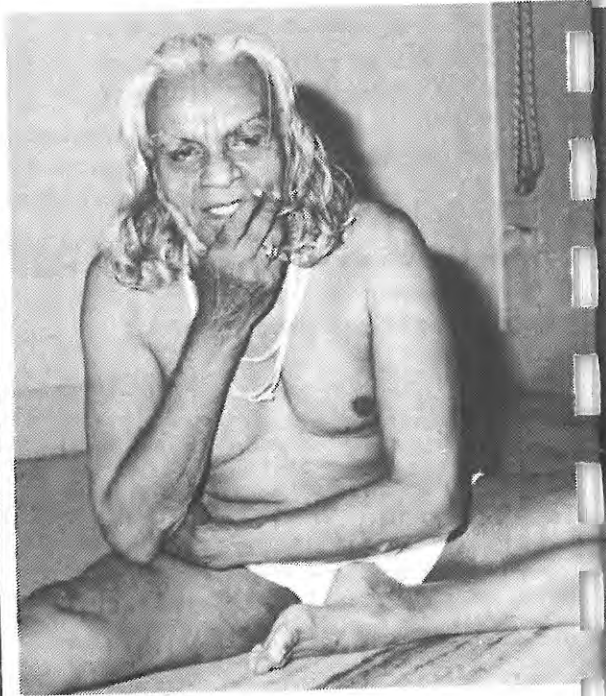


Birgit Hamm, a student from Germany, who is blind uses her sense of touch to "see" Mr. Iyengar's Sirsasana.

"What am I to do?"



*Shirley finds humour
in her predicament!*



"You must savour the fragrance of a poster"



"Awesome !!"



"Stretch any amount"



Leslie

At the November Yoga Centre meeting, Linda Shevloff and I talked about the meaning of yamas, niyamas and the unity of yoga using B.K.S. Iyengar's book *The Tree of Yoga* as a jumping off point.

Yoga is defined as being the uniting of body, mind and spirit. In most texts or discussions, the various paths of yoga are discussed and this leads to confusion. The eight fold path of yoga has the following elements:

Yamas	Ethical
Niyamas	practices
Asanas	Physical poses
Pranayama	Breathing
Pratyahara	Sense
	withdrawal
Dharan	Concentration
Dhyana	Meditation
Samadhi	Unity with the
	Divine

As soon as our minds see this list we are thinking of steps of separation. That is why Mr. Iyengar's book, *The Tree of Yoga*, helps put this back into an integrated whole.

The yamas are the roots of the tree; niyamas the trunk; asanas are the limbs. It is much easier for our minds to grasp that the branch of the tree cannot survive without the trunk or its roots.

There are five yamas - we used examples from doing asanas to explain these further:

Ahimsa - non-injury

To do poses without damaging yourself. Overdoing and underdoing, both can cause injury.

Satya - truth

If you are doing standing poses and the knees bend in uttanasana, who are you lying to? Yourself.

Freedom from greed and non-covetousness

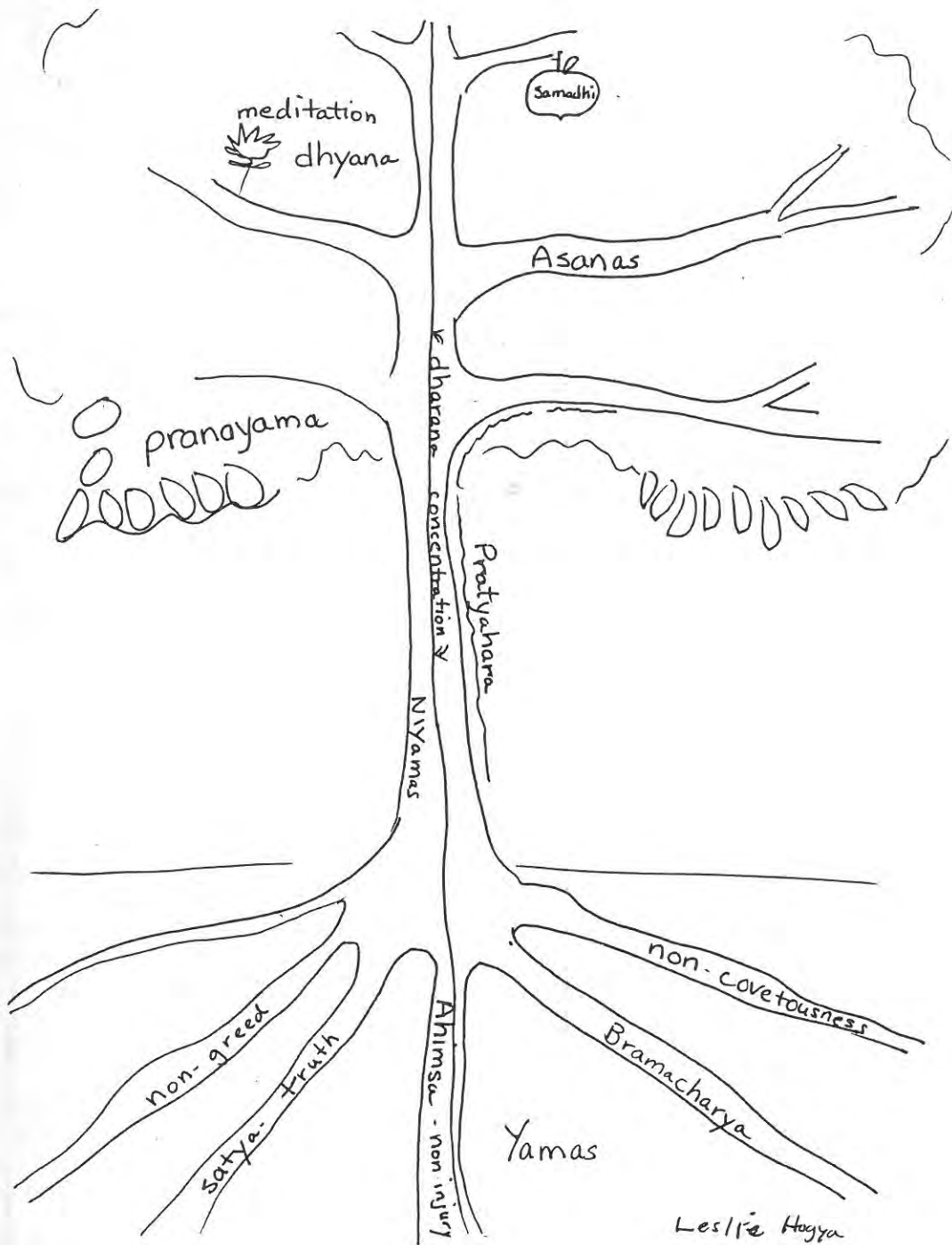
Don't be grasping, trying to do poses longer than is right for you. Don't compare your ability with that of someone else.

Bramacharya - control of sensual pleasure

Choosing only to do poses that are easy for you would be one simple example of the denial of this yama.

The yamas control organs of action. The niyamas control the organs of perception.

The first niyama is cleanliness. This was much more an issue in earlier cultures and still is an issue in countries where fresh water is at a premium, where heat and dust make staying clean more of a challenge. Balancing asana poses on one side of the body then the other helps with cleansing.



Sartosa - contentment

Be grateful for what you already have, accept your limitations.

Tapas - restraints

Linda gave an example of someone who is very adept in the poses, who has a flexible, strong body being told to limit their asana practice to the simplest poses for one year in order to learn a lesson in humility and surrender.

Self study

Learn from your body and apply the lessons to other aspects of your life.

Devotion

Surrender your ego to the Divine.

The leaves of the tree relate to Pranayama - breathing.

Pratyahara - sense withdrawal

This happens when we move inward, the bark of the tree protects the senses.

Dharana - concentration

Fill your body as the tree is full of sap, moving from the very tip of the tree to the bottom of the furthestmost root.

Meditation is like the flowering of the tree.

Samadhi is like the fruit of the tree, the full limit of its potential.

by Leslie Hogya

Yoga Centre Gathering

at the 'Y' Lounge
on Friday January 17th
Practice at 6pm
Led by Jim Rischmiller
Potluck at 7pm
Followed by discussion

Please bring your own plate and cutlery

RADHA HOUSE



1500 Shasta Place
Victoria, B.C. V8S 1X9
(604) 595-0177

WORKSHOPS AND EVENTS

INTRODUCTION TO KUNDALINI SYSTEM

Explore the key challenges and characteristics of each chakra or level of consciousness in the kundalini system of yoga, and see how these levels function in your daily life. This is an important starting point for regular classes.

Friday, January 10,
7.30-10.00 pm.

Saturday, January 11,
10.00 am to 6.00 pm.

Fee: \$65, \$15 deposit

OPEN HOUSE

We invite you to join us in this informal gathering as we start a new year. This is a wonderful opportunity to greet old friends and to meet new ones. Looking forward to seeing you then.

Sunday, January 12,
3-5pm.

THE HIDDEN LANGUAGE OF HATHA YOGA

Discover your personal language hidden within your body and mind. This one-day workshop is based on Swami Radha's newest book, which builds on the classical foundations and wisdom of an ancient tradition. Using metaphor and symbolism, imagery and visualisation, you will unlock your own understanding of the psychological and mystical meanings of the asanas (physical postures).

Saturday, January 25,
10.00 am. to 6.00 pm.

Fee: \$45, \$10 deposit.

GURU PUJA

36 years ago Swami Radha was initiated into sanyas. Dedicating her life selflessly to help others find their inner strength and life purpose, she is an example of the highest order. We honour the guru in a satsang of gratitude.

Sunday, February 2,
8-9pm.

MANTRA, RITUAL AND REFLECTION.

Swami Radha has called the combination of spiritual practice and reflection "the shortcut to enlightenment". This is an opportunity to let your heart and intellect enliven your practices, and take you deeper into them.

Saturday and Sunday,
February 22 & 23
10.00 am. to 6.00 p.m.

Instructor:
Swami Radha Padmananda

Fee: \$90, \$20 deposit.

LIFE STRATEGIES

The preambles to success are a clear goal and a plan of how to reach it. Yet we live our lives with as little planning and no strategy. This workshop can be the starting point to regain control of your life, and to ensure victory in your goals and aspirations.

Friday, March 27
7.30-10.00 pm.
Saturday, March 28
10.00 am to 6.00 pm.
Sunday, March 29,
10.00 am to 6.00 pm

Fee; \$150, deposit \$30.

WHEEL OF LIFE

The travelling Buddhist teachers unrolled their paintings of the Wheel of Life to teach the path to Liberation. How can you see this ancient Tibetan practice to find your way back to the centre again? The answers have practical application in your daily life.

Friday, May 1
7.30-10.00 pm.
Saturday, May 2
10.00 am to 6.00 pm
Sunday, May 3
10.00 am to 6.00 pm

Instructor:
Swami Gopalananda

Fee: \$115, \$25 deposit.

ROSE CEREMONY

The Rose Ceremony is a personal dedication to the Divine, a time to re-establish your commitment to the very finest within, and to reaffirm your ideals. If you wish to attend, please bring two roses - one for you and one for the Divine. Phone for further information. There is no fee but you are asked to make a donation to a charity of your choice as an offering of gratitude.

Part One: Saturday June 6
8.00-9.00 pm
Part Two: Sunday June 7
8.00-9.00 pm.

WEEKLY ACTIVITIES

KUNDALINI CLASSES

Clarify your values, concepts and ideals. Participate in a weekly class based on Swami Radha's book Kundalini Yoga for the West. This course provides a foundation for personal growth and will introduce you to specific spiritual practices that will change your life.

Fee: 9 classes, \$99.

DREAMS

Dreams offer a direct way to connect with the part in us that knows and that speaks each night in our own symbols. In this class we investigate dreams from a yogic perspective and focus on their application in daily life.

Wednesdays, 5.30-7.00pm

Fee: 9 classes, \$99.

SANG AND BHAJANS

Sang is a time to quiet the mind and open the heart; to sing to the Divine, listen to an inspirational reading and chant mantras for those who have asked to be on the Prayer List. All are welcome to join us in this time of prayer and meditation.

If you wish to be on the Prayer List, please contact by phone or letter.

Sundays, 7.30-9.00pm.

HATHA YOGA: THE HIDDEN LANGUAGE

Swami Radha's method of hatha yoga aims to integrate body and mind and to unlock the deeper meaning of the asanas. A continuing study of this method can bring both improved physical and mental condition, and a deeper understanding of the body as a spiritual tool.

Mondays: 5-7pm Ongoing class

Saturdays: 9.30-11.30 am

Beginners.

Fee: 9 classes \$90.



Yoga Centre President, Jim Rischmiller with Mr. Iyengar.

The Victoria Yoga Centre
presents
Inspiration From India

with
Shirley Daventry French

Sunday, February 16th
10 am to 1 pm
Yoga Studio – Victoria YM-YWCA

Yoga Centre Members \$15.00
Non-Members \$18.00

Shirley has recently returned from India where she studied intensively with her teacher, the Yoga Master B.K.S. Iyengar. Mr. Iyengar is celebrated the world over for his expertise in the art of Yoga, and it is a unique and special gift to study at his Institute in Pune. Share Shirley's enthusiasm and benefit from her experience by attending this workshop!

Registration
Phone Shirley Daventry French at 478-3775
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The Victoria Yoga Centre
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IYENGAR YOGA INTENSIVE

July 6th to 11th 1992

with

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Liz and Shirley are longtime students of the Yoga Master, B.K.S. Iyengar and senior teachers of his method of Yoga. They travel regularly to India to study with Mr. Iyengar and have just returned, full of inspiration and enthusiasm, from their most recent trip. Derek is a physician who has practised Iyengar Yoga for many years and seeks to integrate the ancient wisdom of yoga with the practice of modern medicine.

For further information contact:

Victoria Yoga Centre
3918 Olympic View Drive
R.R. 4, Victoria, B.C. V9B 5T8

Telephone Enquiries: Shirley Daventry French (604) 478-3775
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YOGA CENTRE OF VICTORIA

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Please fill out this form and send it with your cheque or money order to:

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Please do not mail me the newsletter; during class sessions, I'll pick one up at my "Y" class. []

The VICTORIA YOGA CENTRE SOCIETY is a non-profit society incorporated under the Societies' Act of the Province of British Columbia whose purpose is, "to encourage the physical, mental and spiritual growth of its members and other interested members of society at large by the study and discipline of Yoga". The Society owes its inspiration to Swami Sivananda Radha and Mr. B.K.S. Iyengar.

The Society Newsletter is published regularly, providing current information on events concerning yoga in Victoria and area and at the Yasodhara Ashram. Published by the Victoria Yoga Centre Society.

Anyone wishing to contribute articles, photographs, drawings, information or suggestions to the newsletter may contact the Editor, Jennifer Rischmiller, 4489 Lindholm Road, R.R. #1, Victoria, B.C., Canada, V9B 5T7. Telephone: (604) 474-5630.

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DEADLINE FOR FEBRUARY ISSUE: JANUARY 17th, 1992.

VICTORIA YOGA CENTRE SOCIETY

3918 Olympic View Drive, R.R. #4, Victoria, B.C., Canada, V9B 5T8



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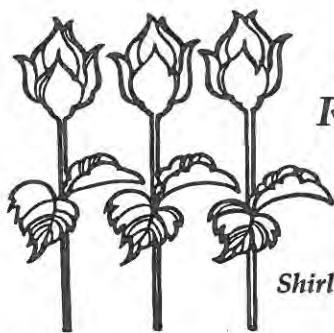
Newsletter



*"What is required
is culture of the heart, and of the hand,
not merely of the head."*

Please Subscribe

February, 1992



Reflections

by
Shirley Daventry French

Yoga lessons come in many forms. They are not restricted to the time we are in class or practising at home, but abound in the events of our daily life twenty four hours a day. Yes, even in our sleep and dreams.

The other day I had a yoga lesson of a different kind, and one which I prefer not to repeat, when I became a victim of that modern plague - rear-end motor vehicle accident. The conditions were ideal. It was pouring with rain, the pavement was slick with rivers of water streaming down the road, and visibility was very poor. As usual in Victoria, the traffic continued at its normal pace as if none of the aforementioned conditions existed.

I was travelling along the Trans-Canada highway in a line of traffic which came to a sudden halt. Fortunately, I had left enough space between myself and the car in front to stop with room to spare. Unfortunately, the driver of the heavy American car behind me had not! I was congratulating myself on the fact that I had good brakes, when my peace of mind was rudely shattered along with my car. The force of the impact propelled my Volvo into the car in front making it a three-car accident.

My car is ten years old, and recently I had been wondering if it was time to trade it in. My husband likes to keep reminding me that in Sweden, the average Volvo owner keeps his car for nineteen years. Why not? They are well built, solid, reliable cars, which handle well, run smoothly, and are very

good in emergencies. Ten years ago, a new Volvo (my first new car) was written off in a bad accident; the driver, my seventeen year old son, escaped with a fright and two small stitches in his scalp.

When dreaming of a new car, I had been thinking that perhaps next time I would get something a little more exciting than a Volvo. Maybe one of the streamlined new models with a spoiler on the back, low slung and fast. For many years I have driven "safe" cars. When I was single, I couldn't afford any sort of car, and in the first years of marriage we bought what we could afford, which wasn't much: second, third or fourth hand vehicles, small as light. Once we had children, we became concerned with safety and looked for a car with a proven safety record, and when our children turned sixteen and began to drive themselves, this became an even more important factor. Last year, we had an unusual amount of snow and considered getting a four wheel drive vehicle. This year there has been none, so I had forgotten about that.

What really counts? Performance or safety? Style or substance? Is it possible to have both? How much energy should go into preparing for something which may never happen?

As the carnage on our roads testifies, any motor vehicle accident is potentially fatal. The other day, having satisfied myself that there was no threat to my life, I immediately became concerned about the threat to my way of life. Would I suffer from whiplash, a common injury in this type of accident? If so, or if there were any other serious injuries, what about my teaching? Battered, bruised and probably without a car, how would I teach my three classes tomorrow? What about the workshop that I was scheduled to teach next month? And what about my practice, which had been going so well recently? Would it have to be modified? Would I have to practise therapeutically? For how long?

As I waited for the police to come, I sat in the car, trying to calm my scattered mind. I breathed slowly and deeply, and alternated between saying a mantra and doing the Divine Light Invocation (a practice learned from Swami Radha). I felt tearful and shaky, probably suffering from shock, but I could breathe easily so my ribs were not broken. I could move all my limbs, and the only real pain I felt was on my chest where the seatbelt had done its job well and restrained me from hitting either the steering wheel or the windscreen. One element of concern kept surfacing because I know, from some of the medical reports I have typed for Dere, that the pain from injuries such as whiplash does not always manifest immediately. However, in the present moment I was alright.

I have heard this sentiment many times from people who have suffered intense physical or psychological distress, that as long as they stay in the moment they are OK. It's only when the mind becomes caught up in "what if", that problems become unsurmountable.

I became aware of my attachment to a certain way of life: wanting to go on doing what I always do without interference. That, however, is not the nature of the Universe, which will make sure that from time to time you are brought face to face with the nature of your attachments and encouraged to let them go. If you ignore this warning, sooner or later you will be forced to let go.

This accident and its aftermath also involved other yogic practices of surrender and acceptance. Acceptance that the direction of my life on that day had changed its course, and would no longer unfold as planned. Surrender to the ambulance attendants who wished to examine me, and then take me to the hospital strapped to a board with a collar around my neck. I felt all of this was totally unnecessary, but they encouraged me to relax and let them do their job. This process of surrender continued in the hospital, and having accepted it I began to enjoy and observe what was happening in an interested and slightly detached way. I was in very little pain, but I

wondered if this was how someone who was severely injured would cope with their predicament. Probably, if they were already following some body-mind discipline such as yoga!

One of the reasons I came out of this accident relatively well was the type of car I was driving. Another was because I practise yoga. A spine and joints which have some flexibility are much more likely to survive such a trauma with minimal distress than those which are rigid. Muscles which are used to stretching and contracting regularly will stretch and contract in the impact of a collision much better than those which are chronically tight or loose. A person who is practising breathing exercises regularly will be more readily able to quieten the breath and calm the mind when dealing with a stressful event. Such an individual will be able to use all these tools to cope with both short and long term problems.

My car is the vehicle in which I travel to and from my work and play. Without it, I could not continue to live in my present home and would have to modify my life in many other areas. I choose my car carefully and maintain it well, so that on those occasions when it is called upon for optimum performance, it is ready. My body-mind is the vehicle in which my spirit travels from birth to death in this lifetime, and it is my responsibility (and on-one else's) to see that it is well cared for so that it can withstand the challenges that inevitably will come my way. Yoga is the best lifetime warranty that I know. If I practise regularly I will be in better shape to handle the vicissitudes of life. A wise investment will generate interest when left undisturbed, but is there to cash in if necessary. The practice of yoga will generate reserves which can be called upon in times of need, and in both good times and bad will enrich your life immeasurably.

The Victoria Yoga Centre
presents
Inspiration From India

with
Shirley Daventry French

Sunday, February 16th
10 am to 1 pm
Yoga Studio – Victoria YM-YWCA

Yoga Centre Members \$15.00
Non-Members \$18.00

Shirley has recently returned from India where she studied intensively with her teacher, the Yoga Master B.K.S. Iyengar. Mr. Iyengar is celebrated the world over for his expertise in the art of Yoga, and it is a unique and special gift to study at his Institute in Pune. Share Shirley's enthusiasm and benefit from her experience by attending this workshop!

Registration
Phone Shirley Daventry French at 478-3775
or Linda Benn 598-8277

Refreshments – Register Early

FROM THE EDITOR

I experienced a feeling of relief when I saw the January issue of the newsletter! When I saw the December issue, I felt disappointed, angry, guilty.

I knew it would serve no purpose to spread those emotions so I kept them close to me in order to examine them. I listened to the reactions of people who saw the newsletter, heard what wasn't included that normally helps to maintain the quality. At this point it would have been easy to allow the emotions to erupt, especially self-pity. I wanted consolation, to be praised for past work. However, my teachers knew what I needed, they were as dispassionate in their comments as I was trying to be. Over a period of two to three weeks I had the opportunity to review my feelings and sort out how I wanted to approach the situation. I looked at each emotion and tried to figure out why I was feeling disappointed, angry and so on.

After this process, I was able to become clearer about the reasons and eliminate a large part of my ego which surrounded these emotions. In fact, my ego caused some of my emotions! The clarity then produced the ability to focus my energy on the questions that arose for me around the issue of newsletter production. The process revived my enthusiasm for the newsletter, left me open to new ideas, suggestions for articles, etc., renewed the energy necessary to produce a monthly publication.

Although this process does not produce overnight solutions, the energy it requires is far less than that required for an emotional eruption and the ensuing damage repair of that eruption. I have tried to use the process over and over and have now had the opportunity to put it into practise again.

I consider myself as a 'plodder' and, for me, there was a very negative connotation to this description. However, I have had a change of perspective and, for me, there is no longer an opinion attached to the label 'plodder'. To continue slowly on, to make sure of where I want to travel, to be clear about my journey in all respects, that's my way of life.

I have spent the past few months renewing my gratitude for my way of life. My gratitude springs from the recognition of my yogic practices, my work on my body, mind and soul. My acceptance comes from the knowledge that unification is at least one life time's work. Through yoga I am learning to be clear, to take each moment and give it the value it deserves. I am also grateful for the freedom yoga brings me because of the ability it gives me to focus.

I will continue to 'plod on' and to celebrate the opportunities I am given to do the work.



THANK YOU

THANK YOU

THANK YOU

***to Bill for collating the newsletter over the past year.

***to Margaret, Kathy and Lawrence for volunteering to collate the newsletter in the future.

THE IMPORTANCE OF ASANAS

by B.K.S. IYENGAR

(The following article is an excerpt from the book IYENGAR - His Life and Work, published by Timeless Books. It is reprinted here with their permission.)

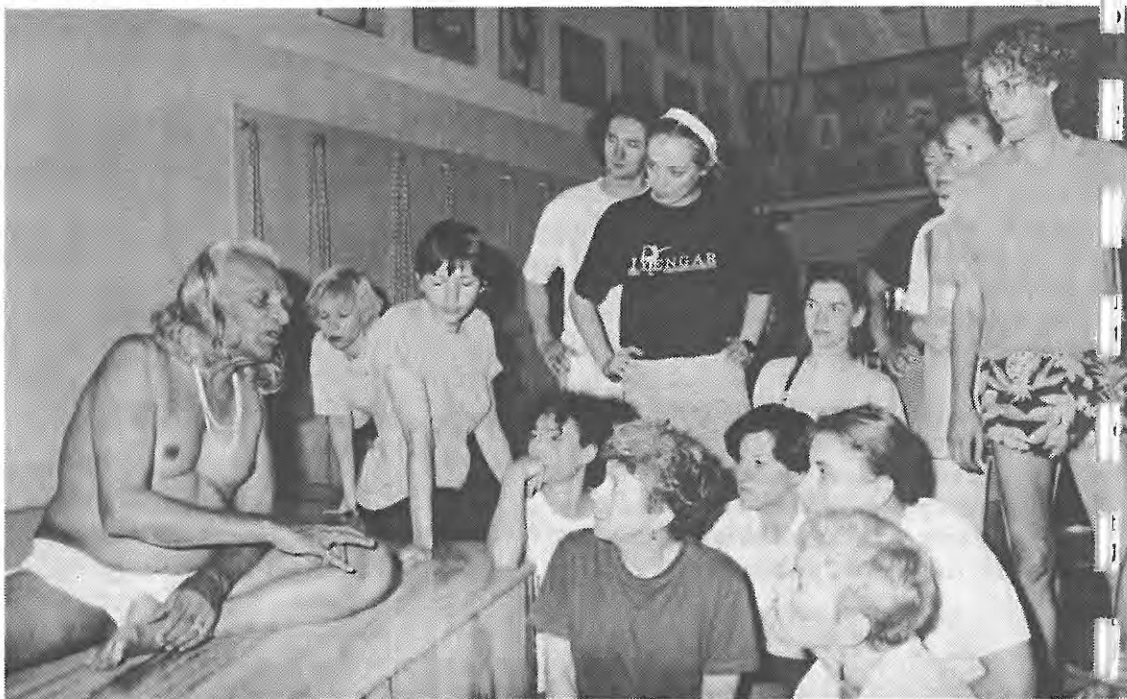
What is it that keeps us from pain and sorrow? Health of the body, mind and soul alone can make us live happily from birth till death. Health alone can enable us to die nobly and majestically. Health is not a commodity which is gained by swallowing pills. It has to be earned by hard work and discipline. One has to exercise in order to keep the muscles, the organs, the nerves, the glands, the flow of blood, and the systems of the body in proper condition. The entire human system should be well-regulated like the rising and setting of the sun. Then the mind becomes free from the shackles of the

body, unattached from the dictates of the senses, and it gets attached to the source of all knowledge, the actions and all emotions, that is Atma (the soul).

The body is the only capital that the Soul possesses and it has to be taken care of, whether it is used for pleasure of the body or realisation of the Self.

Today we live an artificial life, have artificial foods, stimulants for sex, and tranquilisers for sleep. Yoga asanas have stood the test of time; they stimulate the system as well as tranquilise it as the occasion demands.

Asanas restore the balance in the system, making the body fresh and clean. Asanas have to be performed with even, flowing energy and with dynamism, creating new avenues and hopes as mankind is ever dynamic and looks for further expansion in knowledge and experience. Asanas should never be done mechanically for then the body rusts and the mind stagnates.



"Ethical discipline of the asana is when you extend correctly evenly & to the maximum."



*"If you know the extension of the body,
you know the extension of the mind."*

If Sirsana is done accurately and precisely no weight of the body is felt and the brain gets the sharpness. If Dwipada Viparita Dandasana is done, it not only makes the brain sharp, but alert and active. If Sarvangasana is done, the brain remains sober with no negative or positive changes in the brain (both are evenly balanced) whereas in Halasana or Uttanasana the brain becomes empty, silent, non-creative and one hundred percent receptive. If Setu-Bandha Sarvangasana is done, the brain becomes full, non-oscillating, silent and one hundred percent positive and creative. When Paschimottanasana is done the whole physical body feels the peace and poise in each life cell. If Baddha Konasana is performed the bodily desire for sexual union diminishes, while in Pranayama the mental desire for sexual union diminishes. Like this each aspirant can trace the effects of asanas by religiously performing them with an open mind to see what comes.

There are two ways of doing asanas, either with ajnana (without any thought behind them) or with prajna (with fullness of thought). While performing asanas, the spine, the arms and fingers, the legs and toes, the skin, the fibres, the membranes of nerves and muscles, the organs, the intelligence, even the very Self, should be sharp, mobile, alert, alive, observant and receptive. Activity and passivity must go together to get the best effect from each asana. And that is Yoga - Union, or total integration while performing the asanas.

As a healthy tree alone bears healthy flowers and fruits, only accurate performance of asanas gives one a healthy personality, peace to the mind, and poise to the body. Perform asanas with uninterrupted awareness and undivided attention. Do not perform asanas mechanically, with the mind wandering elsewhere. Perform with total movement and involvement. Penetrate the intelligence from one end of the body to the other,

vertically, horizontally, circumferentially as well as crosswise. This will bring uniformity and harmony to the body; it will sculpt the body to bring out its latent beauty. Just as a goldsmith beats and melts the gold to remove impurities, the yogi performs asanas to remove toxins that accumulate in the body. It acts as nature's gift, dissolving all types of complexities and enables us to come to simple living and high thinking.



Perfect performance of asanas does not bring one to the state of body consciousness alone. It rather frees one from the limitations of the body and sets one free, sublimating the mind with the Self. As a devotee surrenders his or her all at the feet of the Lord, the practitioner surrenders, merges, and becomes one with the asana. There is then no difference between the knowable, the knower and the knowledge. There is only the experience of that which is true, good and beautiful.

The asanas effect not only physical, physiological and biological changes, but also psychological ones. The aspirant does not take up the practice of the postures for the sake of sensual pleasure or showmanship. Rather his practice is directed towards life and in the spirit. It is fallacious to believe that the maintaining of a posture in comfort for a given length of time means mastery in yoga, for a sitting posture alone will not eradicate the scores of evils and infirmities man is heir to. Nor is health to be mistaken for mere existence. Health is the delicate balance in harmony of body, mind and spirit, where physical disabilities and mental distractions have vanished and the gate of the spirit is open.

The most important effect of performing asanas is to bring the mind closer to the core of being as it naturally likes to remain attached to the body, senses of perception and organs of action.

According to Patanjali, the mastery of the asana leads to freedom of dualities. The duality between the body and the mind and of the mind and the soul vanishes and results in tranquility. To live in the Infinite is the result of yoga. This happens only when the aspirant's attempts become effortless. Though he gains in health, strength, firmness and lightness, his knowledge becomes more sharp, yet at the same time humility increases as the ego slowly dissolves. Thus the practice of yoga makes possible service and sacrifice.

Note: Copies of IYENGAR - His Life and Work may be purchased through the Victoria Yoga Centre, contact Linda Benn 598-8277, or from Timeless Books, Box 50905, Palo Alto, CA.94304.

The Victoria Yoga Centre
presents
Inspiration From India

with

Jim Rischmiller

Sunday, March 8th
10 am to 1pm
Yoga Studio - Victoria YM-YWCA

Yoga Centre members \$15.00
Non-Members \$18.00

Jim has just returned from his 3rd intensive in India. He had the great good fortune to study with B.K.S.Iyengar whose teachings he has followed for the past ten years. This has been an uplifting experience for Jim which you can share by attending this workshop.

Registration

Phone Jim Rischmiller at home 474-5630
or work 380-2113.

Refreshments - Register Early

THE GURU PUJA

Reprinted with permission from Ascent, the Journal of Yasodhara Ashram Society, Volum XX11, Number 3, 1991.

The following is taken from a talk that Swami Radha gave at the puja celebration of her 80th birthday, July 1991.

First of all, let me say it's great to come back here and see changes that I never thought would take place. In the past I have sometimes felt almost desperate, wondering, What are people doing? How little they understand. Why don't they listen and think deeply and find out what the purpose of their life is? Why don't they read old scriptural texts of any religion to see what the purpose of one's life is? With this weekend I can see there have been many good changes.

In this kind of celebration you kindle the finer feelings within yourself. But I want you to remember that I am only a symbol, even though the symbol is sometimes helpful in that our physical senses need something to focus on. It doesn't matter what kind of an image you have, it keeps you focused and that's the major thing.

Tonight we have had many new gopis and gopas. Just remember that you will remain a gopi and a gopa because these are Radha and Krishna's helpmates. Be a handmaiden of Divine Mother. She is a symbol of the manifestation. I am only a symbol of the little Ashram here. But, when you put it all together you can see that it is all the energy of the union of Radha and Krishna, the invisible power that Krishna represents and the visible power that Radha presents in the Creation.

The question that always comes up is, How do I unite yoga and daily life? Well, I'm sitting here and I'm not wearing a sari to remind me of the changes I

decided to make in my life. I used to wear the sari, as you know, and it was good for me for a certain length of time - I followed that tradition in the beginning because I could understand it best and I had no other example. But many things can remind us of our decisions, and you can really do anything you want to remind yourself of the changes you have decided to make in your life without needing an entire robe.

When I was in India, I had the same problems that you probably have today. I know of few of them. Sivananda - the great master as he was called, the great Guru - seemed to be almost unapproachable. Yet, I also had the opportunity to meet Sivananda in his very human form and that enabled me to see his spiritual greatness in perspective. You see, if the human aspect is denied then the spiritual aspect isn't there either. Unless you make a great effort to discover the Divine in yourself, you cannot discover the Divine in anyone else. All of your impressions of the human personality will stand in the way.

I can give you a little example as an illustration. Sai Baba was visited by a number of people and they said to him, "What is wrong with you? Why do people leave you?" Sai Baba didn't answer directly. Instead he stepped out of his kutir and pointed to a flowering tree with many of its flowers fallen to the ground. Sai Baba said, "Is it the fault of the tree that the flowers fell off?"

Before I met Swami Sivananda in person, I had read all the books about fasting and discipline with food and eating and all this sort of thing. When I did meet him I was simply shocked because he was so big and fat. I thought to myself that he must eat more than necessary, so why would he tell me not to indulge in any food? But I reflected on this and could see that I hadn't come to India to investigate the human aspects of Sivananda. In time, I saw enough of what was going on in the Ashram in India to understand that perhaps some outlet for him was necessary. People with their diverse self-wills and their desire to display their power gave him a lot of

frustration. So, there is no question that he sometimes ate more than he should have.

There were many other little incidents. At first, I used to think, how can he ever be a great yogi and do those things? But, if I had not seen that human aspect of Sivananda, I would never have thought that it was worthwhile to pursue this path. The Divine uses the human body to give all the expressions and emanations of itself. It's all evolution - evolution is your spiritual path. You have to see that you cooperate with your own evolution.

It is for each of you to decide if you will pursue your spiritual life, even if you are married, or have children, or even if you have a career. None of these should stand in the way. Let me tell you, the Ashram has given me very little opportunity for meditation and for certain practices. I was extremely busy. My days were often twelve and sometimes fourteen hours long. The only thing I could do was to dedicate whatever my activity was to the Most High. And that is something that is open for you too. You can dedicate anything you do, even the smallest action, to the Most High and bring the greatest quality possible into your life. Gurudev Sivananda used to say, "If you cannot recognize the miracle of your hand, what do you think you can experience somewhere else?"

And it's no use to go searching from one place to another, from one teacher to another, or from one personality to another. It doesn't work. The knowledge that you need will not be given to you. You can't find it outside; it's not in the books nor in the old texts. But there is a hidden place in the mind where you can receive that knowledge. The mind has many, many layers and your state of mind is your own. You have to search within yourself and I hope someday all of you will find that hidden place.

Another point I would like to make is that people worry about the bad things they have done in their lives. All right, if you know you did something wrong and you are sincerely regretful, then you can put that individual or the situation in the Light and let the Light take care of it. But do it only if you are really sincere about wanting to balance the wrong. Otherwise the expression has no particular effect. If you are critical of yourself then you can be sure you will be critical of others, too, and the judgement that you put on other people is the judgement by which your own actions will be condemned. There is no God who will punish you - it is your own state of mind that does that. If, according to you, something is wrong for someone else, then it's wrong for you too. The time of daily reflection is very, very important. You have to think about what you do, who you are and what you have done with your time. Have you learned something from your use of

yoga

blocks - slant boards - sand bag sleeves
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ॐ

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time, even time spent in casual conversation? Can it help you to correct yourself? Be strict with yourself rather than others.

Your evolution and your cooperation with your evolution is the purpose of your life. When you truly know this, you will meet that place, that hidden place in your own mind, where you receive that special knowledge.

But there is a guardian at the entrance to that hidden place in your mind. The guardian is your intellect and it will fight tooth and nail to maintain supremacy. The intellect does not want, under any circumstances, to be defeated. But if you stay very aware and watch other people around you, you will see that in the end the intellect will let you down. You can use the intellect to bring the Divine in you to the surface and to practice awareness. But the intellect is only a tool - it is not the Divine in you.

When you bring even a little bit of light into a big, dark room, you can begin to see something. The purpose is not only to look at all the bad things that are in there: the spiders, scorpions, snakes and what have you. The purpose is also, simply, to bring in more Light. When you bring in the Light, all these creatures will disappear - they don't like the Light. It is very simple. You have to approach the Divine in yourself, your own soul. You are nothing, but the Divine in you is something. You can think of the Divine in yourself as that little grain of rice - not all the rice in the world - but that little grain that gives you a taste and puts you in touch with something that is much greater than this little self.

Don't waste this life. If you sometimes find yourself in doubt, take a sheet of paper and fold it in the middle. On one side, write all the wonderful experiences you have had and on the other side write all the negative experiences. You may find that the wonderful experience exacted a tremendous price. Do you want to keep paying that price? It becomes

very costly. Rather, pay the price for the pearl of divinity, the pearl that you find in the lotus of your own being.

There have been times when I have asked, Where are all the Radhas? There should be more, there should be lots. Today the world needs lots of Radhas who draw on Krishna. The separation that you see in the Radha-Krishna dance is only temporarily apparent to the senses. If you are fearful of being in the net of Krishna, of that Divine Power, I'd like to tell you that it's your only safe place. If Radha is caught in the net of Krishna, she's safe. If manifestation, this little world of the Ashram, is caught in that net, you are safe, because you stay focused. You do not need to give up the human existence that you are also a part of. The Divine has to encompass your humanness. When I became Swami Radha, my former name and identity, Sylvia, could not just be ignored and forgotten; it had to be incorporated. When you approach the Divine, the Divine incorporates that which is very human in you. Your body, your human being, is Krishna's flute. You have to keep that flute perfect so that he can play the melodies he wants even though these melodies are sometimes necessarily what you want to hear or what you want to say. But, being Krishna's flute is what you have dedicated yourself to and that dedication is not determined by convenience or personal comfort.

Hari Om. Hari Om. Hari Om.





The Victoria Yoga Centre
and the Victoria YM-YWCA
are pleased to announce an



IYENGAR YOGA INTENSIVE

July 6 to 11, 1992

with

Liz McLeod and
Shirley Daventry French

Guest Teacher: Dr. Derek French

- Daily classes in Asana and Pranayama•
- Seminars on Yoga Psychology and Philosophy•
- Therapeutic Yoga•

Fee: \$350.00

For further information contact:

Victoria Yoga Centre
3918 Olympic View Drive
RR#4, Victoria, BC V9B 5T8

Telephone Enquiries:

Shirley Daventry French (604) 478-3775
or Linda Benn (604) 598-8277



SUMMER OF '92

Iyengar Yoga Intensive in Victoria

July 6 to 11, 1992

This summer the Victoria Yoga Centre, in association with the Victoria YM-YWCA is offering an intensive course in Iyengar Yoga with respected Canadian teachers Liz McLeod, Shirley Daventry French and Derek French, all long-time students of the Yoga Master B.K.S. Iyengar. Liz and Shirley travel regularly to India to study with Mr. Iyengar and have just returned, full of inspiration and enthusiasm, from their most recent trip. Derek, who has also studied in India, is a physician who integrates his understanding of yoga into his medical practice.

This course is intended for teachers and students with experience in Iyengar Yoga, who wish to deepen their practice and broaden their understanding of yoga philosophy and psychology. There will be daily classes in asana and pranayama, discussions on how to practice, how to teach and teacher/student relationships. Seminars will include: Seeing and Understanding Bodies, Patanjali's Yoga Sutras, and Looking at Musculo-Skeletal and Back Problems with the perspective of Yoga. Classes will be held in the well-equipped Yoga Studio of the Victoria YM-YWCA which is centrally situated in one of North America's most beautiful cities.

PROGRAMME

Monday, July 6

9:00 to 9:30 am	Introduction & Orientation
9:30 to 12:00 noon	Asana
12:00 noon to 2:00 pm	Lunch
2:00 to 4:00 pm	Seminar
4:00 to 5:00 pm	Pranayama

Tuesday, July 7 - Friday, July 10 inclusive

9:00 am to 12:00 noon	Asana
12:00 noon to 2:00 pm	Lunch
2:00 to 4:00 pm	Seminar
4:00 to 5:00 pm	Pranayama

Saturday, July 11

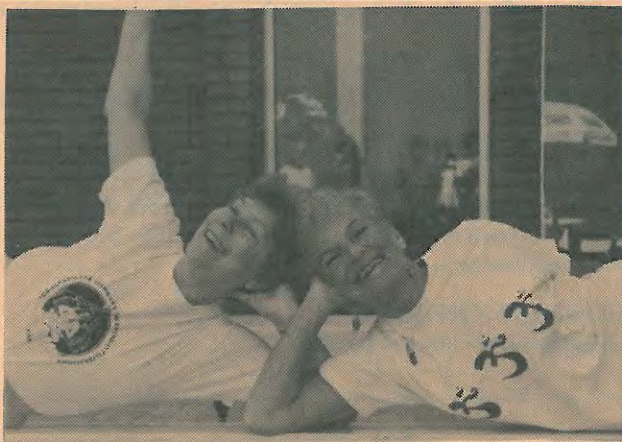
9:00 am to 12:00 noon	Asana
1:00 pm	Picnic lunch and an afternoon of rest and relaxation at the French's residence and nearby Witty Beach Park

THE TEACHERS

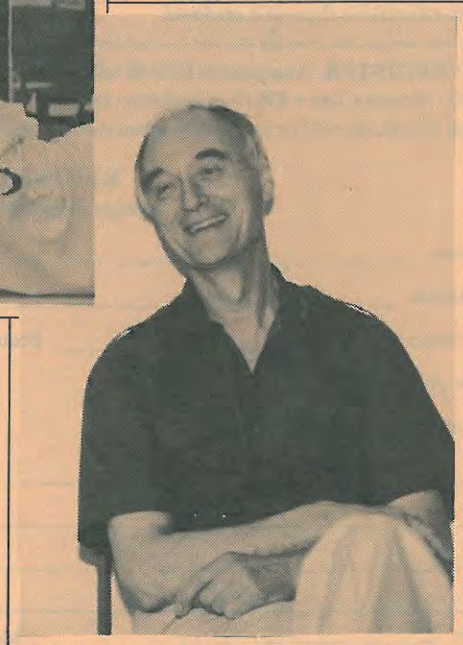
Liz McLeod of Edmonton, began her study of yoga in 1970 out of an interest in body awareness, gymnastics and dance. Liz has been in the forefront of the growth of Iyengar Yoga in Canada. After working for several years on the executive of the Yoga Association of Alberta, Liz founded the B.K.S. Iyengar Yoga Association of Edmonton and serves as its President. She has been teaching in Edmonton for twenty years and gives workshops throughout North America.

Shirley Daventry French was introduced to yoga in 1970 through her work in fitness and health education. She has been teaching in Victoria for twenty years, and gives workshops nationally and internationally. Shirley is the founder of the Victoria Yoga Centre and director of the Iyengar Yoga programme at the Victoria Y. She is also a writer whose reflections on yoga are a regular feature of the Victoria newsletter, and was the editor of Mr. Iyengar's autobiography/biography "IYENGAR - His Life and Work".

Shirley and Liz in a lighthearted moment during the 1991 Intensive



Derek French is a physician in general practice in Victoria, BC with a special interest in musculo-skeletal problems, chronic pain syndromes, stress management and hypnotherapy. As an athlete and participant in many sports, he first became interested in yoga when he injured his own back. He teaches therapeutic yoga, and seeks to integrate the ancient wisdom of yoga with the practice of modern medicine.



Derek enjoying his teaching

ACCOMMODATION

The Residence at the Y has a limited amount of accommodation for women. Bed and breakfast will be available with members of the local yoga community. As a popular tourist centre, Victoria has a wide selection of hotels and motels. There is also accommodation on the attractive campus of the University of Victoria, a short bus ride from downtown and the Y.

Y Residence - Special six night package (July 5 to 10 inclusive): \$170.50 for a single room with shared bathroom, \$253.00 double room. Extra night (July 11): \$34.10 single, \$50.60 double. All prices include tax. A deposit should accompany your request for accommodation. Early reservations are recommended.

Bed and Breakfast - \$20.00 a day

University of Victoria Residence - Single room \$30.50 per night, double \$44.50 per night. Prices include tax and breakfast. Write to: House & Conference Services, University of Victoria, PO Box 1700, Victoria, BC V8W 2Y2, Phone: (604) 721-8395

REQUEST FOR HOUSING IN VICTORIA - IYENGAR YOGA INTENSIVE - JULY 6 TO 11, 1992

Name _____

Address _____ City _____

Province _____ Postal Code _____ Telephone _____

Please find me Bed and Breakfast accommodation in a private home. ☐ \$20.00 per day

(Pre-payment is required by June 15 when balance of course fees is due. Send a separate cheque for this amount payable to Victoria Yoga Centre.)

Please reserve a room in the Y Women's Residence

July 5 to 10: ☐ \$170.50 single ☐ \$253.00 double July 5 to 11: ☐ \$204.60 single ☐ \$303.60 double

Please specify one of the above (all prices include tax)

Non-refundable deposit is enclosed ☐ \$34.10 single ☐ \$50.60 double

TO REGISTER A deposit of \$150.00 will reserve a place in this course. Payment in full is due on June 15, 1992. Refunds, less a \$50.00 cancellation fee, will be given if notice of cancellation is received by June 15. After June 15 refunds will be given only when the space is filled by another student.

REGISTRATION FORM

Iyengar Yoga Intensive - July 6 to 11, 1992

Name _____

Address _____ City _____

Province _____ Postal Code _____ Telephone _____

Are you a teacher? _____

Briefly describe your yoga experience.

☐ Deposit of \$150.00 enclosed

☐ Full payment of \$350.00 enclosed

Make cheques payable to the Victoria YM-YWCA and mail to:
Summer Intensive, c/o Victoria Yoga Centre
3918 Olympic View Drive, RR#4 Victoria, BC V9B 5T8



ESPECIALLY FOR WOMEN
Aphorisms of Swami Radha
(excerpted from the book *Seeds of Light*)

It is difficult for women to change,
one reason being the tenacity with which husbands and children
hang on to the old image.

To come into their own women must establish their own values
and bring up their children accordingly without attacking men.

When women dare voice their true thoughts to themselves,
they have the freedom to shift total devotion
from husband and family to higher goals.

It is women who seek quality and who are willing to accept
other forces in life, such as intuition.

Woman has always been interpreted by man.
A psychology of women does not exist.

The strongest hold on most of us is emotional security, looking
outside ourselves for that which can only be found within.
There is no security that we can really find in another person.

Most people need approval, acceptance and appreciation from
others. Dependence on these needs prevents us from being free
to be ourselves and to develop our own talents.

*The book Seeds of Life, a collection of aphorisms of Swami Radha, is available in
Victoria at Shambhala House, at a cost of \$9.95, or can be ordered directly from
Ashram Books at Yasodhara Ashram, Box 9, Kootenay Bay, B.C. V0B 1X0*



ASHRAM INITIATIONS

IAN MCKENZIE

It had seemed last fall as though September at the Ashram might be anticlimactic. For Swami Radha's eightieth birthday celebrations the Ashram had been full as it had never been before, and now it was as though the air had been let out of the balloon; the summer was over, the people were gone, even Swami Radhi who had left on the first leg of her trip back to Victoria. The Ashram was closing for 30 days so that the residents could regroup, refocus and come together again after the busy-ness of the summer.

In that time of comparative quietness came the transformations. Five of them. On September 8 there were three new swamis and two new bramacharins. The change on the outside was immediate - each with a new name, each wearing clothes of a certain colour. What may seem an abrupt change on the outside is simply a manifestation of an evolution within, a deeper commitment made.

Within the Sivananda tradition there are three initiations, of which the first is the most important. The first is mantra initiation in which the connection is forged between guru and disciple and, equally important, the disciple makes a commitment to the Divine, to which the guru is simply witness.

The bramacharin takes the vow of celibacy. Sometime bramacharya is seen simply as sexual celibacy, but as the understanding grows, it can be seen as a way of life that gradually withdraws attention from the senses and focuses the energy that's gathered upon a deeper connection with the Divine.

The sanyasin takes two additional vows: poverty and obedience.

The initiates have reminders that graphically bring attention to what they've chosen to focus upon more fully. The brahmacharin wears white as a symbol of purity and wholeness, while the sanyasin wears orange, the colour of renunciation, transformation, the colour of the sun setting on one way of being and rising to another.

Each initiate chooses a name for this aspect they want to give strength to and make a more central part of their life.

Joanne Pitman became Utpala, which is the blue flower that Tara holds in her hand. Norman McKenzie took the name Sarada, a manifestation of Sariswati. Ananda means bliss or higher consciousness, and the word ananda is often part of the name that new swamis take, to name the quality that will be their avenue to their goal. David Forsee's long affinity for the young Krishna is reflected in his new name, Swami Gopalananda. Laurel-Lea Shannon wanted to honour the aspect in her reflected by her two spiritual teachers, so she took the name Swami Radha Padmananda. Linda Pelton, who had found the light to be the most powerful expression of the Divine, became Swami Jyotirmayananda. Jyotir means light and, for her, the name has come to mean "bliss achieved through the all-encompassing Light that destroys illusion."

September 8 is Sivananda's birthday, a day to give special recognition to the spiritual lineage passed down to us. Now the lineage has been manifested in a new generation.



Yoga Centre of Victoria

BOOKS FOR SALE

IYENGAR, HIS LIFE AND WORK \$23.00

YOGA, A GEM FOR WOMEN \$20.00

by Geeta S. Iyengar

YOGA, THE IYENGAR WAY \$25.00

by Silva, Mira and Shyam Mehta

THE RUNNER'S YOGA BOOK \$25.00

by Jean Couch

LIGHT ON PRANAYAMA \$16.00

by B.K.S. Iyengar

THE CONCISE LIGHT ON YOGA \$10.00

by B.K.S. Iyengar

YOGA SUTRAS OF PATANJALI \$11.00

by B.K.S. Iyengar

TREE OF YOGA \$17.00

by B.K.S. Iyengar

70 GLORIOUS YEARS OF YOGACHARYA B.K.S. IYENGAR \$25.00

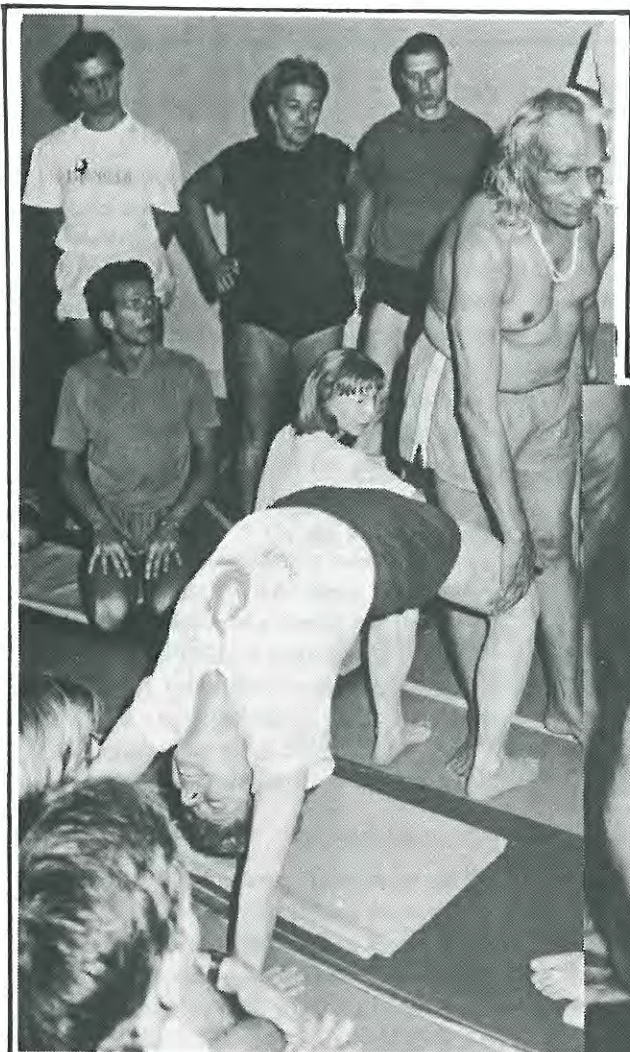
(Commemoration Volume, 1990)

Contact your yoga teacher or Linda Benn

160 Beach Drive

Victoria, B.C. V8S 2L5

598-8277



Legwork in backbend.



Jim Rischmiller in pirasana



The Victoria Yoga Centre Iyengar Workshop

DONALD MOYER

Friday, April 3, 1992 6:30 - 9:30 pm
Saturday, April 4, 10:00 - 1:00 pm
3:00 - 5:00 pm
Sunday, April 5 10:00 - 1:00 pm

Victoria YM-YWCA
880 Courtney Street

Registration Fee: \$115 for Yoga Centre and "Y" Members
\$125 for non members

Donald Moyer is one of North America's foremost Iyengar teachers. He is a long time student of Mr. B.K.S. Iyengar's having studied frequently at the Ramamani Iyengar Memorial Institute in Poona, India. He is a warm and sensitive teacher who willingly shares his knowledge and insights with students.

Students should have experience in "Iyengar" yoga. All sessions will focus on asana.

To Register send your fee payable to: Victoria Yoga Centre
c/o Marlene L. Miller
P.O. Box 2494
Sidney, B.C. V8L 3Z4

For further information contact: Marlene Miller at (604) 389-4651 (pager) or Linda Benn at (604) 598-8277

YOGA INTENSIVE with FAEQ BIRIA

Faeq Biria is director of the Centre de Yoga de Paris and is one of Mr. Iyengar's closest disciples. He is totally devoted to transmitting his master's teaching with truth and authenticity. As well as being very competent at a practical level, he also shares with his students a great theoretical knowledge of the various dimensions of yoga. Faeq Biria's passion for his work stimulates courage and commitment in those who study with him; his classes are a source of inspiration and joy.

Workshop Schedule

- Three days will be offered to students of all levels on April 17,18,19 (in French)
- Two days will be offered on April 20 and 21 for more advanced students and teachers (in English)

Cost : Three days, April 17, 18, 19 : 225\$
Two days, April 20, 21 : 150\$
FULL WORKSHOP, April 17 - 21 : 350\$

To Register, please send a non-refundable deposit of 40% of the total cost before April 1st.

Please make your cheque to: Tejas, Centre de yoga

For further information, please contact :

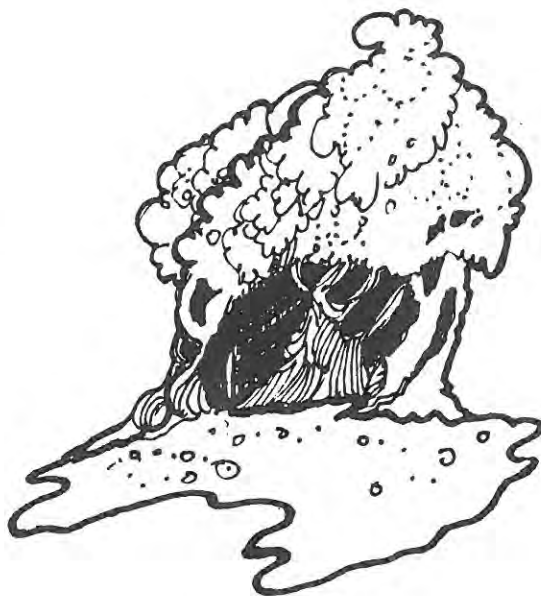
TEJAS, Centre de yoga: (514) 528-8288
or Marie-Andrée Morin: (514) 277-6100

TEJAS, CENTRE DE YOGA, 919 MT-ROYAL EST. MONTRÉAL, QUÉBEC H2J 1X3

FAEQ BIRIA THE TEACHER

Last summer I had the privilege of studying with Faeq Biria. It was a demanding, inspiring, wonderful experience. In trying to describe what this experience meant for me the word Tapas came to mind. In the Tree of Yoga, Mr. Iyengar writes: "Tapas is usually translated as austerity, but its meaning is better expressed as burning desire. It is a burning desire to cleanse every cell of our body and every cell of our senses, so that the senses and body may be made permanently pure and healthy and leave no room for impurities to enter into our system. It is in this spirit that the asanas should be performed." Being in a class with Faeq Biria is an occasion to feel his "burning desire" and an opportunity to contact the Tapas within oneself, to nourish it and thus bring light into one's life.

Marie-Andree Morin



Yoga Centre Gathering

at the 'Y' Lounge

Friday, February 14th

Practice at 6pm

Potluck at 7pm

Followed by Discussion

Please bring your own plate and cutlery

YOGA CALENDAR

FEBRUARY:

- 8: Pranayama Class/Asana Practice in Metchosin with Shirley Daventry French. Call 478-3775 for details.
- 14: Victoria Yoga Centre gathering, 6pm at the Y.
- 16: "Inspiration from India" a workshop with Shirley Daventry French at the Y. 10am to 1pm. See ad this issue.
- 17: Registration begins for Term 1V at the Y for Y members (register at the Y or call 386-7511).
- 20: Registration begins for Term 1V at the Y for non-members (register at the Y or call 386-7511).
- 22-23: Mantra Ritual and Reflection workshop at Radha House with Swami Padmananda.
- 28-30: Workshop with Shirley Daventry French at the Yoga Centre Winnipeg. Contact Val Paape or Hart Lazer, 204-783-8040.
- 29: Iyengar Yoga Teachers' meeting 9.15am to 1pm at the Y.

MARCH:

- 2: Term 1V classes begin at the Y.
- 8: "Inspiration from India" workshop at the Y with Jim Rischmiller 10am to 1pm. Contact Jim at home 474-5630 or at work 382-6464.
- 14: Pranayama Class/Asana Practice in Metchosin with Shirley Daventry French. Call 478-3775 for details.
- 27: Victoria Yoga Centre gathering at the Y.
- 28: Iyengar Yoga Teachers meeting 9.15am to 1pm at the Y.
- 27-29: Life Strategies workshop at Radha House with Swami Padmananda.

APRIL:

- 3-5: Workshop at the Y led by Donald Moyer. Contact Marlene Miller at home 389-4651(pgr) or at work 656-7271.
- 6: Registration begins for term V at the Y for Y members (register at the Y or call 386-7511).
- 9: Registration begins for term V at the Y for non-members (register at the Y or call 386-7511).
- 11: Pranayama Class/Asana Practice in Metchosin with Shirley Daventry French. Call 478-3775 for details.
- 17-21: Faeq Biria, Director of the Iyengar Yoga Institute in Paris, will be teaching for the first time in Canada at the Tejas Centre de Yoga, Montreal. Classes in French and English. Contact Marie-Andree Morin at 514-277-6100 or Tejas 514-528-8288.
- 22-24: Shirley Daventry French will be teaching Ottawa. Contact Donna Fomelli at 819-685-0491 for details.
- 24: Victoria Yoga Centre gathering at the Y. Practice at 6pm.
- 25: Iyengar Yoga Teachers meeting at the Y. 9.15am to 1pm.
- 27: Term V classes begin at the Y.

MAY:

- 1-3: Wheel of Life workshop at Radha House with Swami Gopalananda.
- 8: Victoria Yoga Centre gathering at the Y. Practice at 6pm.
- 9: Pranayama Class/Asana Practice in Metchosin with Shirley Daventry French. Call 478-3775 for details.
- 16: Iyengar Yoga Teachers meeting at the Y. 9.15pm to 1pm.

JUNE:

5-7: Weekend Yoga Retreat led by Shirley Daventry French at the Saltspring Centre on Saltspring Island.

6-7: Rose Ceremony at Radha House.

JULY:

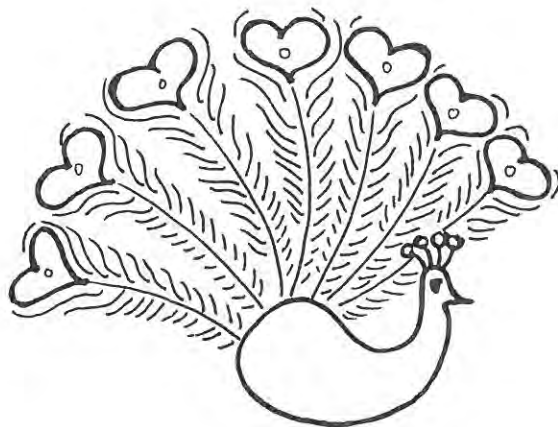
2-5: Canadian Iyengar Yoga Teachers meeting on the Sunshine Coast. Contact Gioia Irwin 604-734-7696.

6-11: Iyengar Yoga Intensive at the Y with Liz McLeod and Shirley Daventry French, Guest Teacher: Derek French (see ad this issue).

24-Aug 2: Teacher training and a weekend workshop with Ramanand Patel at the Yoga Centre in Winnipeg. Call 204-783-8040 for details.

SEPTEMBER:

11-14: Workshop with Ramanand Patel at the Y.



IYENGAR YOGA INTENSIVE

July 6th to 11th, 1992.

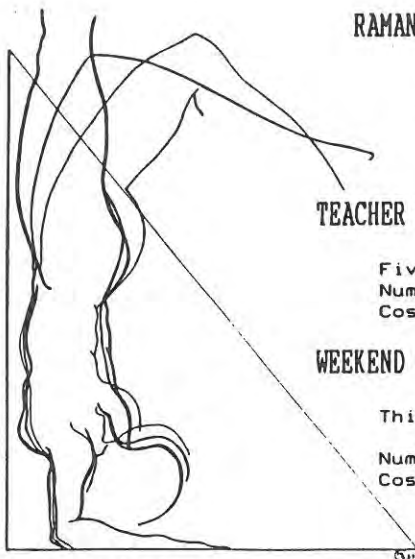
with

Liz McLeod
Shirley Daventry French
Derek French

The brochure for the Summer intensive at the "Y" is being sent out with this newsletter to those members who receive their copies through the mail. Brochures are also available at the "Y" or may be obtained in Victoria from Yoga Centre directors or your yoga teacher. This workshop brings together three of Canada's most experienced teachers who will teach daily classes in asana and pranayama and present seminars on yoga psychology and philosophy. This is a chance to deepen your understanding and practice of yoga.

For further information contact:

Shirley Daventry French 478-3775 or Linda Benn 598-8277



WINNIPEG

RAMANAND PATEL at YOGA CENTRE WINNIPEG

JULY 24 TO AUGUST 2, 1992

TEACHER TRAINING: July 27 through August 2, 1992

Five hours of class time each day
Number of participants limited to 20
Cost: \$400.00

WEEKEND WORKSHOP: July 24 to July 26, 1992

Thirteen hours of class time, Friday evening to
Sunday afternoon
Number of participants limited to 30
Cost: \$150.00

REGISTER FOR BOTH AND PAY \$500.00

BILLETS AVAILABLE

1038 PORTAGE AVENUE, WINNIPEG, CANADA, R3G 0S2. (204)-783-8040

The Yoga Centre of Victoria Newsletter Advertising

If you have products or services of interest to Victoria's yoga practitioners, this is your advertising vehicle.

Because our rates are so low, all advertising material must be supplied camera ready - that is, exactly as you want it to appear in the newsletter. If not, the copy will simply be typed and inserted. If you wish, we can arrange to have an advertisement prepared for you, but we must charge extra for this service.

Our policy in accepting advertising is that all advertisements must not conflict with the aims of the Centre, as stated elsewhere in the newsletter.

If you wish to buy an ad or require further information,
please contact our Advertising Manager, Carole Miller:

721-3477

1807 Forest, Victoria, B.C. V8N 1H5

RATES per ISSUE

Full Page	\$36.00
1/2 Page	\$18.00
1/4 Page	\$12.00
Business Card	\$9.00

RADHA HOUSE



1500 Shasta Place
Victoria, B.C. V8S 1X9
(604) 595-0177

MANTRA, RITUAL AND REFLECTION.

Swami Radha has called the combination of spiritual practice and reflection "the shortcut to enlightenment". This is an opportunity to let your heart and intellect enliven your practices, and take you deeper into them.

Saturday and Sunday,
February 22 & 23
10.00 am. to 6.00 p.m.

Instructor:
Swami Radha Padmananda

Fee: \$90, \$20 deposit.

MEMBERSHIP/SUBSCRIPTION FORM

Its time you joined the Yoga Centre of Victoria! As you read this newsletter, you are receiving one of the benefits of membership. As you attend your yoga classes or a workshop, you are receiving the benefits of membership. These take time and money and your membership fees and participation really help.

Please fill out this form and send it with your cheque or money order to:
YOGA CENTRE OF VICTORIA, 3918 Olympic View Drive, R.R.#4, Victoria, B.C., V9B 5T8

Membership/subscription fee is only \$20 per year.

Name: _____

Street: _____

City/Prov.: _____ P.C.: _____ Phone: _____

I am enclosing a cheque or money order in the amount of: _____

Please do not mail me the newsletter; during class sessions, I'll pick one up at my "Y" class. [☐]

The VICTORIA YOGA CENTRE SOCIETY is a non-profit society incorporated under the Societies' Act of the Province of British Columbia whose purpose is, "to encourage the physical, mental and spiritual growth of its members and other interested members of society at large by the study and discipline of Yoga". The Society owes its inspiration to Swami Sivananda Radha and Mr. B.K.S. Iyengar.

The Society Newsletter is published regularly, providing current information on events concerning yoga in Victoria and area and at the Yasodhara Ashram. Published by the Victoria Yoga Centre Society.

Anyone wishing to contribute articles, photographs, drawings, information or suggestions to the newsletter may contact the Editor, Jennifer Rischmiller, 4469 Lindholm Road, R.R. #1, Victoria, B.C., Canada; V9B 5T7. Telephone: (604) 474-5630.

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DEADLINE FOR MARCH ISSUE: FEBRUARY 21st, 1992.

VICTORIA YOGA CENTRE SOCIETY

3918 Olympic View Drive, R.R. #4, Victoria, B.C., Canada, V9B 5T8



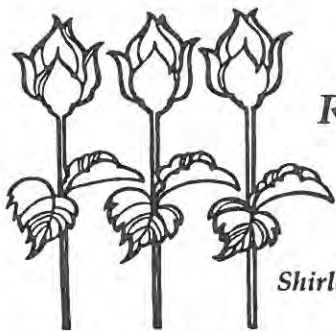
VICTORIA YOGA CENTRE

Newsletter



Please Subscribe

March, 1992



Reflections

by
Shirley Daventry French

If you look at the bulletin board on the back page of MONDAY (a weekly news-magazine distributed widely in Victoria) you see an incredible array of advertisements. Some are factual, supplying numbers you can phone if you wish to learn a language or have your photograph taken, along with announcements of services like reflexology, acupuncture, rolfing or reiki. Then there are the others which promise you anything: transformations, emotional releases, joy, peace, happiness etc. Brochures making similar claims appear all over town. Frequently the person advertising will list many areas of expertise and, sadly, yoga is often thrown in along with several other disciplines, any one of which involves a lifetime's study to gain any proficiency.

Who goes to all these people? These advertisements and brochures keep on appearing, so someone must go. Once when I asked Derek this question, he said that perhaps they all go to each other

This past week my eye was caught by an advertisement for cranial osteopathy - one of the current "in things" in bodywork. It included a long list of conditions which could be alleviated through this therapy including "birth traumas" and "life's processes". Since my recent car accident, I have been going to a massage therapist. In the office where he works there is another therapist who practises cranial sacral therapy. I have heard very good reports of his work from someone whose opinion I really respect. I asked my therapist if he also worked with this form of treatment, and he said that he didn't. He had studied it but did not feel he was sufficiently tuned in to its subtleties, and had decided for the time being to

concentrate on the techniques in which he was already trained. He remained open, however, to the possibility that perhaps later on, he would try it again. My respect for this man grew enormously. I find him very sensitive, otherwise I wouldn't choose him to massage me, and that sensitivity showed in his willingness to wait rather than rush to be part of a new trend.

If someone is well trained in the procedures they employ and discriminating in their use, they can be of tremendous help to a person in physical or emotional pain and distress. When an outside force such as a motor vehicle accident disturbs our equilibrium, or when we are overwhelmed with life's problems, it is wonderful to have someone to turn to whom you can trust to help you back on your feet - someone who knows their own limits, who can temper their eagerness to help with restraint, and while helping with your survival in the short run is also able to see what is in your best interest in the long term.

Several years ago we were holding a yoga centre meeting at my home. We had just adjourned the business meeting which had been held in the downstairs yoga studio and gone upstairs for refreshments. I was making tea when I heard moaning and groaning noises coming from the studio. These became louder and louder and there was a flurry of activity as people ran up and downstairs. What's happening, I asked, and was told that there was a man in agony from abdominal pains but that he being taken care of by people who were offering Touch for Health, Reiki, and various other treatments. Had they diagnosed the source of his distress? I don't know, but they were ready to treat his symptoms.

One person who wasn't rushing to help was my husband Derek, who is a physician. He was sitting in an armchair chatting to someone as if none of this brouhaha was going on around him. I know that he is not a callous person who would let someone suffer unnecessarily, having seen his quick, calm and apt response in emergencies, so I continued to serve refreshments. After a while, Derek got up and went downstairs; the moans gradually subsided, and a little later I learned that this man was in bed in our spare bedroom and was alright. When everyone had left, we went to check on him and he was sleeping soundly. In the morning, I awakened to find he had already got up and was doing his own yoga practice rested and relaxed.

Why were so many people so eager to intervene and why did Derek wait? He told me that from the nature of the noises he was certain they were emotional in origin, because physical pain produces other sounds. Besides, he had already observed during the meeting that this man was restless and distressed. He decided to wait until the individual himself sought help, rather than intrude uninvited. Perhaps what this man really needed most of all was to be left alone to groan and writhe on the floor. Although it is rarely tolerated in our culture, there are many others where this is perfectly acceptable behaviour and well recognised as a way of dealing with existential and emotional pain. Eventually, the man did ask if he could see Derek, who first examined him to rule out the possibility of a physical source of this abdominal pain and confirmed his initial diagnosis.

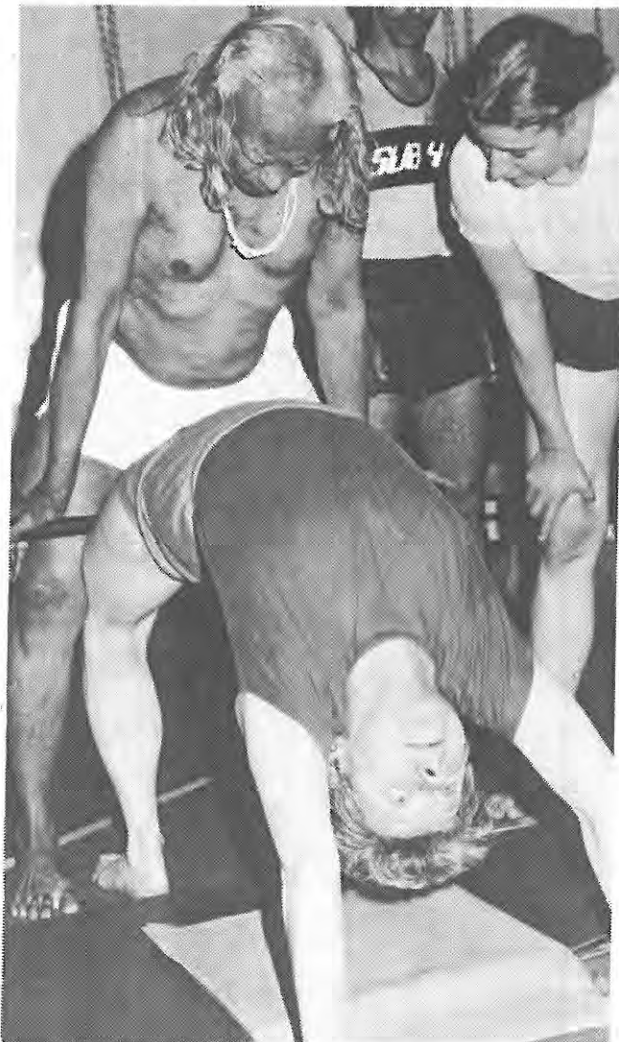
This is another thing which mystifies me, the willingness of people who have no diagnostic training themselves to commence treatment before a diagnosis has been made. Sometimes, of course, our intuition tells us what is wrong, but how do we know if this is reliable? There is a saying that if your only tool is a hammer sooner or later everything comes up looking like a nail!

During a Life Seals workshop with Swami Radha when I was asked to supply a list of positive characteristics, I said that I was intuitive. She asked me how I knew this, and did I ever check it out. I had never thought of this before, but began to see that sometimes what I called intuition was merely self-will, wanting to see things in a certain way or bring about a certain outcome. On the other hand, sometimes it was intuition, clear and true, but before being able to rely on this I had to get rid of many impediments such as emotions, attachments, desires which clogged this channel and prevented a free flow of direct perception. This is really what the practice of yoga is all about.

Sometimes we have to plunge in when a situation demands an instant response, but the chances of our taking the appropriate action will improve if we have been doing our personal work. Self-study is a fundamental part of yoga which, like all yogic practices, gradually removes ignorance and clears a path to knowledge, so that we know when to act and when not to.

In the section of the Bhagavad Gita where Lord Krishna is teaching Arjuna about wisdom in action, he says: "They who see action where there is inaction, and inaction where there is action, live in wisdom. Their consciousness is unified, and their every act is done with complete awareness." (Chapter 4, Verse 18 from The End of Sorrow, Volume I of The Bhagavad Gita for Daily Living by Eknath Easwaran)

Om Namah Shivaya!



Legwork in backbend ...

YOGA CENTRE NEWS

James Traverse led the February Yoga Centre gathering in a practice that helped us to s-t-r-e-t-c-h in the poses. Stretching is a natural gesture made with no strain and James emphasized that the asanas are a form of stretching, there should be no strain only extension to one's limit, just as when we stretch.

During the discussion after dinner we talked about the stretching of the mind and spirit, about how our perceptions and attitudes have changed, become more clear during the time we have practised the asanas.

I have enjoyed the gatherings we have had ;meeting new people, hearing other points of view has helped me to stretch. We have a couple more gatherings before the summer and the members of the Yoga Centre would like to hear

from you about the gatherings. We have enclosed a questionnaire in the newsletter and would appreciate it if you would take the time to fill it in and pass it to your yoga teacher. Thank you.

Remember there are more Victoria Yoga Centre sponsored events coming up so check out the ads in the newsletter and mark your calendar.



Yoga Centre Gathering

***at the 'Y' Lounge
Friday, March 27th***

Practice at 6pm

Potluck at 7pm

Followed by Discussion

Please bring your own plate and cutlery

 QUESTIONNAIRE

How many gatherings have you attended: all ☐ some ☐ few ☐

Do you come for : asana practice ☐

supper ☐

discussion ☐

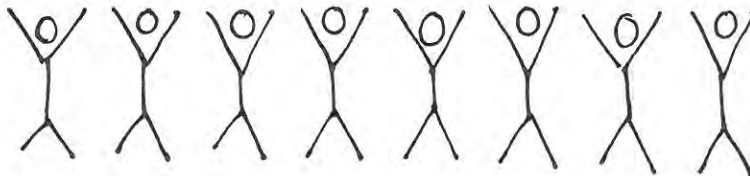
Do you prefer a leader for asana practice: yes ☐ no ☐

Do you have any particular asanas you would like to practice:

Do you prefer a leader for discussion: yes ☐ no ☐

Do you have any topics for discussion:

Thank you





For my
Yoga Teacher

The Victoria Yoga Centre
presents
Inspiration From India
with
Jim Rischmiller

Sunday, March 8th
10 am to 1pm
Yoga Studio - Victoria YM-YWCA

Yoga Centre members \$15.00
Non-Members \$18.00

Jim has just returned from his 3rd intensive in India. He had the great good fortune to study with B.K.S. Iyengar whose teachings he has followed for the past ten years. This has been an uplifting experience for Jim which you can share by attending this workshop.

Registration

Phone Jim Rischmiller at home 474-5630
or work 380-2113.

Refreshments - Register Early



The Victoria Yoga Centre Iyengar Workshop

DONALD MOYER

Friday, April 3, 1992 6:30 - 9:30 pm
Saturday, April 4, 10:00 - 1:00 pm
3:00 - 5:00 pm
Sunday, April 5 10:00 - 1:00 pm

Victoria YM-YWCA
880 Courtney Street

Registration Fee: \$115 for Yoga Centre and "Y" Members
\$125 for non members

Donald Moyer is one of North America's foremost Iyengar teachers. He is a long time student of Mr. B.K.S. Iyengar's having studied frequently at the Ramamani Iyengar Memorial Institute in Poona, India. He is a warm and sensitive teacher who willingly shares his knowledge and insights with students.

Students should have experience in "Iyengar" yoga. All sessions will focus on asana.

To Register send your fee payable to: Victoria Yoga Centre
c/o Marlene L. Miller
P.O. Box 2494
Sidney, B.C. V8L 3Z4

For further information contact: Marlene Miller at (604) 389-4651 (pager) or Linda Benn at (604) 598-8277

YOGA AND MENTAL PEACE

BY B.K.S. IYENGAR

Yoga, samadhi and shanti are synonymous terms, all conveying the same meaning. The means and the end of Yoga is Samadhi. Samadhi is the experience of Shanti or peace within oneself.

It will be interesting to note that Samadhi means putting together, union, bringing into harmony, fixing the mind for attention on the thought, intense contemplation or meditation.

Shanti means tranquility, calmness, freedom from passion, being undisturbed in the objects of pleasure and pains.

Now see what yoga means. Yoga is derived from the root 'Yuj' which means to join, to bind, attach, yoke, to direct and concentrate one's attention on, to use and apply. "Samyoga yoga ityukto jivatma Paramatmanaha". The union of the individual Self (Jeevatma) with the Universal Self (Paramatma) is Yoga.

Before understanding the communion of the individual with the Universal Self one has to know how to bring union of the body with mind and the mind with the self. It is not easy to demarcate between body and mind and mind and self.

It is a known fact that there is no cohesion in man's body and nerves, nerves and organs, organs and senses, senses and mind, mind and intelligence, intelligence and will, will and consciousness, consciousness and self.

In order to bring all these vehicles of man in unison, sages discovered Yoga. This vast scattered subject was codified by sage Patanjali in about 3-400 B.C. in his treatise of 195 terse sutras. He termed the practice 'Astanga or 8 limbed Yoga' and these eight

are known as Yama, Niyama, Asana, Pranayama, Pratyahar, Dharana, Dhyana, and Samadhi.

These aspects of Yoga are like a gigantic mango tree which spreads from the seed to the root, root to the trunk, trunk to the branches, branches sprouting into leaves, leaves aerating the entire tree supplying energy in the form of sap through the barks, later blossoms into flowers, culminating with tasteful fruits. As the fruit is the natural culmination of the tree, the art of Yoga too terminates in the practitioner moving from darkness to light, from ignorance to knowledge, knowledge to wisdom and from wisdom to true happiness and unalloyed peace within himself.

The eight disciplines of Yoga are compared to the tree. The Yama is the root; the Niyama is the trunk; Asanas are the branches; Pranayama is the leaves; Pratyahara the bark; Sap is Dharana; flowers the Dhyana and the fruit is Samadhi. As the essence of the tree is concentrated in the fruit, the essence of Yoga is in the experience of Samadhi.

THE EIGHT ASPECTS OF YOGA:

YAMA

Yamas are Ahimsa (non-violence), Satya (Truthfulness), Asteya (non-covetousness), Brahmacharya (Continence) and Aprigraha (non-greediness). These are considered as universal commandments as they stand for the whole of humanity all over the globe. They are social virtues to be observed in life. Yamas are the ethics that man has to follow while in contact with others.

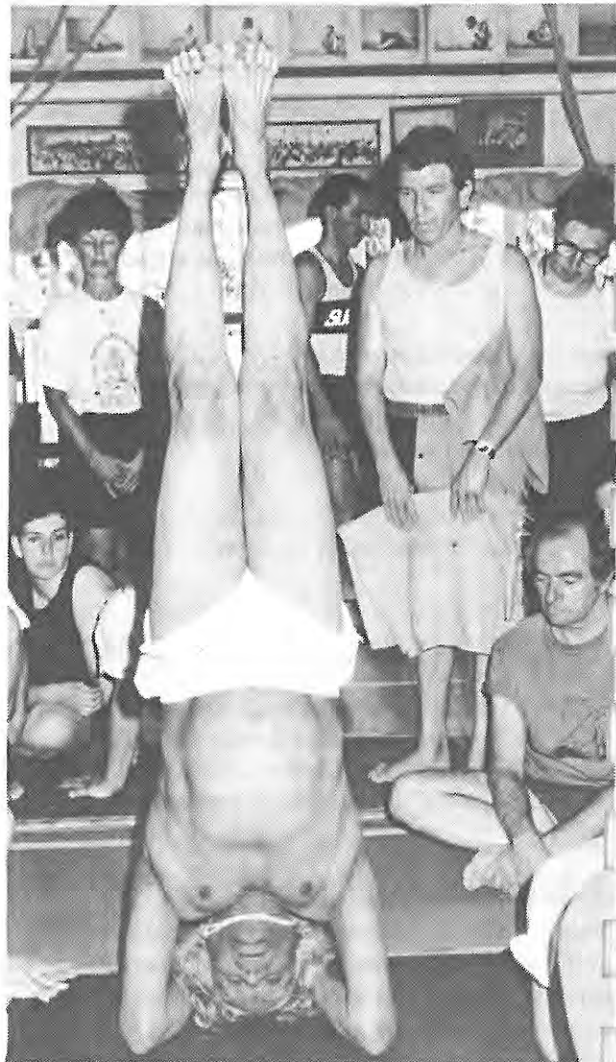
NIYAMA

Niyamas are the individual disciplines which have to be observed within oneself. They are Saucha (cleanliness both within and without), Santosha (contentment), Tapas (a burning desire in pursuit of purification of body, senses, mind, intellect, and ahamkara or ego), Svadhyaya (self-study; education of the self by study of sacred literature) and Iswara Pranidhana (surrender of one's thoughts, words and deeds to Iswara or God who is the creator and architect of the world).

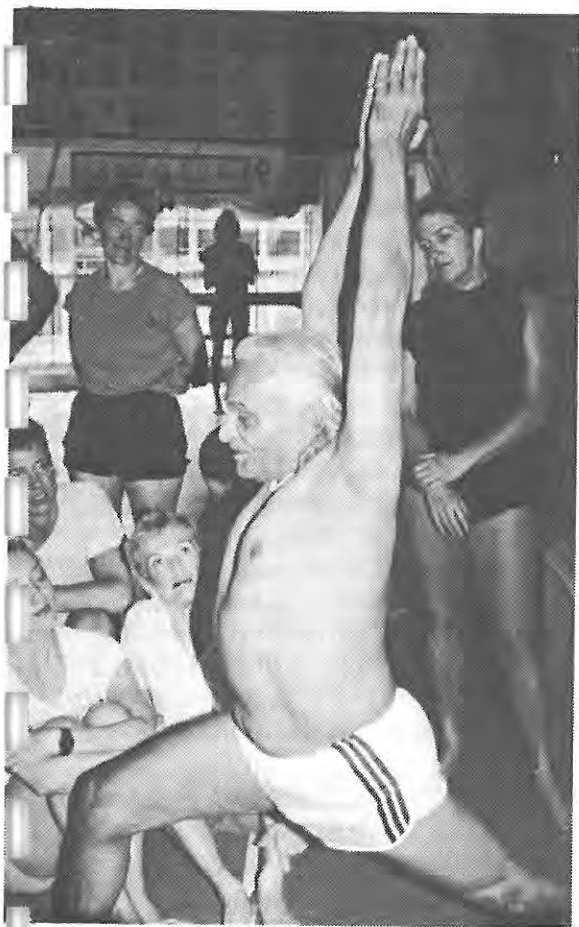
ASANA

Asanas are for maintenance of health in the body and steadiness in mind. Health is not mistaken for mere existence. Health is not a commodity which can be purchased in a bazaar. It is the balance of body, mind and spirit with all three humours - Vata (wind), Pitta (bile), and Sleshma (phlegm). They protect, sustain and support the body with the seven dhatus namely: Rasa (chyle), Ratka (blood), Mamsa (flesh), Medha (fat), Asthi (bone), Majja (marrow), and Shukra (semen). They not only keep the body immune from disease but help to enjoy a positive constructive and creative life.

Life is a combination of the Antahakarana (conscience), Ahamkara (consciousness), Buddhi (intelligence), Manas (mind), Jnanendriyas (senses of perception - ears, nose, tongue, eyes and skin), Karmendriyas (sense of action - legs, arms, speech, excretory and generative organs) and the entire body. Mind, like a mirror, receives the aspiration of the Self and reflects on the body to act as an instrument of enjoyment and attainment. Like the rays of the star which may take years to reach the earth, the self which transmits its likes or dislikes may take a long time to imprint on the mind which in turn makes the senses and the body act without using its intelligence. This unwatchful act of mind brings disturbances in man and makes him an abode of suffering.



Just as a gold smith melts gold to refine it, asanas purge the impurities and purify the body catering to the various needs of the muscular, digestive, circulatory, nervous, glandular, genito-urinary systems, bringing beauty, strength firmness in body, calmness in the nerves, clarity in speech and expressions, revealing a happy disposition. He is free from the dualities of body and mind, and mind and Self.



PRANAYAMA

Prana means energy. This energy may be physical, mental, intellectual, sexual, spiritual or cosmic energy. All vibrating energies are prana. Prana is the breath of all beings. It is the principle of life and consciousness in man.

The breath we draw in or out is the manifestation of the same prana. As the atmosphere contains the prana which is essential for life, respiration in us takes place. Asana means extension, expansion, prolongation, regulation and restraint. Hence pranayama means the prolongation and restraint of breath.

This pranayama has four actions. They are:

1. Inhalation.
2. Inhalation retention.
3. Exhalation.
4. Exhalation retention.

Inhalation is the intake of energy. Inhalation retention is the distribution of the drawn-in energy. Exhalation is the output of used energy and exhalation retention is the state of pause for quietness in the body, nerves and mind. It is a resting period for the organs.

It is said in Yoga texts that where there is breath, there the mind wanders. So still the breath to still the mind. Mind is the king of the senses, breath is the king of the mind. Gaining rhythm in the breath depends on the steady control of the sound of the flow in breath which in turn depends upon the nadis.

This controlled and disciplined flow of breath helps the mind to concentrate with ease and Pranayama acts as a unifying bridge between the mind and the Self. Asanas remove the obstructions which are created in the nerves due to our faulty foods, habits and customs, and pranayama helps the vital energy to flow uninterruptedly. It regulates man's habits, desires and actions and leads him towards the door of spiritual discipline.

PRATYAHARA

Pratyahara means keeping back or restraining the organs of sense. After many years of regular practice of asanas and pranayama the mind and the senses are brought under control when the senses are made to withdraw from the objects of desire. The mind is released from the pull of the senses. As the senses cannot dominate over the mind, they become passive. The mind, no longer held by the power of the senses, turns inwards and is set free from the tyranny of the senses. This is pratyahara. It is a return journey of the senses and intellect towards the source.

DHARANA, DHYANA AND SAMADHI

Dharana, Dhyana and Samadhi are called in technical terms by Patanjali as Samyama. Samyama means integration of body, breath, mind, intellect and Self.

It is not easy to explain the last three aspects of Yoga as separate entities. When concentration is prolonged in time it becomes Dhyana. When absorption takes place between the object of attention, the instruments used for attention and the person himself, it is Samadhi. In short, the knower, the means of knowing and the known become one. Dharana means act of holding, retaining or keeping the mind collected. So Dharana is to bring the wandering mind and fix it to a single point of concentration or to be totally attentive in doing one's work with dedication and devotion. When the person gets involved attentively, continually for a long period it becomes Dhyana by itself. The object and he become one. Body and mind, knowledge and experience get united. All actions from then on become effortless and pure. The only difference

between Dharana and Dhyana is that in Dharana there is slight tension and contraction in the brain. They are felt due to the bringing of shattered nerves and brain toward attention. Whereas, in Dhyana released expansion, quietness and peace are experienced. The prolonged state of this quietness makes man to be free from attachments and indifferent towards the joys of pleasures or the sorrows of pains. Both are the same for him. That is the experiencing of the state of oneness - Samadhi. This is the fruit of the disciplines of Astanga Yoga.

Though man is born free, nature's three qualities or gunas (qualities) sattva (illumination) rajas (activity) and tamas (inertia) entwine him. Due to kalachakra (wheel of time) he is caught up in his own makings of preya (pleasures) and sreya (auspicious and good) and is caught in the web of these gunas. He is moulded and remoulded by his actions and reactions and his mind is endowed according to this own behaviours. This mind is categorised into five states. They are mudha, kshipta, vikshipta, ekagra and niruddha. A mudha



mind is dull and stupid. He begins with Yama and Niyama. A kshipta mind is scattered. Being in disarray he hankers for objects but does not make efforts and remains in a state of neglect. He is introduced to yama, niyama, asana and pranayama. As his mind is oscillating between tamas and rajas, either tamoraja or rajotama, the four aspects of yoga help develop the rajoguna to act in him to become more steady but still distracted (vikshipta).

The ekagra mind is of rajasattva or sattvaraja, one slightly predominating over the other. He knows exactly what he wants, so he uses all his power to achieve his purpose. So he is introduced to, in addition to the above four aspects, pratyahara (withdrawal of senses), Dharana (concentration), and Dhyana (meditation). This makes him develop the sattvaguna.

The niruddha man is a highly sattvic man. He practices all the eight stages of yoga, refines his intellect and uses it meaningfully by synchronising his ideas with facts and reasons.

It is well known that the mind is the cause of bondage or liberation. In one hand it is caught with the pleasures of the world and on the other it strives to gain freedom. Besides it is caught with Avidya (ignorance) Asmita (egoism, pride and vanity), Raga (attachment), Dvesa (repulsion) and Abhinivesha (selfishness to relish and enjoy life).

Avidya is the acceptance of noneternal as eternal, impure as pure, nonself as self and living in material pleasures as if they are permanent pleasures. This causes egoism which in turn perverts his way of thinking. Raga (desires) attract more comforts and pleasures, and sorrow brings hatred towards his fellow beings.

No doubt, today through technological and scientific background, man has conquered ignorance, but he is caught in the pride of knowledge. This pride of knowledge brought in competition between man and man; strains and stresses are increased. In order to

cope with the competition, speed crept into thinking and action. These three, namely strain, stress and speed made the man a miserable creature on earth. His physical frame started waning, his nerves became tense, tight and filled. He could not release his tension. With his thinking faculty affected, the anxieties multiplied. In order to find freedom from anxieties and restfulness in himself he switched to the artificial ways of living. He became addicted to tranquilizers, sleeping pills, alcohol and various other psychedelic drugs or indiscriminate sexual acts to find peace. No doubt that these methods allow him to forget himself temporarily but the cause remains unsolved and troubles return unabated.

Patanjali, the father of yoga, had the foresight and vision to narrate the reasons which afflict man and disturb his peace and poise. They are:

1. Vyadhi (physical ailments).
2. Styana (lack of mental disposition to work).
3. Samshaya (doubt).
4. Pramadha (indifference).
5. Alasya (laziness).
6. Avirati (desire for sensual satisfactions only).
7. Bhranti Darshana (false or mistaken knowledge).
8. Alabdha Bhumikatva (failure to attain continuity in one's approach to life).
9. Anavastitatva (instability to maintain that which has been attained after persistent sadhana).
10. Dukha (pain and misery).
11. Daurmanasya (despair or evil disposition).
12. Angamejayatva (unsteadiness in the body).
13. Shvasa - Prashvasa (unsteady or unrhythmic respiration).

These may be divided and subdivided as gross and subtle and it is enough to say that extraordinary attention and action is required by man to keep his fortress free from the attacks of the above mentioned enemies in order to experience the unalloyed peace.

Yoga is the only science and art which eradicates all the afflictions above. It disciplines the mind, emotions, intellect, will and reason to gain poise in oneself to lead a harmonious life, without the

prejudices of the past or the future but with the ever fresh present. With this state of freshness he can do all his worldly duties and yet maintain mental peace at all situations.

Thoughts in our mind gush out like a turbulent river which can be tamed only with the construction of a dam. Similarly, the rising thoughts have to be controlled by developing sound health in the body and nerves for the mind to think constructively, positively, and usefully.

Just knowing about yoga is not going to give relief from sorrows, anxieties and depression. Words may inspire but daily practice of yoga alone will allow us to face the turmoils of life with steadiness and stability.

Before concluding, I'd like to bring to your notice that at a recently held conference on hypertension, the doctors were of the opinion that yoga offered no cure for such people. My experiences in the art of teaching are just the opposite. My pupils, many of whom are physicians and surgeons, benefit from Yoga. Persistent practice is essential in all these cases. Secondly, no Yogi with thorough knowledge would teach sirasana, dhanurasana or mayurasana to such patients. In sirasana there is pressure on the throat and temples and respiration becomes heavy. In the other two, the diaphragm is compressed which pushes up the blood pressure. There are hundreds and hundreds of asanas which are used according to the conditioned constitution of the person as well as his mental situations. A wrong diagnosis or wrong introduction of medicine will cause adverse results on the patient. So also in Yoga there is a certain method to be adopted and this differs as the constitution differs. This is about asanas.

Now let me say a few words about meditation. As man is a triune of intelligence, emotion and action, he is bestowed with head (seat of jnana), trunk (seat of emotion) and arms and legs (seats of action). Hence the great saints and Yogis of lore discovered three margas (paths), namely Jnana, Bhakti and Karma. In order to have perfect clarity in thinking

and understanding (Jnana) and stability in mind and emotions (Bhakti) and purity in action (Karma), Yoga was introduced as a fourth path.

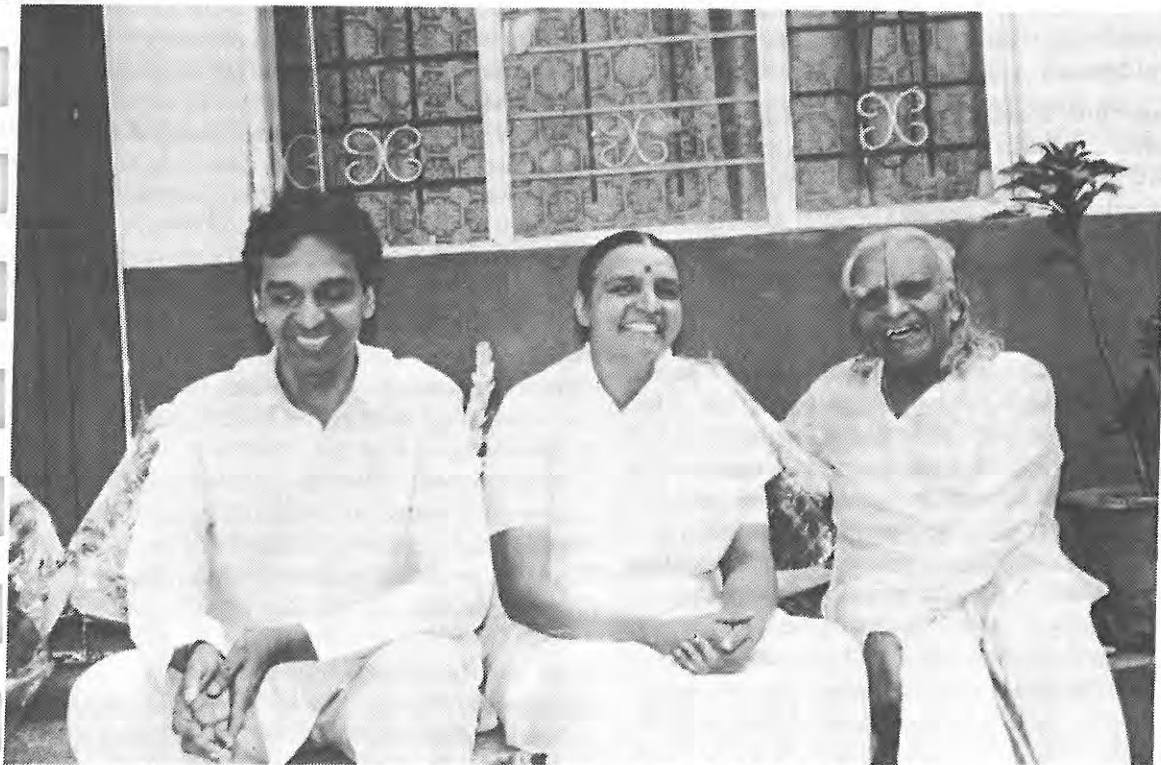
In Yoga the student is taught to unite the body, the breath, the mind, intellect and Self, bringing all to balance evenly like the string holding the pearls of a necklace together. Then he is made to create a state of emptiness (passive silence) in his body, nerves, brain and mind through slow, soft exhalation without advising him to do deep inhalation. This creates in him a state of non-existence, bringing requisite serenity in the body cells. This in turn, relaxes the facial muscles. When the facial muscles are relaxed the organs of perception (eyes, ears, nose, tongue and skin) are released from tension. When the senses of perception are relaxed, the brain which is constantly in contact with these organs becomes shunya (void). So no thinking process takes place. The intelligence which is constantly in the head throughout the wakeful state (jagratavastha) is made to descend to its sources which is known as mind.

In Chandogya Upanishad it is said that, "Hridi Ayam iti Hridayam" (In the heart, the atman dwells, hence it is called hridayam = heart). It is here that energy and intelligence take their origin. When one is active it moves towards the brain and when one is asleep it rests at its source. Realizing this dual path of intelligence, he is taught to constantly remain in the source of its seat. Then his mind becomes sublimated (manolaya). This is the stability in mind. when this is achieved, he is made to learn to stop the invading thoughts from entering either in mind or brain. Here he is made to experience a mindless state (amanaskatva). This is clarity of intellect. When he develops these qualities, he does his work not only quickly but well. He has a dynamic energy but will not unnecessarily allow it to dissipate. When man gains this condition of mind how can he ever have hypertension? Instead of that his mind is cool and recollected.

When such are the disciplines and effects of Yoga, I cannot comprehend the casual remarks of so-called scientific minds who think that they can criticise anything and everything (which is not congenial to them) existing on earth. Have the drugs found remedy for all ailments? If they fail in their treatment they brand the disease as allergic disease. If Yogis fail they make a mountain of it. Most people die of heart attacks while in bed. Could anyone prohibit them not to rest in bed? If a man walks or drives carelessly in the street he is bound to face an accident. So also if Yoga is done thoughtlessly anything might happen. If it is done thoughtfully no doubt it is panacea for many ills. Yoga is an art, it is a science and it is a philosophy. All other sciences and arts are respected, one should respect this also. If Yoga was useless it should not have withstood the onslaught of generations. It is still the most respected basic art for keeping the body, mind and soul in unison and peace.

Before concluding, let me remind you that the person who practises Yoga regularly will not become a victim of circumstances but a master of circumstance and time. Yoga is the only key that unlocks the door of peace, tranquility and joy which have no limitations, frontiers or boundaries. He loves to live, lives to serve and serves the world with beauty and grandeur. This is the essence of life.

Reprinted with permission from the Spring 1991 newsletter of the Iyengar Yoga Institute of San Francisco.



Prashant, Geeta & Mr. Iyengar

YOGA AS ECOLOGICAL RESTORATION

BY BEATRICE B. BRIGGS

Reprinted with permission from the Iyengar Yoga Institute Review, Spring, 1991.

We all inhabit damaged ecosystems. It is just a question of where to draw the boundaries. My ecosystems are a dance of air, water, soil and species that can be variously named as planet Earth, Turtle Island (the North American continent), Sweetwater Seas (Great Lakes basin), land of the Wild Onion (the tall grass prairies and oak savannas of greater metropolitan Chicago), or Beatrice Briggs and friends (the world encased by my skin and encompassed by my heart). All of these have emerged mysteriously, miraculously from the stardust of creation. And each of them is suffering from what Bill McKibben has described as "The Death of Nature".

No matter how broadly or narrowly I define the ecosystems of which I am a part, I encounter depleted vitality. Topsoil and working mothers are equally exhausted. Corporate executives are as strip mined as Appalachian hillsides. Ancient forests receive no more respect than human elders. My body is as much a toxic dump as Lake Calumet, as vulnerable to oil spills as the eagles of Prince Edward Sound. Sea turtles off the coast of Florida swallow plastic bags, thinking they are jelly fish, while Guatemalan farm workers give their children DDT-laced milk. Neither perceives the danger until it is too late. The exhaustion is endemic and systematic. Every day it becomes a little more difficult to carry on. Where to find the psychic and physical strength to fight the infection, antidote the poisons, recycle the garbage, educate the electorate, campaign for economic justice and celebrate the beauty that remains.

Urban Ecology - an oxymoron?

One source of inspiration to me has been the work of those involved in ecological restoration in and around Chicago. First of all, I was amazed to find such work occurring in an urban area. Although 75 per cent of the US population live in cities and towns of 25,000 or more, most of us have difficulty seeing our urban centers as "natural areas", potentially responsive to intelligent, sensitive land stewardship. The urban ecologist recognises that we and our cities are inseparable from the natural systems that we so recklessly pave over and pollute. Urban ecology studies the capacity for renewal of these systems, no matter how degraded. What would it take in terms of money, technical sophistication and public education to let the creeks under the sidewalks run freely above ground? To turn vacant lots into orchards and community gardens? To entice wildlife (other than roaches, rodents and pigeons) into downtown? To reduce our crippling independence on the automobile? To turn barren plazas and boring (or dangerous) playlots into places where people freely gather? In short, urban ecologists seek ways to create sustainable urban environments, in which human structures, both physical and social, exist in balance with nature.

Restoring the Oceans of Grass

One sub-set of urban ecologists in the Chicago area are the prairie restorationists. Theirs is the task of restoring and maintaining remnants of the oceans of grass and oak-hickory groves which once covered the Midwest. Most of this 10,000 year-old ecosystem succumbed long ago to the European settlers' plow. In Illinois only .01 per cent of the original prairies remain. Much of that precious fragment is within a short drive of downtown Chicago, and thus, is decidedly urban in setting.

In the past ten years, thousands of volunteers have participated in brave, patient, careful, prayerful, persistent, quietly revolutionary work of restoring the prairies. As an observer and occasional

participant in these restoration activities, I have begun to see ways in which prairie restoration and the practice of yoga are both urgently needed, ecological arts. What follows are some preliminary thoughts on their relatedness and relevance to my self-understanding.

It takes five years to plant a seed.

Getting people to understand the process of ecological restoration, whether of a piece of land or a human body, takes time. Sowing prairie grasses involves more than tossing seeds to the ground. Doing yoga is more than assuming a certain posture, although in both cases the raw physical act is essential. Prairie volunteers and yoga practitioners are novices for at least five years. Then the real work of "thinking like an ecosystem" can begin.

Fire is a regenerative tool.

Prairies only remain prairies if they burn periodically. Burning encourages the healthy growth of fire-resistant, native plants, destroys Eurasian "invaders" and indirectly stimulates microbial activity in the soil. Similarly, appropriate use of heat-producing yoga postures can burn out the invading weeds and toxins that impair the vitality of the human body. Tapas, or fiery effort, is built into the eco-system management practices prescribed by the ancient yogins.

Sustainable environments are entirely place specific.

The grasses that flourish in the middle of a sun-drenched prairie do not grow in the adjacent oak savanna. A pose that helps one person with a "bad back" may be completely inappropriate for someone else with a similar condition, but different constitution. Both the prairie restorationist and the yoga practitioner need to know what kind of soil they are dealing with. Wet? Sandy? Acid? Alkaline? Trained athlete? Pregnant woman? HIV positive? Deskbound commuter? Rape victim? We

must approach each situation with curiosity, optimism and humility. We have to be willing to use what we know and to be ignorant. We must learn to listen to the land.

Transform the mundane into the special, the sacred.

Prairie restorationists take the messy little plot of land between the highway and the fast food franchise and turn it into a place of pilgrimage. They put out a welcome sign for bugs, bees, snakes, birds, four-footed critters and the robust perennials of the prairie. They invite other humans to praise the abundance of it all. (A mature prairie contains an average of twenty-five different species per square meter). Yoga practitioners take their stiff, fearful, overstimulated, undernourished bodies (also located between the highway and the fast food franchise) and invite the return of biodiversity. They create conditions in which it is safe to breathe, possible to stand, delightful to twist, ok to bend, intriguing to be upside down. What was previously ignored or abused becomes precious, tenderly cared for, vigorously revived. Removing European buckthorn from a stand of old oaks or stretching one's own limbs in vrksasana (tree pose) can equally be acts of devotion.

Use hand tools, not chain saws.

Gasoline-powered mowers and saws are fast, labor-saving devices, but scythes and pruning shears get the job done more safely, quietly and inexpensively. Simple hand tools require little training to use and permit more meditative communion with the environment. Volunteers can talk to each other or listen to the birds singing and insects buzzing as they work. Yoga postures are the tools of choice for many who wish to make a long term, low tech commitment to sustainable health. No elaborate work apparatus, no "quick fix" allopathic drugs, no state of the art surgery, just body, mind and breath, trying to come to terms with each other.

The land remembers.

Given half a chance, the wildflowers bloom, the birds come back, the native grasses put down their roots. Given a regular practice, limbs move with greater confidence, ease and precision. One laughs more often, judges less harshly, acts more courageously. The earth, whether prairie soil or human flesh, remembers its ancient freedoms and yearns to reclaim them. But at this critical point in the planet's 4.6 billion year history, we are destroying the soil and species that are the prairie's genetic memory bank. If the earth forgets to tell the story of the prairie or to sing the song of savanna, it will be because humans forget how to listen. Yoga helps quiet down the outer din and the inner chatter so that we can hear once again.

Restoration helps us claim our place and our purpose in the natural world.

To re-establish human intimacy with the natural world, to re-connect with our biological depths, to ground ourselves in a particular place, to cultivate the wild, to nourish and be nourished by the land, to dissolve boundaries by learning to respect them, to say thank you for the gift of life and pass it on, intact, to future generations are the critical tasks of our time. To do one of these is to do all of them. In this context, the practice of yoga is the practice of ecological restoration. As I become alive to the prairie, the prairie becomes alive in me. As the prairie becomes more mature, creative and resilient, so do I. I have shared responsibility for the health of the ecosystem I inhabit. It all depends on where I draw the boundaries.

Beatrice Briggs is a teacher at Wild Onion Yoga in Chicago. She also writes and lectures on ecological issues.



YOGA INTENSIVE with FAEQ BIRIA

Faeq Biria is director of the Centre de Yoga de Paris and is one of Mr. Iyengar's closest disciples. He is totally devoted to transmitting his master's teaching with truth and authenticity. As well as being very competent at a practical level, he also shares with his students a great theoretical knowledge of the various dimensions of yoga. Faeq Biria's passion for his work stimulates courage and commitment in those who study with him; his classes are a source of inspiration and joy.

Workshop Schedule

- Three days will be offered to students of all levels on April 17, 18, 19 (in French)
- Two days will be offered on April 20 and 21 for more advanced students and teachers (in English)

Cost : Three days, April 17, 18, 19 : 225\$
Two days, April 20, 21 : 150\$
FULL WORKSHOP, April 17 - 21 : 350\$

To Register, please send a non-refundable deposit of 40% of the total cost before April 1st.
Please make your cheque to: Tejas, Centre de yoga

For further information, please contact :
TEJAS, Centre de yoga: (514) 528-8288
or Marie-Andrée Morin: (514) 277-6100

TEJAS, CENTRE DE YOGA, 919 MT-ROYAL EST, MONTRÉAL, QUÉBEC H2J 1X3

YOGA CALENDAR

MARCH:

- 2: Term IV classes begin at the Y.
- 8: "Inspiration from India" workshop at the Y with Jim Rischmiller 10am to 1pm. Contact Jim at home 474-5630 or at work 382-6464.
- 14: Pranayama Class/Asana Practice in Metchoshin with Shirley Daventry French. Call 478-3775 for details.
- 27: Victoria Yoga Centre gathering at the Y.
- 28: Iyengar Yoga Teachers meeting 9.15am to 1pm at the Y.
- 27-29: Life Strategies workshop at Radha House with Swami Padmananda.

APRIL:

- 3-5: Workshop at the Y led by Donald Moyer. Contact Marlene Miller at home 389-4651(pgr) or at work 656-7271.
- 6: Registration begins for term V at the Y for Y members (register at the Y or call 386-7511).
- 9: Registration begins for term V at the Y for non-members (register at the Y or call 386-7511).
- 11: Pranayama Class/Asana Practice in Metchoshin with Shirley Daventry French. Call 478-3775 for details.
- 17-21: Faeq Biria, Director of the Iyengar Yoga Institute in Paris, will be teaching for the first time in Canada at the Tejas Centre de Yoga, Montreal. Classes in French and English. Contact Marie-Andree Morin at 514-277-6100 or Tejas 514-528-8288.
- 22-24: Shirley Daventry French will be teaching in Ottawa. Contact Donna Fornelli at 819-685-0491 for details.
- 24: Victoria Yoga Centre gathering at the Y. Practice at 6pm.
- 25: Iyengar Yoga Teachers meeting at the Y. 9.15am to 1pm.
- 27: Term V classes begin at the Y.

MAY:

- 1-3: Wheel of Life workshop at Radha House with Swami Gopalananda.
- 8: Victoria Yoga Centre gathering at the Y. Practice at 6pm.
- 9: Pranayama Class/Asana Practice in Metchoshin with Shirley Daventry French. Call 478-3775 for details.
- 16: Iyengar Yoga Teachers meeting at the Y. 9.15pm to 1pm.

JUNE:

- 5-7: Weekend Yoga Retreat led by Shirley Daventry French at the Saltspring Centre on Saltspring Island.
- 6-7: Rose Ceremony at Radha House.

JULY:

- 2-5: Canadian Iyengar Yoga Teachers meeting on the Sunshine Coast. Contact Gioia Irwin 604-734-7696.
- 6-11: Iyengar Yoga Intensive at the Y with Liz McLeod and Shirley Daventry French, Guest Teacher: Derek French (see ad this issue).
- 24-Aug 2: Teacher training and a weekend workshop with Ramanand Patel at the Yoga Centre in Winnipeg. Call 204-783-8040 for details.

SEPTEMBER:

- 11-14: Workshop with Ramanand Patel at the Y.

The Victoria Yoga Centre
and the Victoria YM-YWCA
are pleased to announce an

IYENGAR YOGA INTENSIVE

July 6th to 11th 1992

with

**Liz McLeod and
Shirley Daventry French**

**Guest Teacher:
Dr. Derek French**

- *Daily classes in Asana and Pranayama*
- *Seminars on Yoga Psychology and Philosophy*
- *Therapeutic Yoga*

Fee: \$350.00

Liz and Shirley are longtime students of the Yoga Master, B.K.S. Iyengar and senior teachers of his method of Yoga. They travel regularly to India to study with Mr. Iyengar and have just returned, full of inspiration and enthusiasm, from their most recent trip. Derek is a physician who has practised Iyengar Yoga for many years and seeks to integrate the ancient wisdom of yoga with the practice of modern medicine.

For further information contact:

Victoria Yoga Centre
3918 Olympic View Drive
R.R. 4, Victoria, B.C. V9B 5T8

Telephone Enquiries: Shirley Daventry French (604) 478-3775
or Linda Benn (604) 598-8277



SPIRIT OF SERVICE 1992

A series of lectures and workshops presented by SEVA

The common theme among these lectures and workshops is "ways to generous action in our lives".

March 13, 14,	Frithjof Bergmann:	OBSTACLES TO THE PATH OF SERVICE
April 10,11,	Elizabeth Dodson Gray:	CHOOSING LIFE FOR OURSELVES AND THE PLANET
May 8,9,	Paul Brenner:	REDEFINING MALE AND FEMALE; MAKING PEACE WITH THE DIFFERENCE

All of the lectures and workshops are to take place at Christ Church Cathedral,
690 Burrard Street, Vancouver

Cost: Individual lectures are \$15.00
Individual workshops are \$100.00
One lecture/workshop weekend is \$110.00

Tickets available at Banyen Sound, 2069 West Broadway, Vancouver, 737-8858
or Seva, 204-2965 W. 4th Avenue, Vancouver, 733-4284

The Yoga Centre of Victoria Newsletter Advertising

If you have products or services of interest to Victoria's yoga practitioners, this is your advertising vehicle.

Because our rates are so low, all advertising material must be supplied camera ready - that is, exactly as you want it to appear in the newsletter. If not, the copy will simply be typed and inserted. If you wish, we can arrange to have an advertisement prepared for you, but we must charge extra for this service.

Our policy in accepting advertising is that all advertisements must not conflict with the aims of the Centre, as stated elsewhere in the newsletter.

If you wish to buy an ad or require further information,
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LIFE STRATEGIES

The preambles to success are a clear goal and a plan of how to reach it. Yet we live our lives with as little planning and no strategy. This workshop can be the starting point to regain control of your life, and to ensure victory in your goals and aspirations.

Friday, March 27

7.30-10.00 pm.

Saturday, March 28

10.00 am to 6.00 pm.

Sunday, March 29,

10.00 am to 6.00 pm

Fee; \$150, deposit \$30.

MEMBERSHIP/SUBSCRIPTION FORM

Its time you joined the Yoga Centre of Victoria! As you read this newsletter, you are receiving one of the benefits of membership. As you attend your yoga classes or a workshop, you are receiving the benefits of membership. These take time and money and your membership fees and participation really help.

Please fill out this form and send it with your cheque or money order to:
YOGA CENTRE OF VICTORIA, 3918 Olympic View Drive, R.R.#4, Victoria, B.C., V9B 5T8

Membership/subscription fee is only \$20 per year.

Name: _____

Street: _____

City/Prov: _____ P.C.: _____ Phone: _____

I am enclosing a cheque or money order in the amount of: _____

Please do not mail me the newsletter; during class sessions, I'll pick one up at my "Y" class. []

The VICTORIA YOGA CENTRE SOCIETY is a non-profit society incorporated under the Societies' Act of the Province of British Columbia whose purpose is, "to encourage the physical, mental and spiritual growth of its members and other interested members of society at large by the study and discipline of Yoga". The Society owes its inspiration to Swami Sivananda Radha and Mr. B.K.S. Iyengar.

The Society Newsletter is published regularly, providing current information on events concerning yoga in Victoria and area and at the Yasodhara Ashram. Published by the Victoria Yoga Centre Society.

Anyone wishing to contribute articles, photographs, drawings, information or suggestions to the newsletter may contact the Editor, Jennifer Rischmiller, 4489 Lindholm Road, R.R. #1, Victoria, B.C., Canada, V9B 5T7. Telephone: (604) 474-5630.

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DEADLINE FOR APRIL ISSUE: MARCH 20th, 1992.

VICTORIA YOGA CENTRE SOCIETY

3918 Olympic View Drive, R.R. #4, Victoria, B.C., Canada, V9B 5T8



VICTORIA
YOGA CENTRE

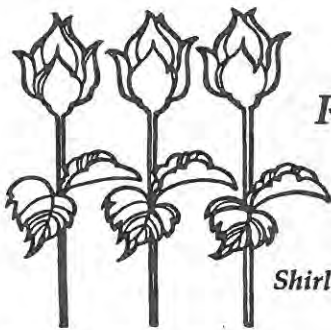
Newsletter

Tadasana!



Please Subscribe

April 1992



Reflections

by
Shirley Daventry French

This is the eleventh year of publication of this newsletter in its present format. The first issue was in November 1981. Before then, from time to time, I produced a few typewritten sheets of paper with information about local yoga events and occasionally a short article. In 1981 there came together some people with skills in editing, printing and graphics who saw the value of a newsletter and thought we could produce something a little better without too high a cost in time or money. We envisaged a small journal which would inform people about yoga, foster a community spirit and encourage students to persevere with their practice. Thanks to Norman MacKenzie, Trish and Bill Graham this idea became a reality and we started on a venture which has given many members of the Victoria Yoga Centre a focus for some creative energy, and the opportunity to practice karma yoga.

In his *Encyclopedic Dictionary of Yoga*, George Feuerstein defines Karma Yoga as the yoga of self-transcending action. Swami Vivekananda, the great Indian sage, stated that the purpose of karma yoga is to attain freedom through unselfishness and by good works. You do the work because it is appropriate to do so without seeking recognition and reward, then your actions are liberating and not binding.

Last week I was questioning whether it was appropriate for me to invest any more of my energy in this newsletter, or indeed in the yoga centre. I

was bereft of ideas for this month's column. On several occasions I sat down and wrote some notes but the ideas always petered out and I decided what I was writing was boring, negative and inappropriate. I was viewing the world from a dark perspective, and who wants to read about that.

There were some reasons for this. The unusually early spring this year also meant early symptoms of hay fever, and the irritation which causes sneezing, a runny nose, stuffiness and difficulty in breathing does not encourage a free flow of positive ideas. Adding to the irritability caused by the hay fever, was the fact that I was in the midst of preparing my 1991 income tax return which always involves an orgy of bookkeeping and accounting, not my favourite occupations.

When we started the newsletter, yoga in Victoria and the yoga centre were growing fast. The nucleus of the centre was formed in 1976 when a few of us who had been inspired by our visits to various spiritual centres in other parts of the world, felt the need to establish a yogic community here in Victoria. We came together once a week to practice and learn from each other. We explored ways of applying the teachings of yoga in our daily lives, and offered encouragement. After a few years, when we had grown to the point where we were sponsoring classes, workshops, retreats and other yoga events, we decided to incorporate into a non-profit society.

The birth of the newsletter in 1981 contributed to this growth by involving more local members, and putting us in contact with fellow yoga students all over the world. Like any period of growth it was exciting and it was easy to do the work in this atmosphere. Workshops were so much in demand we had to set a priority system of registration which would be fair to all our members, in and out of town. Our meetings were full and lively. We had many people interested in serving on the board of directors and working on the newsletter and program committees.

What was happening in the centre reflected what was happening in our city, our country and most of the western world. It was a period of optimism and growth. At such times it is easy to relate in a positive way to the yogic teachings. It's easy to write or speak inspirational words. It's easy to get on with the work when it is done in the company of others whose enthusiasm adds to your own.

The newsletter has always been produced by a team. In the early days we spent a lot of time in each other's company. We had production meetings where we tossed around ideas. We reviewed and edited each other's writing and handed articles over personally to those who were going to type them. The design and paste-up team got together at someone's home to do their work. There was a lot of personal contact, interaction, running to and fro. There was feedback, criticism and support.

This doesn't happen now. We are all too busy! Communication is by telephone (sometimes by car telephone or messages left on each other's answering machines) or by brief notes left in the box at the "Y". We hardly ever see each other except in class, and after class everyone rushes off.

It was a lot more fun before, but that is not the point. In karma yoga the point is to do the work because it needs to be done, for as long as necessary without seeking reward or recognition. And believe me, that's not easy!

Vivekananda states that "there cannot be work without motive, and the motives may be for fame, money, power, as penance, avoidance, for good, for evil".

My motives for working on the newsletter vary. It's never for money. It costs me money: wear and tear on my computer, discs, ribbons for the printer, paper etc. not to mention time. Fame is miniscule, limited to a small circle of readers (and many months we wonder if anybody actually did read it - the silence is so deafening!). Certainly the written word can have power, and I must admit to the

occasional attachment to what I have written. Some months the work definitely feels like a penance but rarely an avoidance. I hope that what I contribute is for some good purpose, and hopefully never evil.

If we can maintain discipline and carry on even when it is most difficult, the work itself will gradually transform our motives from selfish to unselfish ones. No doubt, one day the time will come when either I will no longer be involved in this newsletter or it will cease to exist; but there is no need to worry, there is always plenty of work to be done.

Last weekend, still feeling frustrated and negative about the newsletter I travelled to Vancouver on a family visit and on the way delivered some yoga straps to a longtime yoga friend, Hilda Pezarro. She was out but her husband Theo was there and made some appreciative remarks about the newsletter and my contributions. Ideally, if I were an advanced practitioner of karma yoga, I would be indifferent. Instead, I was pleased. It would be false to pretend I am beyond the need for support and a little help from my friends. Thank you Theo! Your encouragement helped dispel my negative feelings and give me the impetus to get down to it once again.

This article was written with appreciation of all the others who work on this publication out front and behind the scenes, and especially to those who have served as editor: Norman McKenzie, Bill Graham, Linda Shevloff and the current editor, Jennifer Rischmiller. While I take responsibility for my own writing and a certain amount of transcribing, editing and promotion of workshops, the editor takes responsibility for the entire publication. The newsletter has offered them a wonderful opportunity to practise karma yoga, just as it offers appreciative readers the opportunity to practise gratitude - or even more tangible support by taking out a subscription (see inside back cover). Aren't we fortunate?

Om Namah Sivaya!



"When Dharma Sara (Satsang) was looking for land, the aim at that time was to make a Centre where people could practice yoga and teach yoga. Now there is a land where you do many things, but the priority is yogic life."
Baba Hari Dass.

Under the direction of our teacher, Baba Hari Dass, we have established the Salt Spring Centre. In 1981 we purchased 69 acres of meadows, woodlands and an old farm house. Now, we sponsor regular workshops, retreats, on-going classes in yoga and meditation and serve as a rental facility for compatible programmes. The garden has grown and become a real jewel. The school has grown and houses 35 students with the philosophy still the same as when it started - proceeding at one's own pace with special importance given to the art of solving problems, emotional and social, as well as intellectual. The same intent to create a place of peace, a foundation for the development of inner peace.

We operate the Centre by members volunteering their time and talents in the spirit of karma yoga - the chosen duty of selfless service. We indeed feel it a privilege to have the Centre which offers us so many opportunities in which to strive towards our ideals of unity and peace.

Our inspiration comes from Babaji - a master yogi who observes the vow of silence he took forty years ago in order to conserve energy for the practice of yog and stilling the mind. He instructs Astanga Yoga based on the Yoga Sutras of Patanjali. But he is just as likely to be found on the construction crew as he is to be conducting a class on the Bhagavad Gita, engaged in a spiritual game of volleyball or playing with the children. The seventy year old yogi moves like the wind and is often the first to come out to offer an example to his students. His profound understanding and experience in Yoga, combined with his appreciation of the Westerner's temperament and needs, allows him to communicate, on his small chalkboard, the wisdom of the ancient system in a way meaningful to us. Each summer we have our Yoga Retreat and the opportunity to study, work and play together, enjoying old friendships and creating new ones.

For our tenth Anniversary last year Baba Hari Dass wrote:

"Saltspring Centre is a spiritual community based on yogic discipline. The aim of the community is to attain peace within and without. The purpose of the community is to mould the young generation with spiritual life by presenting a good model of their own lives. Karma Yoga, or the yoga of selfless action, is the best method to remove egocentric desires and attitudes which are the cause of human miseries. Living in community with the attitude of selfless service can bring peace. Those who live in peace bring peace in the hearts of others."



THE VICTORIA YOGA CENTRE

is pleased to present

The 1992 Weekend Retreat at The Saltspring Centre

with

Shirley Daventry French

Friday, June 5, 6:00 pm thru Sunday, June 7, 2:00 pm

ALL LEVELS

**Yoga Centre Members \$185.00
Non-Members \$195.00**

**Develop the body as a spiritual tool
with Asana and Pranayama in the Iyengar tradition**

Shirley Daventry French is a senior student of B.K.S. Iyengar, and one of Canada's leading teachers of the Iyengar method of Yoga. She has visited India several times to study at the Iyengar Yoga Institute in Pune, most recently in October 1991. This rich and extensive training, combined with a lively humour and articulate style is a powerful catalyst for students seeking the next step in their journey.

The retreat will provide time for spiritual renewal and reflection. In addition to daily classes in asana and pranayama, there will be chanting, satsang and periods of silence. Delicious vegetarian meals will be provided by the dedicated members of the Saltspring Centre and there will be time to swim, take a sauna, have a massage or simply enjoy the idyllic island setting. Indoor accommodation is provided. There is also space for tenting.

Please make your cheques payable to:

**Victoria Yoga Centre
and mail to: Celia Ward
Upper Suite, 3012 Quadra St.,
Victoria, B.C. V8T 4G3**

For further information, phone Celia at 388-7839 or Linda Benn at 598-8277

TADASANA

- THE ROOT OF YOGA

Reprinted with permission from Autumn, 1991,
newsletter of the Light On Yoga Association (UK)

This article was first published in "Institute News", No. 3 Summer, 1991, a newsletter produced by the Bristol Iyengar Yoga Institute. It was entitled "IN focus - The first of a series in which we take a look at the cultural background of Yoga. In this issue we focus on Tadasana".

The earliest evidence for the existence of the practice of Yoga was discovered by archeologists in the area of the ancient Indus Valley civilisation. Ivory seals were found which appeared to show the god Shiva in a seated Yoga posture; these date from the second and third millennia BC. Shiva has always been recognised, among other attributes, as the Lord of Yoga, the god who gave Yoga to mankind. Yoga is probably, therefore, as old as religion itself.

Nowadays, the practice of Yoga is very widespread across the world. In the popular imagination, and even amongst many of its modern practitioners, Yoga has lost many of those once inextricable links with religion and art. For most people today it is chiefly a system of physical exercise, breathing techniques and relaxation.

The decline of traditional religious observance in modern times is a wellworn theme, although it is harder to argue that people's inner religious consciousness had deteriorated to the extent that has sometimes been claimed. For example, the vast majority of people in the USA, over 80%, according to a recent survey, believe in the existence of God, whether or not they attend church.

A lesser, but still a large majority of people in the UK hold a similar belief. We should nevertheless remember, that in countries such as Ireland or Poland, religious faith is still as strong as ever.

The development of twentieth century civilisation and the pace of rapid technological and cultural change together with the spread of education and rationalist attitudes has nevertheless separated many Westerners from their traditional beliefs and observances. Many people are left with a sense of the numinous but without a system of religious practice nor any clear idea about how to cultivate it in a way they can easily reconcile with their everyday lives in a modern society. Yoga is such a system.

A number of ancient Indian scriptures such as the Puranas, the Ahirbudhyna, Samhita and epics such as the Mahabharata, the Ramayana and the Bhagavad Gita refer to Yoga.

In ancient times, Yoga was seen as a practical science to assist the seeker to attain the goal of liberation from the world of nature and the senses and the realisation of the soul or true self, the Divinity. The Yoga Sutras of Patanjali, written some time before 200BC were a compilation of all the philosophical knowledge concerning Yoga and are recognised as the subject's authoritative source by all schools of Yoga.

Can the study of ancient Indian artifacts, as distinct from scriptures, be of any help to us today? The popularity of Buddhism in the West has perhaps led to the popular perception that the only asana depicted in Indian sculpture is padmasana (lotus posture) and its variants. In fact, a vast number of Indian sculptures are standing upright and suggesting at least a small movement, either in dance or in a state of "pose and re-pose," as if they were adjusting or shifting their balance.



Bahubali (981 AD.)

All other statues are standing in Tadasana (Mountain posture). However, since many Western scholars are not familiar with Tadasana as a Yoga posture, the statues are not connected in the public mind with Yoga. They are instead pushed into categories of "meditators", "saints" or "ascetics" as if they were apart from the mainstream of traditional Indian religion. Their failure to understand the importance of Yoga also leads some commentators to miss the point when discussing such artifacts.

Consider the following comments on the statues of the Jain Tirthankaras (saints of the Jain religion) taken from "In the Image of Man" - Arts Council 1982. "Images of the Tirthankaras show youthful naked ascetics decorated with crowns and ornaments. They stand stiffly, their arms hanging beside their bodies. The still, unyielding posture, the tautly drawn body.....are all characteristic; so is the fixed inward-looking gaze". And again, "The body of a Jain saint is seen, massive and unyielding; it conveys the quality of inwardly-held



Parshvanatha (1200 AD.)

breath.....again, the solidity of the figure, with its tautly-drawn skin and cylindrical limbs, expresses immobility".

The Yoga practitioner is in a position to observe something more than the non-Yoga practitioner, namely correct Tadasana, which, although a fundamental pose, can embody all of Patanjali's Yoga in its performance.

There is not stiffness in these postures but rather complete firmness and perfect balance. The sculptors have taken great pains to carve the statues in absolute symmetry. The arms do not just "hang", the skin, muscles and bones are in complete harmony, subtly extended down to balance the upward lift of the spinal column and the opening of the ribcage bringing steadiness to the diaphragm and poise to the brain.

Both arms and legs do indeed have a cylindrical appearance, but rather give the impression that energy and intelligence run smoothly and evenly throughout the limbs. Every joint is equally spaced and correctly aligned: the entire body and mind are held in exact equilibrium, recalling Patanjali's words "Yoga cittavrtti nirodhah". In the manner of great art, the goal of spiritual liberation (kaivalya) is pointed to, educating and encouraging the practitioner to continue the struggle.

One only has to compare this with Mr. Iyengar's Tadasana in "Light on Yoga" to realise that the subject presented is identical, namely the integration of body, mind and soul we call Yoga.

The great significance of Yoga in the modern world is first, that it is a universal subject and second, it has never been discredited by science. With growing internationalization and the crossing of cultural boundaries the fact that Yoga can be learned and performed by everyone means that its spiritual benefits are available to people of all religions and race.

Continued on page 13

YOGA CENTRE NEWSLETTER INDEX

PART X 1991

The Index has been compiled by Dave Rocklyn and
typed by Jennifer Rischmiller.

Title/Author	Pge	Mth	E		
B			Especially for Women:		
Benn, Don:	6	Mar	Aphorisms of Swami Radha	4	Apr
Letter			Experience of Yoga Goes		
Benn, Linda:			Through the Entire Body:		
Book Review	17	Feb	Interview with B.K.S. Iyengar	17	May
Hawaiian Yoga Vacation	9	May	80th Birthday, an		
Bielawski, Ellen:			by Leslie Hogya	5	Apr
On Being an Intermediate			F		
Student	18	Nov	Fornelli, Donna, Letter	3	May
Byrd, Christine:			French, Shirley Daventry:		
Tapas	19	Apri	Reflections	2	Feb
Farnett, Ron:			A workshop with		
Meditations on the Tree			Linda Shevloff	4	Feb
of Yoga	5	June	Classes, workshops, practice	6	Feb
			Reflections	2	Mar
			Reflections	2	Apr
			Reflections	2	May
Classes, Workshops,			Reflections	3	June
Practice by:			Reflections	2	Sep
Shirley Daventry French	6	Feb			
Company MOCT letter	3	Nov	H		
			Hawaiian Yoga Vacation		
Directors 1991 photos	10-11	Mar	by Linda Benn	9	May
Drawings by Nance Thacker	22	Feb	Hodge, Norma, Letter	3	May
	15	Mar	Hogya, Leslie:		
Morgananda, Swami:			An 80th birthday	5	Apr
Reflections on the Temple			Leslie	19	June
of Light:	10	Feb	Leslie	11	Sep
			I		
			In the Company of the Wise,		
			Remembering my Teachers,		
			Reflecting the Light		
			A Book Review	15	Sep

Iyengar, B.K.S.:		
Maxim	Cvr	Mar
Maxim	Cvr	Apr
Honoured	16	Apr
Interviewed with	17	May
The Power of Yoga	6	June
Questions and Answers	2	Oct
Maxim	2	Nov
Iyengar, His Life and Work		
Book Review by Zoe Stewart	19	Feb
Iyengar Way, The		
by John Schumacher	8	Sep

K

Kchachaturova, Vera M.		
Letter	3	Nov

L

Laura, Letter	2	Nov
Lenman, Karin, Letter	5	Sep
Leslie, by Leslie Hogle	19	Jun
Leslie, by Leslie Hogle	11	Sep
Letters:		
from Don Benn	6	Mar
from Linda Shevloff	6	Mar
from Norma Hodge	3	May
from Donna Fornelli	3	May
from Jessica Sluymmer	5	Sep
from Karin Lenman	5	Sep
from Laura Roberts	15	Oct
from Margot	2	Nov
from Laura	2	Nov
from Vera Kchachaturova	3	Nov
from Company MOCT	3	Nov
Lissner, Jorgen:		
10 Reasons for choosing a		
Simpler Lifestyle	15	May

M

MacKenzie, Ian:		
Shambala House	21	June
Swami Radha	20	Sep
Margot, Letter	2	Nov
Meeker, Howie, Poetry	21	Oct

Maxims by:

B.K.S. Iyengar	Cvr	Mar
Hubert Meeker	6	Mar
B.K.S. Iyengar	Cvr	Apr
B.K.S. Iyengar	2	Nov
Meditations on the Tree of Yoga		
by Ron Burnett	5	June
Meeker, Hubert, Maxim	6	Mar
Mr. Iyengar's Visit to Wales		
by Glenys Shepherd	20	Feb
My Spiritual Diary		
by Jim Rischmiller	23	Feb
by Jim Rischmiller	16	Mar
by Jim Rischmiller	21	Apr
by Jim Rischmiller	16	May
by Jim Rischmiller	18	June

O

On Being an Intermediate		
Student, by Ellen Bielawski	18	Nov
On Yoga Philosophy and Practice		
by Ramanand Patel	6	Nov

P

Palkhivala, Aadil, B.A.:		
Pranayama - Thoughts for		
Beginners	8	Mar
Patel, Ramanand:		
On Yoga Philosophy and Practice	6	Nov
Poetry by Howie Meeker	21	Oct
Power of Yoga, The:		
by B.K.S. Iyengar	8	June
Pranayama - Thoughts for		
Beginners by		
Aadil B.A. Palkhivala	8	Mar
President's Report for 1990		
by Jim Rischmiller	8	Feb

Q

Questions and Answers		
with B.K.S. Iyengar	2	Oct
Questions and Answers		
with B.K. S. Iyengar		
by Lorna Walker	8	Apr

R

Radha, Swami:			
The Temple	Cvr	Feb	
Aphorisms	4	Apr	
A Word from the Author	19	Sep	
by Ian MacKenzie	20	Sep	
Reading the Bhagavad Gita			
by Jessica Sluymmer	18	Apr	
Reading the Gita			
by Jennifer Rischmiller	14	May	
Reflections :			
by Shirley Daventry French	2	Feb	
by Shirley Daventry French	2	Mar	
by Shirley Daventry French	2	Apr	
by Shirley Daventry French	2	May	
by Shirley Daventry French	2	June	
by Shirley Daventry French	2	Sep	
Reflections on the Temple of			
Light by Swami Radha	10	Feb	
Rischmiller Jim:			
President's Report for 1990	8	Feb	
My Spiritual Diary	23	Feb	
My Spiritual Diary	16	Mar	
My Spiritual Diary	21	Apr	
My Spiritual Diary	16	May	
My Spiritual Diary	18	June	
Rischmiller, Jennifer:			
Yoga Centre News	9	Feb	
Saltspring Yoga Retreat	6	April	
Reading the Gita	14	May	
Roberts, Laura	15	Oct	
Runner's Yoga Book, The			
view by Linda Benn	17	Feb	
Saltspring Yoga Retreat			
by Jennifer Rischmiller	6	Apr	
Schneeman, Andrea:			
Tadasana's Journey	12	Mar	
Schumacher, John:			
The Iyengar Way	8	Sep	
Shambala House			
by Ian MacKenzie	21	June	

Shepherd, Glenys:			
Mr. Iyengar's Visit to Wales	20	Feb	
Shevloff, Linda:			
A Workshop with Ann Kilberus	4	Mar	
Letter	6	Mar	
Sivananda Radha, Swami:			
The Temple	Cvr	Feb	
Sluymmer, Jessica:			
Reading the Bhagavad Gita	18	Apr	
Letter	5	Sep	
Stewart, Zoe, Book Review	19	Feb	

T

Tadasana's Journey			
by Andrea Schneeman	12	Mar	
Tapas by Christine Boyd	19	Apr	
Temple, The			
By Swami Sivananda Radha	Cvr	Feb	
10 Reasons for Choosing a			
Simpler Lifestyle			
by Jorgen Lissner	15	May	
Thacker, Nance:			
Drawings	22	Feb	
Drawings	15	Mar	

W

Walker, Lorna:			
Questions and Answers with			
B.K.S. Iyengar	8	Apr	
Word from the Author, A			
by Swami Radha	19	Sep	
Workshop with Ann Kilbertus, A			
by Linda Shevloff	4	Mar	
Workshop with Linda Shevloff			
by Shirley Daventry French	4	Feb	

Y

Yoga Centre News			
by Jennifer Rischmiller	9	Feb	

Yoga Centre Gathering

at the 'Y' Lounge

Friday, April 24th

Practice at 6pm

Potluck at 7pm

Followed by Discussion

Please bring your own plate and cutlery



King Narasimha (1300 AD.)

It is not necessary to believe in anything except one's own existence when beginning the practice of Yoga, but perhaps one can be inspired by the silent, ineffable testimony of these ancient figures, towards a new discovery of one's inner life through learning Yoga.

For instruction in Tadasana, please turn to "Light on Yoga" by B.K.S. Iyengar and "Yoga The Iyengar Way" by Silva, Mira and Shyam Mehta.

Richard Ward



The Victoria Yoga Centre
and the Victoria YM-YWCA
are pleased to announce an

IYENGAR YOGA INTENSIVE

July 6th to 11th 1992

with

**Liz McLeod and
Shirley Daventry French**

**Guest Teacher:
Dr. Derek French**

- *Daily classes in Asana and Pranayama*
- *Seminars on Yoga Psychology and Philosophy*
- *Therapeutic Yoga*

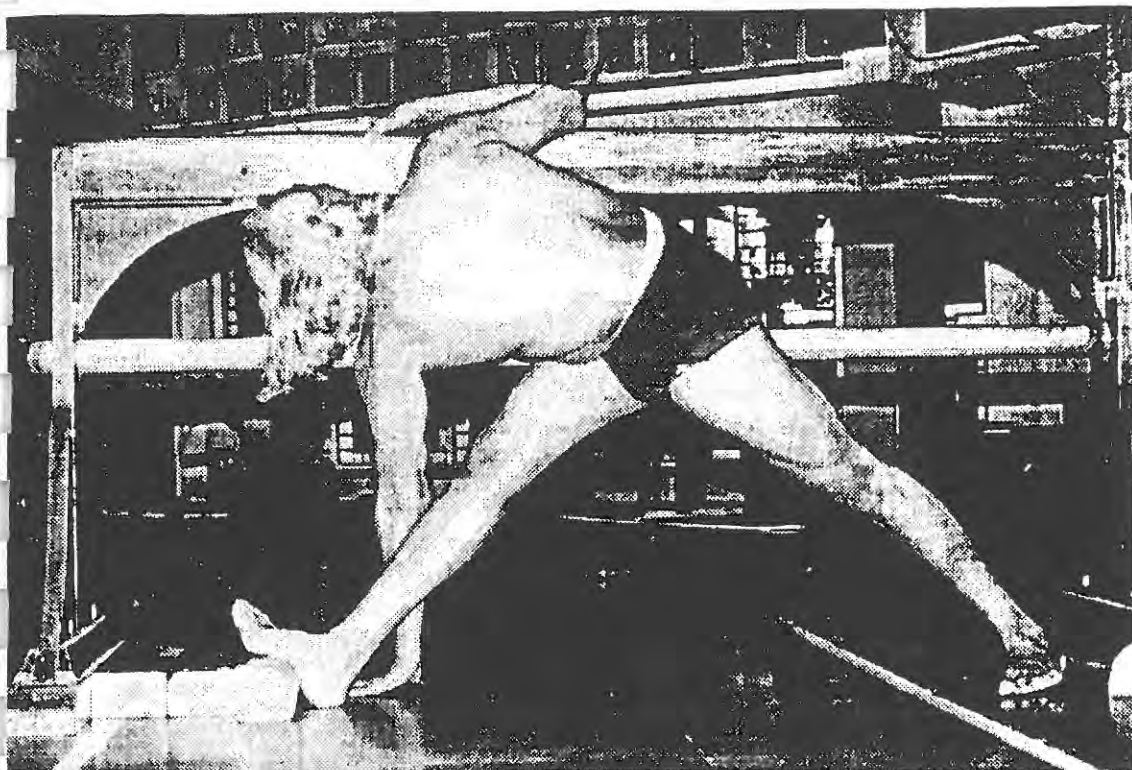
Fee: \$350.00

Liz and Shirley are longtime students of the Yoga Master, B.K.S. Iyengar and senior teachers of his method of Yoga. They travel regularly to India to study with Mr. Iyengar and have just returned, full of inspiration and enthusiasm, from their most recent trip. Derek is a physician who has practised Iyengar Yoga for many years and seeks to integrate the ancient wisdom of yoga with the practice of modern medicine.

For further information contact:

Victoria Yoga Centre
3918 Olympic View Drive
R.R. 4, Victoria, B.C. V9B 5T8

Telephone Enquiries: Shirley Daventry French (604) 478-3775
or Linda Benn (604) 598-8277



PATANJALI AWARD

Mr. Iyengar has recently been awarded the prestigious Patanjali Award in Ayurvedic and Homeopathic Medicine by the Government of Karnataka. Congratulations !!!

INVOCATION TO PATANJALI

*Togena cittasya padena vacam
Malam sarirasya ca vaidyakena
Yopa karot tam pravaram muninam
Patanjalim pranjalir anato smi
Abahu-purusakaram
sankha-cakrasi-dharinam
Sahasra-sirasam svetam
Pranamami Patanjalinim*

To the noblest of sages, Patanjali,
Who gave Yoga for serenity of mind,
Grammar for purity of speech,
And Medicine for perfection of the body, I bow.
I prostrate before Patanjali,
Whose upper body has a human form,
Whose arms hold a conch and disc,
Who is crowned by a thousand-headed cobra,
O incarnation of Adisesa, my salutations to Thee.

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YOGA CALENDAR

APRIL:

- 3-5: Workshop at the Y led by Donald Moyer. Contact Marlene Miller at home 389-4651(pgr) or at work 656-7271.
- 6: Registration begins for term V at the Y for Y members (register at the Y or call 386-7511).
- 9: Registration begins for term V at the Y for non-members (register at the Y or call 386-7511).
- 11: Pranayama Class/Asana Practice in Metchosin with Shirley Daventry French. Call 478-3775 for details.
- 17-21: Faeq Biria, Director of the Iyengar Yoga Institute in Paris, will be teaching for the first time in Canada at the Tejas Centre de Yoga, Montreal. Classes in French and English. Contact Marie-Andree Morin at 514-277-6100 or Tejas 514-528-8288.
- 22-24: Shirley Daventry French will be teaching in Ottawa. Contact Donna Fornelli at 819-685-0491 for details.
- 24: Victoria Yoga Centre gathering at the Y. Practice at 6pm.
- 25: Iyengar Yoga Teachers meeting at the Y. 9.15am to 1pm.
- 27: Term V classes begin at the Y.

MAY:

- 1-3: Wheel of Life workshop at Radha House with Swami Gopalananda.
- 8: Victoria Yoga Centre gathering at the Y. Practice at 6pm.
- 9: Pranayama Class/Asana Practice in Metchosin with Shirley Daventry French. Call 478-3775 for details.
- 16: Iyengar Yoga Teachers meeting at the Y. 9.15pm to 1pm.

JUNE:

- 5-7: Weekend Yoga Retreat led by Shirley Daventry French at the Saltspring Centre on Saltspring Island.
- 6-7: Rose Ceremony at Radha House.

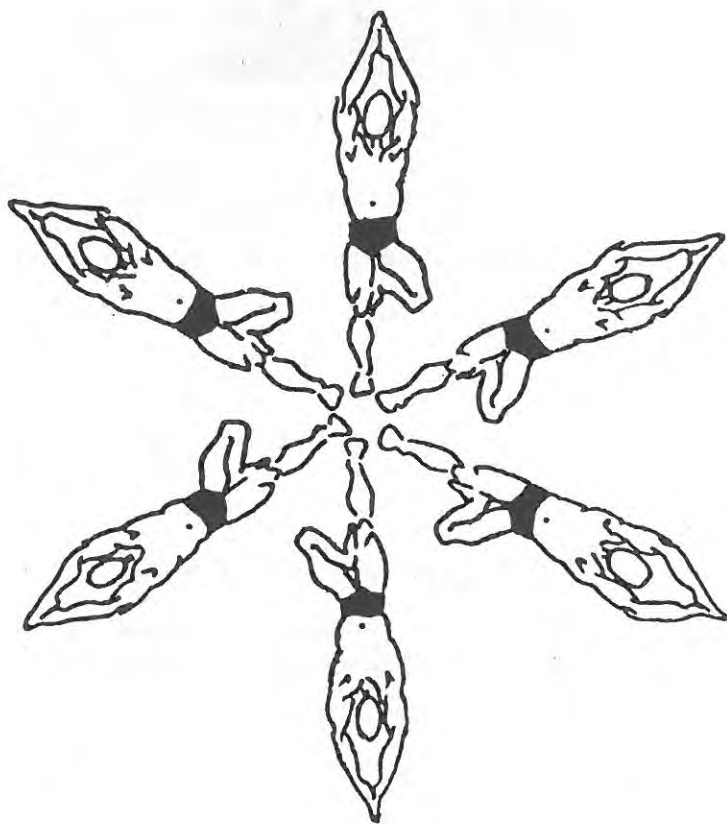
JULY:

- 2-5: Canadian Iyengar Yoga Teachers meeting on the Sunshine Coast. Contact Gioia Irwin 604-734-7696.
- 6-11: Iyengar Yoga Intensive at the Y with Liz McLeod and Shirley Daventry French, Guest Teacher: Derek French (see ad this issue).
- 24-Aug 2: Teacher training and a weekend workshop with Ramanand Patel at the Yoga Centre in Winnipeg. Call 204-783-8040 for details.

SEPTEMBER:

- 11-14: Workshop with Ramanand Patel at the Y.





"Homage to Elfe Meyer"
drawing by
Karen Culham



SPRIT OF SERVICE 1992

A series of lectures and workshops presented by SEVA

The common theme among these lectures and workshops is "ways to generous action in our lives".

April 10,11, Elizabeth Dodson Gray: CHOOSING LIFE FOR OURSELVES AND THE PLANET
May 8,9, Paul Brenner: REDEFINING MALE AND FEMALE;
MAKING PEACE WITH THE DIFFERENCE

All of the lectures and workshops are to take place at Christ Church Cathedral,
690 Burrard Street, Vancouver

Cost: Individual lectures are \$15.00
Individual workshops are \$100.00
One lecture/workshop weekend is \$110.00

Tickets available at Banyen Sound, 2069 West Broadway, Vancouver, 737-8858
or Seva, 204-2965 W. 4th Avenue, Vancouver, 733-4284

The Yoga Centre of Victoria Newsletter Advertising

If you have products or services of interest to Victoria's yoga practitioners, this is your advertising vehicle.

Because our rates are so low, all advertising material must be supplied camera ready - that is, exactly as you want it to appear in the newsletter. If not, the copy will simply be typed and inserted. If you wish, we can arrange to have an advertisement prepared for you, but we must charge extra for this service.

Our policy in accepting advertising is that all advertisements must not conflict with the aims of the Centre, as stated elsewhere in the newsletter.

If you wish to buy an ad or require further information,
please contact our Advertising Manager, Carole Miller:
721-3477

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RADHA HOUSE



1500 Shasta Place
Victoria, B.C. V8S 1X9
(604) 595-0177

WHEEL OF LIFE

The travelling Buddhist teachers unrolled their paintings of the Wheel of Life to teach the path to Liberation. How can you see this ancient Tibetan practice to find your way back to the centre again? The answers have practical application in your daily life.

Friday, May 1
7.30-10.00 pm.
Saturday, May 2
10.00 am to 6.00 pm
Sunday, May 3
10.00 am to 6.00 pm

Instructor:
Swami Gopalananda

Fee: \$115, \$25 deposit.

MEMBERSHIP/SUBSCRIPTION FORM

Its time you joined the Yoga Centre of Victoria! As you read this newsletter, you are receiving one of the benefits of membership. As you attend your yoga classes or a workshop, you are receiving the benefits of membership. These take time and money and your membership fees and participation really help.

Please fill out this form and send it with your cheque or money order to:
YOGA CENTRE OF VICTORIA, 3918 Olympic View Drive, R.R.#4, Victoria, B.C., V9B 5T8

Membership/subscription fee is only \$20 per year.

Name: _____

Street: _____

City/Prov: _____ P.C.: _____ Phone: _____

I am enclosing a cheque or money order in the amount of: _____

Please do not mail me the newsletter; during class sessions, I'll pick one up at my "Y" class. []

The VICTORIA YOGA CENTRE SOCIETY is a non-profit society incorporated under the Societies' Act of the Province of British Columbia whose purpose is, "to encourage the physical, mental and spiritual growth of its members and other interested members of society at large by the study and discipline of Yoga". The Society owes its inspiration to Swami Sivananda Radha and Mr. B.K.S. Iyengar.

The Society Newsletter is published regularly, providing current information on events concerning yoga in Victoria and area and at the Yasodhara Ashram. Published by the Victoria Yoga Centre Society.

Anyone wishing to contribute articles, photographs, drawings, information or suggestions to the newsletter may contact the Editor, Jennifer Rischmiller, 4489 Lindholm Road, R.R. #1, Victoria, B.C., Canada, V9B 5T7. Telephone: (604) 474-5630.

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DEADLINE FOR MAY ISSUE: APRIL 17th, 1992.

VICTORIA YOGA CENTRE SOCIETY

3918 Olympic View Drive, R.R. #4, Victoria, B.C., Canada, V9B 5T8



VICTORIA YOGA CENTRE

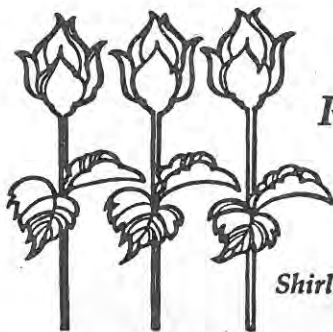
Newsletter



Summer Intensive - class of '91

Please Subscribe

May, 1992



Reflections

by
Shirley Daventry French

I was saddened this morning to read some comments in an article on yoga suggesting that the work of my teacher, B.K.S. Iyengar, is external while promoting the work of another teacher as coming from "an internal place". It was especially sad because the quote came from an ex-student of mine who is now studying with an ex-student of Mr. Iyengar. Feeling this way, and having nothing positive to say about Mr. Iyengar, why did she have to mention his name at all? Why? It is a testimony to the stature of Mr. Iyengar and the impact of his work. He has spread the message of yoga to all corners of the world, his books *Light on Yoga* and *Light on Pranayama* are contemporary classics in the field. He is a man of impeccable character, integrity and sincerity, capable of great warmth and generosity. If he accepts you as his student, and you are willing to practise and do your own personal work, he will give you as much as you can take in - and more! In return, he will demand the maximum from you. Clear, precise and direct, his teaching bypasses the intellect and penetrates right to the core of your being revealing the light within. What could be more internal than that?

It is inevitable that some students, having experienced Mr. Iyengar's teaching, will decide that this is not for them. Sometimes they give up yoga altogether, sometimes they continue their studies with another teacher, sometimes they continue on their own. It is an individual decision which may have been made for negative or positive reasons. Perhaps they are embracing a new method which is

better for them, but it could be an avoidance of some difficult personal work. Whatever the reason, there is often a need for self-justification. When brought face to face with your reluctance to let go of some of your attachments and habitual ways of being in the world, it is tempting to dismiss the teacher who is encouraging you to make those changes; much easier to move on to someone who won't ask you to tread this dangerous ground. On the other hand, If you are going to a new teacher for positive reasons, because you truly believe their work is fostering your personal and spiritual growth, why would you need to dismiss the work you have done previously. It is this that has brought you to this place.

Behind anyone on the yogic path, there is a line of teachers whose work has brought us to our present place of learning. The teachings of yoga have been passed on from teacher to student through generations from the beginning of yoga to the present day, and in our current lifetime there are many individuals who have acted as teachers and mentors stimulating our search and awakening our consciousness. Rather than dismissing them and claiming to know better, we should honour them and the part they have played in our evolution. If we do know better, it is partly because of them and what they have taught us, and if we have unresolved negative feelings, then we should try to keep our mouth shut so that we do not have to eat our words later on.

My early training in yoga was with Swami Radha of Yasodhara Ashram. From her and teachers trained by her I was given a wonderful grounding in yoga psychology and philosophy and guided through some difficult personal transitions. I was also trained to teach various aspects of yoga including asana and pranayama. Like myself, the ashram was also in a period of transition especially where hatha yoga was concerned. At first I was taught the Sivananda method, but one day, with the arrival of one of Swami Radha's students who had also studied in India with Mr. Iyengar, there was an abrupt change. We had all read Mr. Iyengar's book

Light on Yoga, but this was the first time we had come in contact with anyone who had actually studied with him. It was a revelation! I hated the first class, but by the second was beginning to see something really valuable here, and by the third was determined to study this method.

This did not mean that I threw out everything I had learned from Swami Radha and her teachers. I completed all the papers and reports required to graduate from the Ashram teacher training course, at the same time as learning what I could about Mr. Iyengar's work. Eventually I was given the chance to go to India, and this put me in a dilemma. If I did this, was it a rejection of Swami Radha? Would she approve? Was it an avoidance or a positive step in my evolution? These and many questions had to be answered by me and no-one else. There were no guarantees. Perhaps Swami Radha would disapprove and throw me out. Perhaps Mr. Iyengar would disapprove of my previous work with her, and he would throw me out. Most important decisions have to be made in a void of uncertainty.

It eventually became clear to me that I was being pulled and pulled towards India and Mr. Iyengar in many ways; my heart and mind were drawn towards him and his work and I really had no choice but to answer this call. I had not sought Iyengar yoga, it had sought me out in a place where I went looking for something else.

Having made my decision to go to India, I avoided telling Swami Radha for fear of her disapproval. I had good reason to suspect she knew, because in the yoga grapevine there are very few secrets, but I did not say anything. Then I saw how childish this was, and sat down and wrote a long letter explaining as honestly as I could why I wanted to study with Mr. Iyengar. Having posted it I felt a tremendous sense of relief and was more sure than ever of my decision. I received a gracious reply from Swami Radha saying that if this was the work I wanted to do then it was only right to go to the source, and she wished me well.

When I came back from India it was with a strong commitment to Mr. Iyengar and his work and the conviction that I would return one day. But I was also committed to Swami Radha and while I was not practising her method of asana and pranayama, I was following other practices I had learned from her including daily reflection, the divine light invocation, mantra, spiritual diary, dream interpretation. They had become part of me and my life.

It was made easier for me, because Iyengar Yoga continued to be taught at the Ashram. For many years, there was an exchange as Ashram teachers went to India or studied with Iyengar Yoga teachers on this continent, and many Iyengar Yoga teachers went to the Ashram to participate in the work of the community and receive spiritual counselling and guidance. During this time the hatha yoga part of their teachers' course was taught by Iyengar Yoga teachers and special courses were offered by a variety of teachers trained by Mr. Iyengar. For ten years, my husband Derek and I were invited to teach a summer intensive in Iyengar Yoga at the ashram, and in return on each visit were uplifted and enriched by our association with Swami Radha and all the members of this spiritual community. It was a wonderful atmosphere in which to teach and learn, and I was very content.

This all changed one day when we were informed that Iyengar Yoga would no longer be taught at the Ashram, they would focus instead on offering classes in a new method developed by Swami Radha. Swami Radha herself spoke to Derek and I and said she hoped we would understand. We said we did, but I did not. I felt so strongly about Mr. Iyengar's work that I could not understand why you would want to practise in any other way. We left the Ashram and went our separate way. I continued to study with Mr. Iyengar, and each contact with him convinced me more than ever about his genius as a teacher and the value of his work in my life and others'.

In Victoria, many people who had studied with me and studied at the Ashram asked what had happened. Had Swami Radha turned against Iyengar Yoga? What was I going to do? Fortunately, although I was confused and upset by the changes, I had enough sense to say nothing and get on with my own work, letting the work speak for itself and others come to their own conclusions. The work fulfilled its promise, and as I became more clear about my personal path I became more accepting of those who had chosen a different direction, and more appreciative of all the strange twists and turns which pointed me towards the light.

The remarks which stimulated my reflections appeared in an article promoting some yoga classes. It is sad that this was done at the expense of someone else's work. There are many paths towards the light. If you have discovered a new route and are convinced it is the best one for you, there is only one way to find out. Take it, and if it is the right path then somewhere along the way you will develop an appreciation of all the teachers who inspired you to make this journey, and have the grace to acknowledge them in a positive fashion. If you cannot do this, it is better not to mention their name at all.

These reflections are written with gratitude to all my teachers, and especially to Swami Radha and B.K.S. Iyengar whose teaching has enriched my life immeasurably. From them, I have learned to search for the Most High, and live life to the maximum.

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Dear Shirley,

Betty sent me the January newsletter in which you talk, or rather write, about teaching yoga. The problem of the incompetent teacher. It was very timely for me.

My teacher here has gone to study at the Institute for two months and has asked me to take over the class. At least it is a continuing class where all of us students have some experience.

Goodness knows I am not competent to teach even though it is 10 years since I took my first class at the Y with Marlene Miller. Many wonderful teachers, such as you, have given so much to students such as I.

However, in attempting to lead a class I learned something important. As a student I "leaned" heavily upon my teacher. My teacher would tell me every time what to do and how to do it. It was not necessary for me to remember, only to do what I was told.

Oh, I remembered some things, but much simply went into the moment and was gone. You can be sure that as a student I will now remember more of what I have been given. As a teacher you learned this long ago. Maybe it is important to teach even a simple asana to become more aware of what is involved in learning.

I have three more classes to teach then I can again be just one of the students. I will be a student who learns differently though.

Thank you for your teaching in classes and in your writing.

Namaste.

Walt Dietiker.



THE VICTORIA YOGA CENTRE

is pleased to present

The 1992 Weekend Retreat at The Saltspring Centre

with

Shirley Daventry French

Friday, June 5, 6:00 pm thru Sunday, June 7, 2:00 pm

ALL LEVELS

Yoga Centre Members \$185.00

Non-Members \$195.00

**Develop the body as a spiritual tool
with Asana and Pranayama in the Iyengar tradition**

Shirley Daventry French is a senior student of B.K.S. Iyengar, and one of Canada's leading teachers of the Iyengar method of Yoga. She has visited India several times to study at the Iyengar Yoga Institute in Pune, most recently in October 1991. This rich and extensive training, combined with a lively humour and articulate style is a powerful catalyst for students seeking the next step in their journey.

The retreat will provide time for spiritual renewal and reflection. In addition to daily classes in asana and pranayama, there will be chanting, satsang and periods of silence. Delicious vegetarian meals will be provided by the dedicated members of the Saltspring Centre and there will be time to swim, take a sauna, have a massage or simply enjoy the idyllic island setting. Indoor accommodation is provided. There is also space for tenting.

Please make your cheques payable to:

Victoria Yoga Centre

and mail to: Celia Ward

Upper Suite, 3012 Quadra St.,

Victoria, B.C. V8T 4G3

For further information, phone Celia at 388-7839 or Linda Benn at 598-8277

A SUMMER INTENSIVE

My partner has just left for a meeting and I ought to be at a yoga class - Marlene may wonder where I am. I step outside and hear the drums from the reserve across the valley - another culture, a culture about which I am tremendously curious.

The melting snow drips from the almost-blossoming plum tree and I know that I have my metaphor. The juxtaposition of winter snow and spring blossoms, the Indian culture across the valley and the Indian culture across the ocean - the juxtaposition of these with my own western culture - this is my issue.

A year and a half ago I took up yoga (perhaps yoga took up me). I did my best to attend classes at least once a week. I participated in every workshop that came my way. All were wonderful experiences. I thought I had reached the apex when I attended the week-end retreat on Saltspring Island. I was still in awe - in awe of these people with whom I was practicing and from whom I was learning. I knew that I had met with something tremendously important. (This is not, said I, just another way to get exercise without damaging my knees or having to wear spandex). I feared, however, that the intensity of an entire weekend might be overwhelming but, come Sunday afternoon, the end of the weekend, I wasn't tired out; rather, I was energized in a way that was new to me. I felt that my eyes had been opened. To what? you may ask - to myself and to the world around me - not the big, big world of politics and institutions - to the very specific world that I inhabited. My body had been enlivened; my mind somehow was on high speed and low speed at the same time.

I looked forward to the promised "intensive" schedule for late July. How much more intense, I wondered, could things get? The

neophyte, ever curious, ever eager. I signed up - signed up for one of my life's most - most what? most rewarding experiences - no, that doesn't quite express it. Most intense experiences? Weeeeeell, it was intense. No doubt about that. One of life's most meaningful experiences? I'm not nearly finished with this life, so I can't say that. I'm not mature enough, I think, in my practice of yoga to really come to terms with exactly what the summer intensive has contributed to me as a person.

Just yesterday, I received a copy of a photograph taken by Jean Morel from the NWT - a photo taken in the courtyard of the Y here in Victoria, of all the people at last year's 'intensive'. So camaraderie was certainly part of the experience. I made connection with people whom I value, but I made a connection on a more personal level than is possible when we meet, in practice, on only a weekly basis.

I met and worked with teachers who were either new to me - just names in the newsletter - or with whom I had worked only fleetingly. I worked with people who were, and are, tremendously knowledgeable about the human body and about yoga. They never, however, reduced me to just a body. They gave of their knowledge; they gave of their souls, they even gave of their friendship.

The part-time job I contemplated taking this summer is now a non-issue. Timing makes it impossible for me to take the job and to participate in the "intensive". Do I want a few shekles in my pocket or do I want to experience the mental, physical and even visceral levels that such a week can enliven?

My fervent wish is that people who are new to yoga be not intimidated by this notion of one-whole-week. It is a week which is so well modulated, so well articulated that anyone serious about the practice could not be anything but well pleased. The work is not too hard -

does your weekly

teacher push you too hard? No. You are the only one who can do that. And so it is with the "Intensive". You choose to come - as I choose.

You choose to work as best suits you. You have the experience enriched - physically, mentally, and (because I can't quite use the word spiritually yet) psychically. I feel so enriched. I am grateful to my teachers of that week; Shirley and Liz, in particular, also Derek and Bruce who presented their specialized perspectives.

It was a week filled with the wonder of discovering more about yoga, more about myself, and more about the world and the people around me. I forged at least one friendship and several acquaintanceships; I became more intrigued by the possibilities for expanding my place in this world, my place within myself.

o-Anne Hope

LIZ McLEOD

by Scott Allison

Shirley Daventry French has asked me to write a few paragraphs about my yoga teacher, Liz McLeod, as a means of introducing Liz to those of you who may not have yet had the good fortune to study with her. Liz will be teaching with Shirley and Derek at the Iyengar Intensive in Victoria in July. This is an event which should not be missed.

I first began studying with Liz McLeod as an absolute beginner in the fall of 1988. A medical specialist had suggested that the practice of yoga might be helpful in relieving chronic neck and shoulder pain since anti-inflammatory drugs were not having any noticeable effect. The doctor had never heard of Iyengar yoga and neither had I. It just happened that Liz was teaching at the University of Alberta and I was working there,

thus my yoga was to be Iyengar yoga and my teacher was to be Liz McLeod. I can truthfully say that my studying with Liz has changed my life.

The first thing that has to be said about Liz is that she is an excellent teacher but that it takes a considerable degree of maturity on the part of the student before he realizes just how good she really is. As I look back over my four years of study with Liz, I can see how she gradually brought me from a state of almost total bodily unawareness to the much higher level of awareness which I now occupy. Liz seems to have the uncanny ability to know exactly what demands are appropriate for an individual at their own particular stage of development. One sees all these things much more clearly in retrospect, of course. As a raw beginner I thought Liz to be far too demanding. She asked me to do (and her tone of voice implied that I had no choice!) things with my body which, it seemed to me, no body should be expected to do. And then, once I had gone into the pose in question, she had the nerve to expect me to hold it for what seemed like a sadistically long period of time. Furthermore, she was never satisfied with the pose I was doing. It always needed to be corrected, even if I was sure that it was as good as it could ever be.

Yes, Liz is a demanding teacher and, unfortunately, many beginning students fail to understand that sloppy, approximate, unaware yoga is not Iyengar yoga, and is thus not what Liz is all about. There are drop-outs from Liz's beginner classes and I was almost one of them. I used to go to class twice a week with the firm resolve to see an end of Liz and of Iyengar yoga as soon as the semester was finished and I could say that I survived the introductory course. I used to ask myself, and my fellow students, "How can such a friendly, pleasant woman be so tough as soon as she starts teaching her yoga class?" The answer, as I now know, is that Liz is totally dedicated to spreading the practice of Mr.

B.K.S. Iyengar's work . I understand this now. I did not in 1988 and yet, something of the spark must have been kindled in me, for after completing the introductory course I signed up for it again the next semester, and again the semester thereafter - four times in all - redoing the same introductory course. Finally realizing I was hooked, I took the plunge into the intermediate level course. As I look back over those four introductory sessions which, at the time, seemed like the same course done four times in a row, I can see that all four were quite different from each other. In any given class, Liz can identify exactly what level of performance to expect of each student and so, of course, by the time the fourth session rolled around, Liz was demanding much more of me than she had during the first, second or third. This is something which is, I believe, the sign of an outstanding teacher - to know all her students' capabilities, to know and respect their physical limitations, but yet be demanding enough and optimistic enough to expect that these physical limitations can be overcome with enough time and perseverance.

In the past three years I have continued to study with Liz, through noontime classes at the University, evening classes in the west end and monthly Saturday morning workshops. Liz knows (and I know too) that I do not practise my yoga enough at home and that my progress is not what it could be if I were to apply myself more regularly. However, as I have already implied, one of the marvellous things about Liz is that she never gives up on anyone. She always assumes that those of her students who have become lukewarm or cold in their yoga will see the light, some day.

I have often talked to Liz about this over a glass of red wine and a slice of Greek pizza (with extra garlic and onions). The once a month after Thursday evening yoga class garlic pizzas at the Flamingo are legendary among Liz's intermediate

students. I have asked her whether she is saddened by the students who come and go, those who are enthusiastic for four months and then disappear from sight, or those who drop in only once or twice a year and don't appear to have any real commitment to Iyengar yoga. She always replies, "No. You can't force anyone. You just have to wait until they're ready."

Liz works hard with every student who comes through the door. She watches all, she sees all and she is reputed to have eyes in the back of her head! Every student benefits from Liz's long years of faithful practice and her regular visits to Pune to study with Gururji. Liz's attention to detail in teaching is well known to all her students. This is something which she inherits from her teacher, Mr. Iyengar. It seems to me



*Shirley & Liz with well deserved
Bauquets .*

The Victoria Yoga Centre
and the Victoria YM-YWCA
are pleased to announce an

IYENGAR YOGA INTENSIVE

July 6th to 11th 1992

with

**Liz McLeod and
Shirley Daventry French**

**Guest Teacher:
Dr. Derek French**

- *Daily classes in Asana and Pranayama*
- *Seminars on Yoga Psychology and Philosophy*
- *Therapeutic Yoga*

Fee: \$350.00

Liz and Shirley are longtime students of the Yoga Master, B.K.S. Iyengar and senior teachers of his method of Yoga. They travel regularly to India to study with Mr. Iyengar and have just returned, full of inspiration and enthusiasm, from their most recent trip. Derek is a physician who has practised Iyengar Yoga for many years and seeks to integrate the ancient wisdom of yoga with the practice of modern medicine.

For further information contact:

Victoria Yoga Centre
3918 Olympic View Drive
R.R. 4, Victoria, B.C. V9B 5T8

Telephone Enquiries: Shirley Daventry French (604) 478-3775
or Linda Benn (604) 598-8277

that Liz carefully relates the level of detail in her teaching of the poses to the level of understanding of the students she is instructing. She introduces one or two details more than the students are capable of comprehending at the time - just enough to keep them striving for more, but not so much that they become confused or disoriented. She always seems to know when things have become complicated enough and it's time to stop issuing instructions. Often a mere touch of her hand on an arm or leg accompanied by a verbal "In" or "Back" or "Down" is all that it takes to transform a pose. Detail, yes, but internalized detail and not just a lot of words.

As almost four years of study with Liz have gone by I have come to see her not just as an excellent teacher but also as a real friend. When my first and favorite cat died not so many months ago, I wanted Liz to be one of the first people to know because I knew she would be able to understand the grief I was feeling. However much of friend she may be, though, I know that when I step onto the yoga floor I had better give my all because this is what Liz expects of all her students, be they friends or first-day acquaintances.

For those of you who will be experiencing Liz's teaching for the first time this summer, I can tell you that you are in for a real treat. You will learn a great deal about Iyengar yoga, you will be pushed past your normal limits and you will feel that somehow Liz has changed your life for the better.

DEREK FRENCH

by Jim Rischmiller

Derek has been practising medicine for many years and, as one of his clients, I feel he has brought much yoga to his practice.



Recently, in the middle of a nasty flu, I eventual broke down and went to see him. Experience told me I probably would not get a pill. However, I was surprised to get a book about seeing illness as an opportunity to learn. The message I got was to go home and read the book. In other words, to slow down and give myself chance to heal instead of continuing working. Derek also practices yoga and in the early 80's attended an intensive with Mr Iyengar in India.

As a student of Derek's I have found his teaching to be characterised by his firm grounding and knowledge of the interconnectedness of ourselves. He has helped me understand my posture and the importance of breathing and I, in turn, carry that message into my practice and teaching. Derek also brings a sense of humour to his teaching and I encourage everyone to come to the summer intensive in July to study with him.

SHIRLEY DAVENTRY FRENCH

by Jennifer Rischmiller

As my life extends, I have a tendency to honour the passing decades with more respect than in the past. On the occasion of my 5th decade I have more reasons than ever before to honor the past ten years of my life; the divine has given me many gifts. I can be particularly grateful for the teachers who have been involved in my life during that time. I acknowledge all the lessons I have been taught, those learned from my parents, my husband, my children, my friends.

One of the reasons my thoughts have turned to appreciation is that another teacher has left Victoria. Last year Swami Padmananda left for the Ashram in Nelson and recently, Swami Radha has gone to open a Radha House in Vancouver, where she will live.

However, once these thoughts began, I thought again of my desire to acknowledge those responsible for publishing the newsletter for over a decade.

Along with that thought was the knowledge that the newsletter began with Shirley Daventry French and that rounded out my circular way of realising the point of this article!

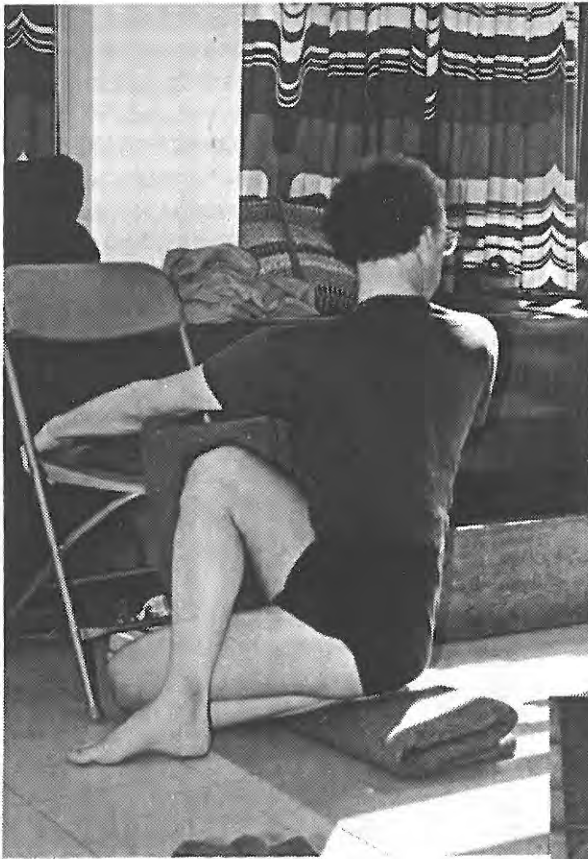
I do, in fact, wish to give thanks for the special teacher in my life, Shirley Daventry French. Many of the important lessons I have learned during the past ten years have been taught to me by Shirley. I live in awe of Shirley's boundless energy and I respect her enormous commitment to her work, these assets help me to accept her teachings - I know how much time and effort she must have spent to learn her own lessons. Shirley is a 'real' person, just like me, who is able to put her struggles aside in order to help me with mine. The help is offered with humour, discipline and clarity. I am offered a real-life example of the self-discipline required to follow the path.

I intend to honour the offerings in every way possible.

Om.

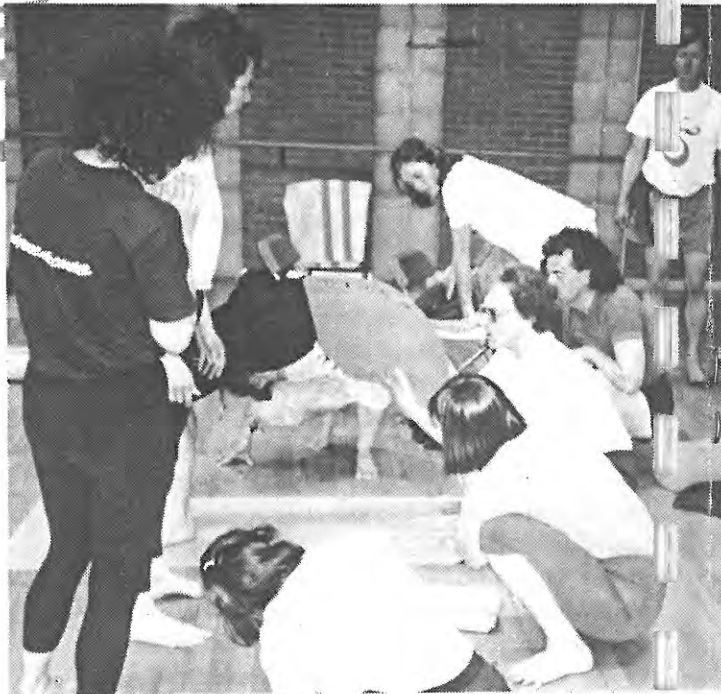


headstand work



Photos from
Donal's May's
Weekend
Workshop

Donald in Ardha
Matsyendrasana I
(LORD OF THE FISHES)



A MORNING SESSION IN BACKBE



NICE !!



ends



DONALD MOYER'S WORKSHOP

I have studied with Celia Ward for about three years but have only begun to attend classes regularly in the last year. Donald's workshop was the third yoga workshop I have attended and each time I've gone hesitantly because I recognized participants who were teachers and felt intimidated. One thing that impresses me so much about yoga is lack of competitiveness. I teach learning disabled children and their learning is always coloured by comparing themselves with others. I spend a lot of energy trying to help these children value themselves for their efforts rather than grading themselves on their accomplishments. There is a shift in the school system which is attempting to value all parts of the child rather than just the child's academic ability. I find that attitude is naturally present in the practise of yoga, taken for granted and rarely articulated. And so it was at the weekend workshop. Unfamiliarity with poses and the fact that I'd managed only one handstand before that weekend didn't seem to matter at all. Do you want to hear how soothing that is for the former, barely tolerated klutz of the grade eleven P.E. class?

Donald's ability to tell which areas of the body needed to work amazed me. At first I wondered if he was making it up but his suggestions for my own poses were so accurate I had to admit I was working in the presence of an artist. Which brings me to calligraphy. On a visit to Japan, through a string of wonderful circumstances, I found myself taking calligraphy with a teacher who was soon after proclaimed a master teacher. The experience of working with him was similar to the experience of the weekend. In calligraphy so much depends on the most subtle movements and making a connection with the center of yourself. Since I tend to over-think my way through things it is a delight and relief to be able to work at this non-

thinking level. As I tried to explain to Celia, I had to keep telling myself throughout Donald's workshop, "Don't think, don't analyze it." Phrases from Celia's teaching came into my mind, combined with Donald's comments and then I was able to do the work. The feeling was the same in my experience as doing calligraphy, writing well or effortless gardening. I wonder if dancing, painting, singing, swimming, running have their equivalent connection?

Donald said we had to work in the spaces, rather than with the muscles. This reminded me of a physiotherapist I worked with recently who said that in quantum physics we are 99% space. If this is so we have a lot more scope to work within the spaces rather than with the solidity of muscles. But this is becoming more esoteric than my practical self can tolerate!

By Saturday evening I was stretched to the limit, my body felt incapable of any more learning and I was incredibly sleepy. Family events and the unexpected arrival of friends led to my decision not to attend the last session. In the few days of practise since the workshop I find that I am able to do things I couldn't manage last week, questions about how to work with my legs in standing poses have been answered and I'm stiff in places I didn't know existed!

I would encourage other yoga novices to attend the weekend workshops. I'm looking forward to the next time.

Mary Bomford.

SEE YOU AT THE SALTSPRING RETREAT,
MARY!!!! Editor.

VICTORIA 'Y' YOGA CENTRE GATHERING

FRIDAY, MAY 22 1992

at 6 pm

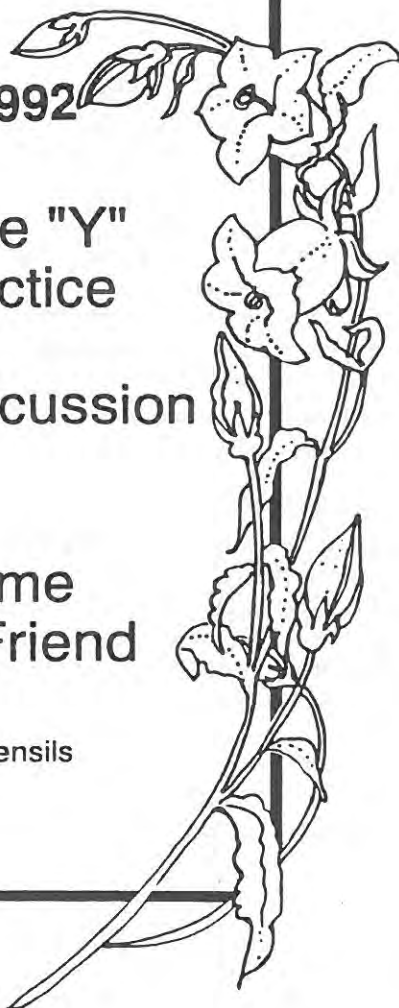
in the Lounge at the "Y"

6-7 pm Asana Practice

7 pm Potluck and Discussion

**Everyone Welcome
Bring Food and a Friend**

For the Planet: Bring Eating Utensils





Only sporadic articles have appeared under my name in the past eighteen months. Why have I been absent? Not because I've run out of things to say, nor because I've gotten too busy. I somehow got out of a routine. Shirley Daventry French in her Reflections of April, 1992, spoke about how we have begun to run the Yoga Centre more by phone than by actually meeting. Some of that personal contact has lessened and one deadline has blurred into the next. The other reason is related - I attribute it to getting older. Time keeps on slipping by.

I put on a t-shirt from the San Francisco convention the other day. 1984 it said. Could it really have been eight years ago? I remember the whole experience so vividly, the people I met from all over North America who became friends, the lining up for props, cozy talks in our dorm style room with Celia, Gay and Carole.

I've started several articles in my thoughts but not too many have reached the stage of pen on paper (yes, I still write with a pen).

One article I never wrote was triggered by a syndicated column about "Random Acts of Kindness and Senseless Acts of Beauty". That title really struck me. It would be a nice slogan

for the 90's. There's so much sad and depressing news. I'm always searching out the articles that give me a little hope.

One way I've practiced random acts of kindness is on the streets of Victoria. Anyone who has ever parked at a meter in Victoria learns to fear the tyranny of the meter person. He\she must position themselves at meters that are about to expire so they can whip out their tickets the second the violation sign clicks over. When I'm downtown I watch for cars that have expired meters and miraculously have not yet been ticketed. If it's a meter that takes a nickel I pop one in and give the car another seven minutes.

This is truly a random act because:

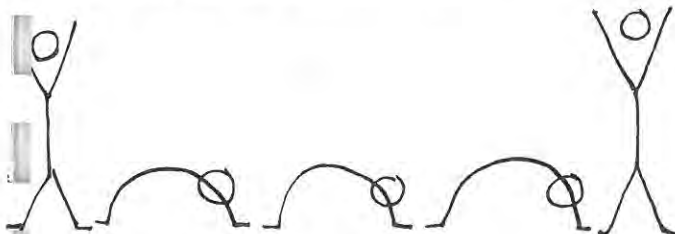
- A. I don't know who owns the car.
- B. I don't know if they'll make it back before the meter expires again.
- C. I'm not often walking around downtown.
- D. I don't always have a nickel.
- E. The meters that only take quarters are too dear for this pastime.
- F. The car owner will never know anyone actually helped save them from a ticket, they would assume their watch was wrong or they were just lucky.

This makes me think of Karma yoga. Another article I began composing in my thought waves was on Karma yoga. A few months ago Jim Rischmiller led a discussion on 'what is Karma yoga' at a monthly Yoga Centre gathering. I was agitated and stimulated by the discussion. I was trying to define it the way Eswaran did in his book instead of The Gita battlefield as Jim was doing at the meeting.

The following is from the first chapter of Eswaran's book The End of Sorrow:

"The Gita", says Mahatma Gandhi, "is not a historical discourse. It is the description not of war between cousins, but between two natures within us, the Good and the Evil. The battle described in the Bhagavad Gita is not limited to a particular historical setting.....It describes the eternal truth of life that the fiercest battle we must wage is against all that is selfish, self-willed, and separate in us..... Many of us are skilled tacticians in guerilla warfare right in our own homes."

Yes ---- It's easier to practice the idea of selfless action on the streets with a nickel in my pocket than it is sometimes with my own nearest and dearest. I can be generous and magnanimous with a complete stranger, one whom I'll never meet, than it is with someone who knows my weaknesses and can trigger a reaction in me! Awareness, practice, patience, forgiveness and more practice. Life always presents me with new ways to practice kindness to all.





THE VICTORIA YOGA CENTRE

Yoga Centre Members:

The Centre is pleased to offer the following scholarships:

**Iyengar Yoga Intensive
July 6 to 11, 1992**

Three (3) individual \$100.00 scholarships

and

**Yoga Retreat at the Salt Spring Centre
June 5 through 7, 1992**

One \$100.00 scholarship

Please refer to the February, March, and April Newsletters for details of the Intensive and the Retreat.

If you would like to apply for a scholarship or know of someone you wish to nominate to receive this assistance please contact Derek French and Marlene Müller, Scholarship Committee, at the following address:

**Victoria Yoga Centre Society
3918 Olympic View Drive, RR #4
Victoria, B.C. V9B 5T8**

The money which the Victoria Yoga Centre sets aside each year for scholarships is generated by the revenue from the workshops which we sponsor and by the interest on money which was donated and which we hold in a term deposit.

TEACHER TRAINING & WEEKEND WORKSHOP

with RAMANAND PATEL

TEACHER TRAINING

July 27 to August 2, 1992

During the Teacher Training, Ramanand will offer his expertise in the following areas:

- distinguishing fundamental actions in the asanas from refined actions
- ways of observing students and how to see
- communicating instructions effectively
- adjustment and the art of touch
- fundamentals of therapeutics

The structure of the teacher training will provide time for participants to practice teach using the concepts presented and receive constructive feedback on their teaching.

DAILY SCHEDULE: 7:00 to 9:00am Asana Practice (optional)
9:00 to 10:00am Breakfast
10:00am to 1:00pm Morning Session
3:00 to 5:00pm Afternoon Session

COST: \$400.00

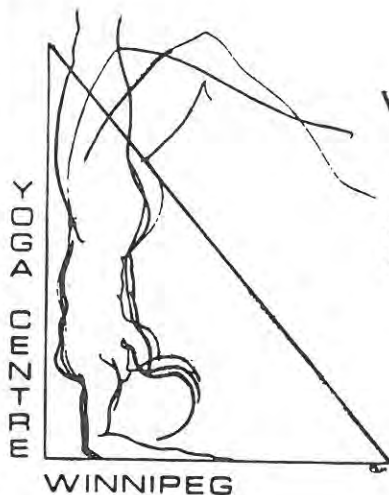
WEEKEND WORKSHOP

July 24 to July 26, 1992

COST:

\$150 for the workshop only or
\$100 if taken in conjunction with the teacher training.

LOCATION:
YOGA CENTRE WINNIPEG
BILLETS AVAILABLE



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Paradox & Healing is available at bookstores for \$20.28 (includes GST)

Or mail \$24.03 (includes postage & GST) to:
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Victoria, British Columbia, Canada, V8X 4M6, Tel: (604) 727-3451



YOGA CALENDAR

MAY:

- 1-3: Wheel of Life workshop at Radha House with Swami Gopalananda.
- 2: Iyengar Yoga Teachers meeting at the Y. 9.15 am to 1pm.
- 15: Victoria Yoga Centre gathering at the Y. Practice at 6pm.
- 9: Pranayama Class/Asanan Practice in Metchoshin with Shirley Daventry French. Call 478-3775 for details.

JUNE:

- 5-7: Weekend Yoga Retreat led by Shirley Daventry French at the Saltspring Centre on Saltspring Island.
- 6-7: Rose Ceremony at Radha House.

JULY:

- 2-5: Canadian Iyengar Yoga Teachers meeting on the Sunshine Coast. Contact Gioia Irwin 604-734-7696.
- 6-11: Iyengar Yoga Intensive at the Y with Liz McLeod and Shirley Daventry French, Guest Teacher: Derek French (see ad this issue).
- 24-Aug 2: Teacher training and a weekend workshop with Ramanand Patel at the Yoga Centre in Winnipeg. Call 204-783-8040 for details.

SEPTEMBER:

- 11-14: Workshop with Ramanand Patel at the Y.



more BackBend
work !!



SPIRIT OF SERVICE 1992

A series of lectures and workshops presented by SEVA

The common theme among these lectures and workshops is "ways to generous action in our lives".

May 8,9,

Paul Brenner:

REDEFINING MALE AND FEMALE;
MAKING PEACE WITH THE DIFFERENCE

All of the lectures and workshops are to take place at Christ Church Cathedral,
690 Burrard Street, Vancouver

Cost: Individual lectures are \$15.00

Individual workshops are \$100.00

One lecture/workshop weekend is \$110.00

Tickets available at Banyen Sound, 2069 West Broadway, Vancouver, 737-8858
or Seva, 204-2965 W. 4th Avenue, Vancouver, 733-4284

The Yoga Centre of Victoria Newsletter Advertising

If you have products or services of interest to Victoria's yoga practitioners, this is your advertising vehicle.

Because our rates are so low, all advertising material must be supplied camera ready - that is, exactly as you want it to appear in the newsletter. If not, the copy will simply be typed and inserted. If you wish, we can arrange to have an advertisement prepared for you, but we must charge extra for this service.

Our policy in accepting advertising is that all advertisements must not conflict with the aims of the Centre, as stated elsewhere in the newsletter.

RATES per ISSUE

If you wish to buy an ad or require further information,
please contact our Advertising Manager, Carole Miller:

721-3477

1807 Forest, Victoria, B.C. V8N 1H5

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ROSE CEREMONY

The Rose Ceremony is a personal dedication to the Divine, a time to re-establish your commitment to the very finest within, and to reaffirm your ideals. If you wish to attend, please bring two roses - one for you and one for the Divine. Phone for further information. There is no fee but you are asked to make a donation to a charity of your choice as an offering of gratitude.

Part One: Saturday June 6
8.00-9.00 pm
Part Two: Sunday June 7
8.00-9.00 pm.

MEMBERSHIP/SUBSCRIPTION FORM

Its time you joined the Yoga Centre of Victoria! As you read this newsletter, you are receiving one of the benefits of membership. As you attend your yoga classes or a workshop, you are receiving the benefits of membership. These take time and money and your membership fees and participation really help.

Please fill out this form and send it with your cheque or money order to:
YOGA CENTRE OF VICTORIA, 3918 Olympic View Drive, R.R.#4, Victoria, B.C., V9B 5T8

Membership/subscription fee is only \$20 per year.

Name: _____

Street: _____

City/Prov: _____ P.C.: _____ Phone: _____

I am enclosing a cheque or money order in the amount of: _____

Please do not mail me the newsletter; during class sessions, I'll pick one up at my "Y" class. []

The VICTORIA YOGA CENTRE SOCIETY is a non-profit society incorporated under the Societies' Act of the Province of British Columbia whose purpose is, "to encourage the physical, mental and spiritual growth of its members and other interested members of society at large by the study and discipline of Yoga". The Society owes its inspiration to Swami Sivananda Radha and Mr. B.K.S. Iyengar.

The Society Newsletter is published regularly, providing current information on events concerning yoga in Victoria and area and at the Yasodhara Ashram. Published by the Victoria Yoga Centre Society.

Anyone wishing to contribute articles, photographs, drawings, information or suggestions to the newsletter may contact the Editor, Jennifer Rischmiller, 4489 Lindholm Road, R.R. #1, Victoria, B.C., Canada, V9B 5T7. Telephone: (604) 474-5630.

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DEADLINE FOR JUNE ISSUE: MAY 22nd, 1992.

VICTORIA YOGA CENTRE SOCIETY

3918 Olympic View Drive, R.R. #4, Victoria, B.C., Canada, V9B 5T8



VICTORIA YOGA CENTRE

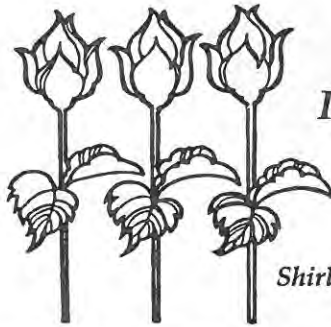
Newsletter



Inside this
issue:
A conversation
between
Swami Radha
&
B.K.S. Iyengar

Please Subscribe

June, 1992



Reflections

by
Shirley Daventry French

Many years ago, when our three children were very young, we had just finished dinner and Derek was sitting in an armchair in the living room reading. "Would you like to help with the washing up?", I asked him. "Yes," he replied, without moving. As I contemplated my next move, my three year old daughter Stephanie said, in a loud, clear voice: "He said 'yes' but he means 'no'". Of course, she was right, seeing straight through us as children so often do. We both laughed.

When I was a child myself, I knew how to be direct. My mother often told a story of how once when I (the daughter of the house) was asked to do the dishes after a family dinner, I turned to my older brother as he sat reading and said to him: "Will you wash or wipe?" To the astonishment of my mother, he got up and followed me into the kitchen. To her this story illustrated my brother's generosity of spirit and my nerve. To me, it was yet another example of injustice to be tackled head on.

The other day at the "Y" on the second week of classes of a new term, I looked at my class list and saw that many students had not yet registered. At the end of class, I politely reminded them that it was the second week of a new term and perhaps they were not aware of this. Karen Fletcher, a longtime friend from Winnipeg who is just completing a sabbatical year in Victoria, followed this up by saying: "What she means is 'pay up!'"

Everyone laughed. It was funny, but I noticed that my laughter was a little uncomfortable. Karen's assessment of the situation was correct. Pay up, was exactly what I meant.

Earlier that week there had been a similar incident in another class. Seven years ago, when Karen spent a previous sabbatical year in Victoria, she had attended this class regularly and got to know us pretty well. Here again, at the end of class, I reminded students to register, which I did reluctantly, throwing it in among a number of other announcements. Karen spoke up: "Nothing seems to have changed in seven years!". Again, we laughed.

Karen is about to leave town to return to Winnipeg. Did this make it easy for her to speak out? Perhaps, but I have noticed and admired her ability to be forthright in other situations, and think that in these matters she is clearer than I am. Why is this?

How I hate these situations! How I wish it would all go away! How I wish everyone would simply take care of registering for the class they are attending without having to be reminded! How I wish that people would register for workshops early enough to let us know that our overheads will be covered, allowing the organisers of the workshop to relax a little and not get so many worry lines and grey hairs. How I wish that more of the local students who pick up the newsletter regularly in

class would invest \$20 in a subscription. However, as Karen pointed out, in seven years very little has changed. Why would I waste my energy with such futile wishes. It would be better instead to explore how I can handle the situation better.

When I make requests for support, financial or otherwise, I often do it in an offhand way. "Would you mind ..." "Would you like to ..." In the comedy of manners I learned when growing up in England, requests were sometimes even more oblique: "If you could be so kind as to ..." "If it isn't too much trouble ..." "When you have a moment ..." "I was wondering if you might be able to ..." It's no wonder the novel *Nineteen Eighty-four*, with it's 'Doublethink' and 'Newspeak', was written by an Englishman.

During the Yoga teachers' course at Yasodhara Ashram, as part of my training, my teaching was evaluated. One of the criticisms from my teachers and fellow student-teachers was that I was too polite. Instead of a simple instruction to "lie down" I was more likely to say "would you lie down". It was pointed out to me that this introduced an element of choice, and was this what I really meant? Of course it wasn't. To emphasise the point, when I said "would you lie down", many of the students said "no" and continued to stand up. It was done with humour; I laughed as I learned, and over the years my teaching has become much more direct.

In life in general, in all my interactions with others I am learning how to be direct without being angry or confrontational, but one area where I still have a lot of difficulty involves money and asking people to pay up for services rendered or to secure a place for themselves in a class or workshop.

It is difficult for me to talk about money. This goes back to my early upbringing and education where I was taught that to do so was in very bad taste. I never knew anything about my parents

financial affairs, and when I went out to work I was quickly made to understand that I should not discuss my salary with anyone else. Now I can see that this was a conspiracy of silence which kept expenses down and employees in their place, but at the time I took it as a sign of refinement and would have been appalled if any of my friends had asked me what I earned. If you were given a raise or bonus, you were informed in a private letter sent to your home asking you to keep this information to yourself. If you were not discreet you were unlikely to be promoted, and might even lose your job. If you quit over a dispute about salary you would not get a good reference. The odd thing is that all of this took place in a time of high employment; but in the climate of post-war England, good form and not rocking the boat were considered more important than individual freedom of expression, which is one of the reasons Derek and I left.

In Canada, although I have learned to be more open, honest and straightforward about many things, it is still not easy for me to stand in front of a class and bring up the subject of money. Derek and I are both self-employed, and this has been a powerful catalyst. At the last yoga centre executive meeting, when we were discussing finances, I said that I thought everyone should go through the experience of being self-employed at one time in their life. There's nothing like it for bringing one face to face with the fact that you have to pay for each sheet of paper, each paper clip, each staple, each stamp used to promote a class, each item of equipment used in the class, and that the space in which the classes take place has to be cleaned, heated and maintained for seven days a week, twelve months of the year. And all of this is before the teacher receives a penny!

Strangely enough, in my private classes the finances have been more straightforward than at the Y, even though I charge more. Perhaps we have been too generous at the Y, and as a result what we offer is undervalued. Perhaps it is because the Y is an institution, and students find it easier to distance themselves. Perhaps it's time for some facts.

Contrary to popular belief, the Y receives no community support for its adult programs which have to be self-sufficient. The United Way contributes to the Youth program only. This is different from other recreation centres in the city, the university and community college, all of which offer yoga classes and all of which are supported by taxes. Each month the co-ordinator of the yoga program (at present time, Linda Benn) prepares a financial statement. We are expected to contribute 50% towards overhead, which is not an unreasonable amount as anyone who has tried to run a business will understand.

The Y was one of the first places in Victoria to offer yoga classes and over the years a mutually beneficial relationship has developed between the Y and the Victoria Yoga Centre. The stated purpose of the Y is "to provide quality programs, services and education for individuals and families that encourage and support a balanced approach to development in body, mind and spirit". We have provided a high quality yoga program at the Y for over twenty years, and sometimes I think it has been there so long, it is taken for granted.

One of the important lessons of yoga is not to take anything for granted, but to bring a freshness to each moment of life. Throughout the year I visit other yoga communities, where people often comment on how lucky we are in Victoria, and from a distance I can take a fresh look and see clearly that we are lucky - our yoga community is blessed in many ways. In Victoria, if I am not careful, I lose sight of that. It is a good idea and a yogic practice to step back, from time to time,

from the known and familiar, see it anew and consider its value in your life. For me, it's time to take a fresh approach to the business side of yoga, drop some of the baggage accumulated in my early years in London, and be more straightforward when I remind students to register. It's not bad taste to ask them to pay up, it's right livelihood and very yogic.

Thank you Karen! Thank you also to all those who do register early for classes and workshops, and must wonder what all the fuss is about and why this topic comes up again and again. Thank you to all those students who, even they know they will not be able to attend all the classes in a session, show their understanding of the nature of yoga and business by paying for the course in full. Thank you to all who subscribe to the newsletter. In all these instances, your support enables us to keep going, to propagate yoga and to offer help in the form of grants and scholarships to sincere students who are experiencing financial difficulties.



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A CONVERSATION BETWEEN SWAMI RADHA AND B.K.S. IYENGAR

This article, reprinted with permission, was originally published in the spring 1982 issue of *Ascent*, the Journal of the Yasodhara Ashram, and includes a selection of excerpts from a conversation which took place at the Ramamani Iyengar Memorial Institute in Pune.

Mr. Iyengar: Hatha yoga starts in the body and goes directly, one after the other, from the body to the breath, from the breath to the mind, from the mind to the soul.

Swami Radha: It is similar to when we look at a picture. At first we may not be able to see everything at once, so we begin by looking at one area and then at another. Finally, we can see the whole picture.

Mr. Iyengar: Yes, then we experience the totality, complete alertness. For example, the body for me is the gross soul. So how can the envelope be separated from the letter?

Swami Radha: Right. Duality is a creation of the mind.

Mr. Iyengar: No one can demarcate where the body ends and the mind begins, where the mind ends and the soul begins. These terms are all for the sake of convenience, when it is explained that one is the gross body, one is the subtle body, one is the casual body. It is like Patanjali explaining the various methods of Yoga, one after the other: "Try this, try this, try this!" He gives many variations.

Swami Radha: For the sake of communication...

Mr. Iyengar: Yes, communication. Within the same body we have what we call the anatomical body, the physiological body, the mental body, the

intellectual body, and the abode of the soul, which we call *ananda* (bliss). There is no *ananda* for the mind; only pleasure is for the mind. *Ananda* is for the soul, which is eternal, which can never fade. That *ananda* is pure *ananda*.

It is not just that if I explain each pose then you will know how to use them. Sometimes the body is the subject; sometimes the Self is the subject and the body is the object. So there is a different way for me to take each asana. I say that each cell is a Self. Do we treat each cell as a Self, in order to truly understand what health means? That is how I teach, that is how I work. The cells are new, second to second. They are born - they die; and if we don't do practice for even one day we don't make use of the cells fully. We are then creating artificial death in the cells. But why should we not create natural death in the cells by making use of them before they die? So that is where the asanas and pranayamas come to our rescue, to make use of each cell fully. Then we live totally in the cells, we live totally in our body and in our mind. Then everything is One, there is no difference.

Patanjali has said that "the river of energy and the river of consciousness have to flow together in the river of tranquility." Those are my words which I use for Patanjali's! (laughs). So if we take Patanjali's authority, when he says, "By the practice of yoga the impurities of the body and mind are destroyed." - now tell me, how can this happen? Patanjali has said it very well, that even if you reach the state of *samadhi*, (the state in which the aspirant is one with the object of meditation, the Supreme Spirit pervading the universe, where there is a feeling of unutterable joy and peace), if you do not continue with daily *sadhana* (spiritual practice) your state becomes very shaky. There are nine types of obstacles that come in the way of progress, and the

last one is *anavasthitattva* (instability in continuing the practices, feeling that it is not necessary to continue because the highest state of *samadhi* has been reached). This means that even if you reach *samadhi*, you must remember that if you stop your practices, you have fallen from the path.

So that is why I say that today we have lost a great deal by neglecting the spiritual practice of the body. The fragrance of the flower is only there if the plant is healthy. The fragrance of the fruit comes only if the tree is healthy and produces the fruit. The spiritual end of a small plant is the flower, and the fragrance of that flower. So we should have that fragrance in our practice of yoga. If there is no fragrance, what is the use of life? I may be able to talk philosophically but what is my position inside? How do I feel inside when I am alone?

So yoga is practised in order to die majestically, a natural majestic death. And if we don't do the practice, if we don't care for the cells, we kill the cells artificially before they die naturally, and life is frittered away without making use of it.

It is unethical for a person who is practising his *sadhana* to miss it for even a single day. If I do not do my *sadhana* today, I am definitely unethical within myself. If you take the stories of *Vasishtha* and *Viswamitra* (celebrated Vedic sages, two of the seven great *Rishis*) they did not neglect their bodies. Their health reached the highest state; at the same time they knew that the body was a chariot, according to the *Kathopanishad* (one of the principal *Upanishads*). So the chariot cannot be neglected. A charioteer requires a good chariot. But today, what has happened? The charioteer is there, but there is no chariot! So both have to go together. A musician can express through an instrument. A yogi has nothing through which to express except his own instrument, the body. So whether it is the yogi as an artist, the yogi as a scientist, the yogi as a philosopher, he must always work through his body.

Swami Sivananda: Didn't you have some disability when you were seventeen or eighteen?

Mr. Iyengar: Yes, and that is what made me do yoga.

Swami Sivananda: What was it?

Mr. Iyengar: I suffered from tuberculosis, and at that time there was no Streptomycin injection, or penicillin or anything like that. So I said, "If one has to lie there, what is it anyway, to live or to die? So let me die peacefully, that is all, if my health does not improve. At least I will be able to say that I died doing yoga. Beyond that, what does it matter? Death has to come, does it not? That is certain. So let it come in a noble way." That is all I thought - and I have not left, even now! Even today, I am a very vigorous and rigorous practitioner.

Swami Radha: Oh, I can see that! (laughter).



Mr. Iyengar: People say that you cannot see the infinite through the finite. But show me one man who has seen the infinite without finite means. Each and every person has used finite means to reach the infinite. This logic cannot be changed. When the finite merges in the infinite, the finite becomes the infinite. We are beings in which the finite also becomes one with the infinite throughout. (laughs) So that is how I am practising yoga even today, for seven or eight hours each day. When there are intense courses I practise thirteen, fourteen hours a day. I never even get a rest.

Swami Radha: The practice rejuvenates you.

Mr. Iyengar: Yes, of course it is tremendously rejuvenating.

Student: Did you say you did ten hours of practice a day?

Mr. Iyengar: Yes, when I was young. How I struggled to master this art! Now it is a natural discipline, but then it was a forced discipline. (laughs) I can't call it a discipline anymore, because it has become an art. In the past, who knows, I might have gone back to having TB so my motive was, "Let me conquer, let me conquer." And, to be frank with you, even today, when the doctors examine my ribs, they say that my ribs are as tender as a boy of twenty years. They say, "You must have suffered from TB," and tell me that, according to their findings, these ribs cannot carry this body at all. Yet I am still carrying it....

Swami Radha: Yes you do very well! (laughter). For me, coming from the West....

Mr. Iyengar: But I appreciated you, because you were very sincere, honest in your ethics, telling people to be ethical!

Swami Radha: Build character first.

Mr. Iyengar: Because ethics is one wing and spiritualism is the other wing. The bird can fly only with two wings, not with one wing. So one wing of the human being is ethics, the other wing is the spiritual life. If they go together, the seeker can definitely fly, and reach the height of Everest. Not otherwise.

Sometimes when I am conducting classes I am also very, very strong (demanding) and they ask me, "Why are you strong?" I say, "So I can die in peace. Knowing the art, if I do not teach, I will be questioned there, not here. If I had a limited art...w say innocence can be pardoned, ignorance is a bliss sometimes. So unfortunately, God has made me to know so much in this art, that if I can't give it to you, I will die in unhappiness."

When I am alone I say, "Why did I not correct it when I knew I could do it!" Now see that girl. (Mr. Iyengar points to a student with a "bamboo", or fused, spine, who has been developing flexibility in her back through his guidance.) I helped her, and I am very happy, knowing that if I didn't do it, I would be very unhappy, saying to myself, "Why didn't I take the risk?" I have taken the risk....

Swami Radha: But the secret is also your motivation.

Mr. Iyengar: That is there.

Swami Radha: That is why you can take the risk.

Mr. Iyengar: I have tremendous---

Swami Radha: Motivation. Yes!

How long have you known Gurudev Sivananda (Swami Sivananda of Rishikesh, Swami Radha's guru)?

Mr. Iyengar: Oh, since 1937. (laughs).

Swami Radha: Ah, just about when you were starting, too.

Mr. Iyengar: Yes.

Swami Radha: How did you meet him?

Mr. Iyengar: Well, we were always corresponding, because I was having lots of troubles when I started practising. I used to approach not only my Guru, but all yogis, whoever they were. I said, "I am having this trouble, I am having that trouble with my practice. Can you help me?" But the guidance I received was not sufficient. They would say, "Don't practice that if that problem is happening." So I used to question them, "Why do you say don't do it? Have you done it, have you suffered? Tell me, if you have suffered, then what was the remedy?" Then I used to write to them and say, "Come what may, I am not going to stop my practice unless I know why the problem happens." So I fought with them throughout! I said, "Give me the right guidance but don't say, 'Don't do it'; tell me instead, by doing it what are the things that will happen? How did you experience these things?" So that's how it used to go (laughs)...Later on Swami Sivananda said to me, "You are Matsyendranath!"

Swami Radha: Why did he call you that?

Mr. Iyengar: Because I had done so much hatha yoga. He used to look at my album and say, "This I can do...this my pupils can do - oh, this one! Matsyendranath!"

Swami Sivananda: What does that name mean?

Mr. Iyengar: Matsyendra was the founder of hatha yoga. I will tell you the story. Matsya means fish. Lord Siva was explaining to Parvati about this art of yoga. And he told her when she questioned him, "I will explain it to you, but we must go where there is no human being." He saw a beautiful lake and said,

"Let us sit here, because the weather is very good, and the lake is calm, with no movement at all."

There was a fish in the water, who listened to their dialogue so intently that it did not move the water at all. After some time, when the discussion came to an end, Lord Siva saw something moving. He said, "What is this? There was no movement at all..."

And he looked and saw the fish. He blessed the fish, and the fish became a human form called Matsyendranath, the King of the Fishes.

So Swami Sivananda used to call me that, and tell me I was the modern-day Matsyendra, but I never used to listen.

"Come," he said to me, "and I will give you sanyas." I said, "I want to be a married man. If I want to be a sanyasi (a swami) I will come. I am not interested in becoming a sanyasi." I used to write to him like that.

Swami Radha: Why did you want to be a married man?

Mr. Iyengar: Because all the people said, "Only swamijis can do yoga, only sanyasins can do yoga."

Swami Radha: Oh, I didn't know that....

Mr. Iyengar: Yes, I am speaking of the 1930's, when yoga was unknown even in India. So they said that only people who are little bit mad, out of control, practise yoga. Even in India today, many think that they are the only type of people who do yoga. They must have been completely disappointed in their lives, they must have lost interest in everything, and that has made them take to yoga. That was the attitude in the 1930's. At that time we had to struggle to establish yoga.

If I became a swami, then people would say, "Then of course he can do it. What is that?" But living in the turmoils of day to day, can he practise yoga? I can live in the world and I can practise yoga in living. Under Swamiji's feet there is the Ganges running. But how can I practise in the city, in the

world, meeting all the ups and downs in life? I said, "No, I will do it with the ups and downs. I don't want that security, the quiet life." So I refused to take sanyas. And now I am a sanyasi, because my wife is gone...(laughs gently) So God has given me sanyas without even asking for it!

Student: Weren't you worried that your attention would be between two things, your home and yoga?

Mr. Iyengar: No, I chose to prove whether yoga could be done by a man in turmoil. If I had been a sanyasi, everyone would say, "What is that? What problems has he got in life? So he can practise." But I live on today and I am still on the top; not one has done what I have. So that is why I say, "You show me anything. If you do better than I do, I understand you, but I don't want worse. Show me practically, so that I can understand the centre."

Swami Radha: Now wait a minute! You had -

Mr. Iyengar: That will power!

Swami Radha: You had to make money to feed your family, you had to give time to your wife, you had to give time to your children.

Mr. Iyengar: And I still had to practise.

Swami Radha: Right. How many hours did you sleep? Four?

Mr. Iyengar: You ask my children and they will tell you. Did I not maintain the whole family? Did I not look after everything? Did I stop my practice for even one day, you can ask them that too! (laughs) So I maintained everything. That is why I said I am a responsible person. I can explain this to anyone who is in the same line.

Geeta Iyengar: (Mr. Iyengar's daughter, one of the main teachers at the Institute): That is very important, because there are some people who call themselves spiritual, and who are married and

neglect the whole family. I mean financially, also, the family is not properly looked after, and you find the family suffering in these households. But this didn't happen in my father's case. It has happened many times, when the man left to become a swami, and the whole family has been left to suffer, without money, without food.

Mr. Iyengar: But giving authority for this is not spiritual. Even as Gurudev says we should have the blessings of the gurus, why should I not have the blessings of my children?

Swami Radha: So you don't feel you have missed anything?

Mr. Iyengar: No. Why should my children say, "On account of my father, see my fate?" They can't say this now, for I have given them all.

Geeta: But this has happened to other families, with the man going off to become a sanyasi, and the family suffering on the other side.

Swami Radha: Yes, I have met one in Sivananda Ashram in 1958, when I returned for four months. There was a young man teaching us hatha yoga and he told us that his father had been a yogi, and had left his mother, himself and two other children, to the mercy of the rest of the family. And then one day, when the young man was 21 or so, his father said to him, "Come, I want you to witness something so you will understand what I have been doing." The father said he was now going to consciously enter *mahasamadhi* (final stage of *samadhi*, or divine union, where the life force is withdrawn), because he had no more desires. The young man sat there watching his father seated in the meditation posture. Time passed, and more time, and more time, until finally the son touched him to tell him, "Well this is enough now, why should I sit here and watch you?" The body fell over. His father was dead. And now he, the son, having witnessed this, was so impressed, even though he had gone through so much suffering as a child, that he left his wife and

two little daughters and went to pursue yoga. I think that this was the reason his father had wanted the son to witness his *mahasamadhi*. I asked him, "How much time do you spend to look after yourself? That time you can also give to your family!" There was always some discrepancy.

Mr. Iyengar: That is why my life is a balanced life, because I have seen everything in life. (laughs)

Swami Radha: I have not been able to understand that you can achieve the Highest at the cost and tears of someone else.

Mr. Iyengar: Yes. That is not liberation. That is not proper at all!

Swami Radha: Right! (to the others in the group) I'm glad that you hear that! I met another Indian somewhere around Rishikesh, who said to me, "I am a full-blown bramacharyi (celibate)!" I asked him what he meant. Well, with the help of his Guru they had purchased a little village girl of 15 or 16. He described it as similar to being in a room where food is being stored. If you eat all the food until you almost burst, you don't want any food, you don't even want to see it anymore. And here the same principle was applied to sexual indulgence - if you have had all the sexual pleasures, you have had enough. I said, "But the body digests the food and you get hungry again. The sexual desire will also return again. Your actions are not logical - and what happens to the girl? Now she will not be able to marry. If she becomes pregnant what happens?" "Oh, she can put the baby in the hills, and wild beasts will eat it..." Do you call that spiritual?

Mr. Iyengar: No, no.

Swami Radha: Oh no, no, no. She can drown herself in the Ganges, because nobody will want her, or she can become a prostitute.

Mr. Iyengar: We have spoken before of ideals. We have to have ideals as teachers. If we have no ideals, we should not even speak on the subject of yoga.

Now this controversy has been going on between my people and myself recently. Your ethical life in America, your way of living and our way of living is quite different. I never say that the West should be like India. In India marriages only take place with family consent, and the bride and groom do not meet before. In your country there is contractual living together which is part of your ethics. I'm not objecting to that at all. I say yes, because the man has to understand the woman, the woman has to understand the man, so after two or three years they should marry. That is your law. But some of my people are following the principles of other people who are teaching that, because the other's ethics permit that. In the daytime they are students, in the night they are sharers of the bed. I said, "This is not ethics. You cannot do that or you must marry." You see what is going on now? I said, "No, I will not encourage such things in my life."

Student: That's just what Mataji says!

Swami Radha: (laughing) I don't care how old you are, you cannot stay in the Ashram in the same room if you are not married.

Mr. Iyengar: So this is the only way we can teach; in the olden days, even in the Western countries, they were behaving like that. But all of a sudden it has taken a change, it has become pleasure; everything is a pleasure, then yoga is a pleasure - then why call it yoga? There is a word *bhoga* for pleasure, but yoga is an auspicious thing. So I say, "Marry and enjoy!"

Swami Radha: There it is, the same.

Mr. Iyengar: I am not saying, "Don't marry at all." I am a fool to say, "Don't marry," because as my daughter said, if you are wanting it in your head, it is better to be mentally pure, too.



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work of B.K.S. Iyengar.

Swami Radha: Yes, I often have you given to me as an example. "But look, Mr. Iyengar is married." I said, "I have heard Mr. Iyengar has been a widower for a number of years. So if he only married for the sake of sexual pleasure, I'm sure he would have found a second or even a third wife. But he didn't."

Mr. Iyengar: That is true. I always give many examples to my Indian students who go to America. I say, "In the West, if you have got an art, it does not matter whether you are ugly or a beauty." You know, there were lots of people who fell in love when I went to England for the first time in 1952, when I was in the prime of my youth. Yet even today I only fold hands (namaste). I have spoken to swamis who travel in the West, and asked, "Why do you kiss? It is not good for you to do that as a swami." They say, "No, I think of everyone as children," but how do you know the way in which a person will respond?

Swami Radha: Right, I agree. I get my own viewpoints very well confirmed, thank you for that! I have to struggle sometimes with it.

Mr. Iyengar: But even I am struggling still! I am struggling with all these people. I ask them, "Do you mean to say that I could get women in this world even now? But why?" You can ask Geeta. Some foreigners came and said, "Just see the magnetism of this other leader, and how many people he can attract!" I said, "Don't you know that I have the magnetism which keeps you far away from me? (general laughter) You cannot come near me! Why are you afraid of me, the moment you come near? Why are people afraid of me if I just walk by them? That is my magnetism. (laughs) You have seen my class today - even any outsider, any foreigner who comes, within ten minutes they are afraid of me. I'll finish teaching them in five minutes how to behave. It won't take a long time at all! (laughter) Within two or three minutes I teach them. I say, "How did you look when you came? Is

that the way to look?" Finished! "Is that the way to behave, is that the way to stand?" That is how I teach.

Student: Do you treat women differently than men?

Mr. Iyengar: Why should I, tell me! If the soul has gender, then I will show the differences. If there is a feminine soul and a masculine soul then I will say what the difference is. Whether you are a woman or a man, the emotional feelings are the same, are they not?

Swami Radha: I do think that a man has more physical strength and a woman has a little more endurance.....

Mr. Iyengar: Yes, I agree with that.

Swami Radha: But that is all. Right.... Years ago I asked Swami Venkatesananda who he considered to be the finest hatha yoga teacher, and he said, "Well, I think Iyengar is the best." So I got a copy of your book 'Light on Yoga' and as I held it in my hands for a while, I felt a great sense of peace. I often go with a feeling like this, so I said to myself, "I will open the book at random, and in the first three lines on the top of the right hand side of the page I open the book to, there should be something which confirms my feeling." After I had this sign, I put the book on the list for our students, even before I had read it completely. I based my decision on my own impression, and read it afterwards.

Mr. Iyengar: As I said before, I think that in the West you are the only person who has insisted on ethics. Even the Indians don't say that, which hurts me tremendously.

Swami Radha: I am presently writing a book on yoga from the psychological viewpoint. In your book you had a small paragraph in the introduction: "We must see that we live in a world with many other creatures." That sentence gave me, finally, the clue. I have always been very interested in symbolism, I would sit by my lily pool and watch the goldfish, and reflect on what it means to be a fish in the water. I searched for information on all the various animals and other life forms for which the asanas are named, even when I felt I knew the meanings from my own practice. I came across many delightful legends and stories, such as the conversations of the king Milinda and the sage Nagasena about the tortoise, one of the animal names used in hatha yoga. Nagasena tells the king about the five special qualities symbolized by the tortoise. For example, when there is danger and temptation, the aspirant should dive to the bottom of deep meditation and hide himself until the temptation is over. He should protect himself by drawing in his senses as the tortoise draws in its limbs for protection. These symbolic stories are easily understood by Westerners, so I have searched for anything I could find.

I also use the same technique I used in the Kundalini book (Kundalini: Yoga for the West) of asking people to write a paper to clarify their thoughts. What does the fish mean to you? What does the tortoise mean to you? What does it mean to stand on your head?

During the last three weeks I was at the Ashram in Rishikesh, Gurudev Sivananda said, "Now that you have seen some of the asanas, show me six of them." I showed him what I had been practising, and he said, "Now, what is the psychological meaning?" I was stunned. I hadn't even heard about this. So I started to think about it, and said, "If I can twist my body in so many ways, my mind can certainly twist in as many ways." So one thing followed right after another, and he said, "Now, what would be the mystical aspect?" I didn't even know where to look!

So I went to the swami who was teaching hatha yoga, and he said, "What are you talking about?" I went to another one who said, "I am only devotional, I don't do hatha yoga any more." I couldn't find anyone who could help me. So I went back to Gurudev and I said, "You have to give me one example so I know where to search." And he gave me the example of the mystical meaning of standing on the head, and that put the whole thing together: learning to become my own opponent, and looking at things from the opposite end; but also the insight of what is termed 'nectar and ambrosia'. Now I try to help people discover the psychological message: "If you can't do the asana, what is the reason? Are you stiff-necked?"

Mr. Iyengar: In the same way, when you are doing the asanas - I'll give you a simple example. Suppose you stretch your finger, like this. The psychological intelligence also takes this circular action. If you move like that, the intelligence also takes this circular action. If you move like that, the intelligence also moves in that direction. When we do the asanas, it is not only psychological, but mystical and spiritual as well. There is the inner wall, which is known as the intellectual wall, and the outer wall, which is the inner layer and the outer layer of the skin. When I am doing the pose, is my intellectual wall parallel to the physical wall? Is the physical wall parallel to the intellectual wall? And how many do yoga like that? When I say, "Stretch your hands," they don't know if they are stretching. So every time I have to say, "Is my intellectual wall - which is inside my body, or inside the skin - the same distance from that end to this end, and from this end to that end? It should be the same. Does it vary? Now the intelligence is varying, and it is not touching here at all. It is only touching here if you move like this (demonstrates); then intelligence touches here. That's the feeling. Otherwise there's no feeling here. So when I am teaching the asanas I say, "The feeling here, the feeling here, the feeling here should be the same." We have eight directions: northeast, northwest, north, east, (laughs)...so in our

body, we've got eight directions as God has created. When we do each and every posture penetrating all these eight directions, then there is a unity within ourselves. Until then, it's a physical yoga. Then intelligence, psychologically - that means your mind and your body are penetrating everywhere evenly, so that means a positive, dynamic health; physical and mental health meeting together.

Swami Radha: I'm glad we have that on tape! (laughter)

Mr. Iyengar: So that is how the asanas have to be done. I tell my students in the classes, "People say to concentrate on a lamp, to gaze at it, and call that spiritual practice. I say, 'Look at your toe. Why is your right toe big, your left toe small?' So intelligence comes. But intelligence does not come by looking at the lamp. Each posture is a torch within you, which will awaken the intelligence within. Use that as a torch, use that as a light. That's how the poses are to be done. Not just, 'I am standing on my head'."

Now the mystical aspects come as well. When you say you stand on the crown of your head, do you know what is the crown of the foot? How many people can explain that? The middle of the arch is the crown of the foot. That means if a line is drawn from the centre of the head to the centre of the foot, you should be in a single thread from the top to the bottom. So two heads, like the south pole and the north pole, evenly balanced, this is the spiritual or mystical root of sirsana. Many people, when they do sirsana, don't know where their right leg is, where their left leg is, whether they are straight to the head or whether the heel has gone backwards or the foot has come back.

Swami Radha: No, they only find out, "I can stand on my head for three minutes, or half an hour." That is what is important to them - competition. "I can stand longer than you can."

Do you sometimes read the reports about the results of new scientific experiments?

Mr. Iyengar: I don't have any time to read. I consider myself lucky if I find even half an hour in a day to read. Even after the hard work of the classes my mind is still working. "What can I do to help that student." I am more a practical man than a theoretical man.

Swami Radha: I am asking you this because many people feel that the ancient teachings are contradicted by the new scientific findings. Yet if one takes the time to study, you discover that it is just a reinterpretation, and not necessarily a contradiction at all.

Mr. Iyengar: For example, when we speak of nuclear energy, now the theory has to change toward growth. We speak of oxygen going into the lungs. I ask, "What is prana?" Now with nuclear physics the atom has been broken into several categories - neutrons, protons, all of them are in our system. all of this nuclear energy is contained in the gross atmospheric air. How is that energy consumed into our system? That is what is known as pranayama. To a very great extent we can bring the teachings and modern science together.

Swami Radha: But then you must have read about these things! (laughs) Otherwise you couldn't explain that right now.

Mr. Iyengar: I never read, but I often think when I am teaching. I don't say I never read at all, but the opportunity is very rare. Take the case of

pranayama again. You know how a magnet attracts iron filings. Now, we all agree that if you have a good respiratory system your blood current is better, the chemical parts change more completely. But what explanations are given for this? I said, "I can show you the way, but somebody has to discover the scientific reasons why." Just as the magnet has the power to clasp the iron filings, in the relaxed pranayama breathing there is a tremendous receptivity in all the fibres of our lungs. In regular deep breathing there is tension, but in pranayama there is no tension. As there is no tension in the fibres, they are receptive. As they are receptive, the energy which was drawn goes in these avenues, into the tip end of the bronchials. This energy is like the iron filings. All your cells act as magnets which can absorb tremendous energy and hold it, like the magnet holds on to the iron filings. Regular deep breathing is not like this; the energy is discharged immediately. Medical science has still to discover what I am saying. Today they may not even think of that, but in a hundred years' time they may say, "Yes, this is the effect of pranayama." No one doing research presently can tell the difference between pranayama breathing and deep breathing. I say it is the nuclear energy, not oxygen alone, that is absorbed through pranayama. And that changes the chemical quality of the blood.

Let's take another example - bone cancer. Blood transfusions are given to the patients, yet still they do not know why the bone marrow is not manufacturing enough blood. Why do people get bone cancer? The supply of blood to the bones is not sufficient, which brings about the cancer. Suppose the muscles and the bones are woven together in all our movements in the asanas; then how can a bone cancer occur? The muscle is feeding the bone, and the bone is feeding the muscle, so there is an interchange taking place and bone cancer cannot come. The transfusions are not necessary.

Yet this type of study is not being done at all.

Instead the only thing being studied is: "What is the blood pressure when they are in sirasana? (headstand), when they come down from sirasana?" It is just a kindergarten test going on, even today. Who wants to know this? When the doctors study some of my students they find that after the head balance their blood pressure comes down. In other cases the blood pressure does not lower at all. So instead of studying to find out what is different in the way the students are performing the asana, why the results here are different than in other places, they say the asana doesn't lower the blood pressure. This is what science has to find out: what are the differences in the poses? Why are there changes here, and no changes there?

Some years ago I sent one of my students to help diabetics in one of the hospitals in Bombay. I told him, "Don't tell them anything, just make them do these poses." And now they are so improved they have no food restrictions at all except the amount of calories per day. They can even eat sugar if they want to, provided they don't exceed the correct number of calories. Science must find out why some people have been given many restrictions on how they should live, and others with the same condition have been given no restrictions but practise yoga instead, and its effect is the same.

I have told the doctors, "Let the cell do its job before it dies!" That is what the asanas teach us. But they don't; they can't even think!

Swami Radha: But then why is it that some of the yogis that I have met in the Himalayas did not get well in spite of their practice of asana?

Mr. Iyengar: The reason is they don't know how to achieve interpenetration. That interpenetration is not there.

Swami Radha: You think that is the clue.

Mr. Iyengar: That is the reason. For example, if a person is having liver trouble, and you ask them to

reach the liver in sirsana, they cannot, whereas I can work exactly on the liver alone in that pose. I have worked on my own in that way. How do you work the liver? Now, you know how to work the biceps, and how to work the triceps. But how do you work the liver? It should expand, it should contract, it should have lateral movements. We must learn to think organically.

Swami Radha: What is the influence of the mind on the liver?

Mr. Iyengar: What can we say? Unless the mind goes there, how can we influence it? So many people do sirsana; are they aware of their feet? Are they aware of the cells of their feet? Are they aware how the bottom of the foot is working? The intelligence has not penetrated at all in their head balances. They stand on their heads without feeling anything. If you ask me, I say they are to balance their foot on their sole. A great deal of attention is required.

Student: So in interpenetration, the cells of the muscles, bones and blood all exchange?

Mr. Iyengar: Exchange - that is known as the feedback system in modern terminology. This was known to us in olden days.

Swami Radha: When I have met people who do not have this conviction, I have been as honest as I can that the hatha yoga asanas can really take care of healing. What I have done is give people a purpose for living. I ask them, "If you want your life to be spared, why? If you keep on living in the same old way, there is no reason why your life should be spared. In order to live, you must give something back to life, and have a different respect for the gift of life. Do something selflessly." Sometimes I have said, "You tell me you have a garage full of tools. Take the kids off the street and show them how to do something!"

Mr. Iyengar: Yes, constructively using their life!



Swami Radha: Yes, and anyone who could accept that is still alive.

Mr. Iyengar: Yes, I know, because when the mind is healthy, gradually the cells also become healthy. Health approaches from the inside, too.

Swami Radha: So you are saying then that the diseased part can be approached and developed from opposite ends.

Mr. Iyengar: Yes, yes.

Swami Radha: All right, I understand. Are you developing more asanas?

Mr. Iyengar: I keep developing this art for the simple reason that there is a covering which comes inside if we neglect our sadhana. The practice of asanas is like that for me. If you take your lamp and cover it with a blanket, the light is contained in the area. If I don't do the asanas, my intelligence is limited; it cannot go into vastness. My light has to expand, and I cannot stop it, because if I don't practise then I have to live on yesterday's memory to explain to you. But if I am practising then I can give you what I am feeling today, not yesterday.

Swami Radha: When you said more practice.....

Mr. Iyengar: It is an interpenetration.

Swami Radha: Another level - no?

Mr. Iyengar: There is no other level. There is only one form, one level, you know. There is no physical level, there is no mental level, no emotional level; for me everything is one. I have not demarcated the levels. I say instead, "How much can I interpenetrate? Can my intelligence still interpenetrate more than it is interpenetrating now?" I use the word "interpenetrate", remember that. In my asanas, the body is moving to the external penetration, and my intelligence moves internally. I must test these two, to find out if there is an end to the interpenetration. so that is why I want to keep practising with greater intensity. Intensity should increase. Maturity has come, wisdom has come, so there is no doubt in me what I am doing. Without doubt, where does it lead me. No trials, no errors. This is one practice. The second practice is when people come to us with their problems and I ask myself, "In what way can I help them?" I have to recreate their defects in my body, in my mind, to know how to help them.

Swami Radha: But you do not identify with it?

Mr. Iyengar: Why should I? I have to identify myself in the beginning, otherwise how will I know what changes take place? How can I identify their weaknesses in me? (chuckles)

Swami Radha: When you identify with someone else, don't you lose your own identity?

Mr. Iyengar: Why should I? I am a witness. Identifying does not mean I become someone else.

Swami Radha: (laughs) All right, now I understand how you use the word.

Mr. Iyengar: I am a witness. I am identifying as a witness.

Swami Radha: (laughs) Good. Many people identify to the point where they cannot help. I knew that wasn't what you meant.

Mr. Iyengar: No. I have to identify for myself exactly what is happening. So I am a witness and an actor at the same time. I am observing and I am acting. (chuckles) So this is another type of practice. First I always experiment on myself before I tell others. I don't experiment on others. That would be very unfair. If I don't experiment on my own body, and I say to you, "Try this," it is only an inference, not an experience. I have to be sure that what I say works. If it works with me, I know it will have a fifty per cent effect on someone else, because my body is very sensitive.

Swami Sivananda: You two are so alike. Everybody who has met you told us that the two of you must meet, because you are so similar.

Swami Radha: Well, we did. (laughter)

Mr. Iyengar: So this is what I mean by practice. But there are no layers in my practice. I never create layers. The moment I create layers I am creating compartments.

Swami Radha: Yes I understood that from what you said before. But sometimes we need to use such terms for clear communication.

Mr. Iyengar: In one of my classes in Bombay there was a boy who had a bamboo spine (fusion of the vertebrae) and was completely curved. All the doctors had seen him and could do nothing. I have worked very hard with him, and now he has improved to such a degree that if you see pictures of him when he started you cannot recognize him. After two years of training with me he went to the doctor who had been treating him for twenty years, and the doctor said, "Where is your brother who had

that stoop?" He could not recognize his own patient! My student said, "I am the same man," and his doctor replied, "No, no! How can you become so straight now? This is impossible!"

In my classes I have students with all kinds of problems. Even cancerous students who have been operated on come to the classes, because they have absolutely no energy at all. How much energy I am giving them! My practice has helped with problems in my own case. If you see me working in the classes, I should have varicose veins all over my body.

Swami Radha: Why should you?

Mr. Iyengar: Because of the size of the people I teach in my classes. Some weigh 200, as much as 300 pounds, yet I just throw them like birds, you know, when teaching the asanas. (laughter) It is not a joke! So much strain to lift, so naturally there is a lot of pressure, yet because of my practice no varicose veins are visible.

Sometimes students grip my legs so hard you can see the blood coming out of their grip. In my life/I have had to face all these things. Sometimes if I am teaching and I am too strong, ladies will pinch me with their nails which are poisonous. I show them the marks and say, "Is this the way to treat me? I do it for your good!"

Swami Radha: Do they do this because of their fear and anxiety?

Mr. Iyengar: Yes. So every day I do head and neck balances without fail. This is why I have no broken capillaries, no varicose veins. Otherwise I would surely have them by now.

Swami Radha: Do you have many failures, people you can't help?

Mr. Iyengar: Oh, yes.

Student: Why are they failures? Are they beyond help, or won't they help themselves?

Mr. Iyengar: It is very difficult, of course, to say generally. People who have got some troubles will have a negative approach to life throughout. To make them positive takes a long time.

Swami Sivananda: It is the mind, not the body.

Mr. Iyengar: Both - fear complicates it a little bit more. So naturally, we can't treat just the mind, we treat the person. Before we treat the disease, we treat the person. And to treat the person is very difficult. It is not like psychology when they ask you what you have suffered and all. We have to hit the mind directly while teaching. We don't allow anyone to repeat the same complaints over and over again. I tell them that I have heard enough! So that is how we start! (laughs)

Student: Do you ever work specifically with medical problems?

Mr. Iyengar: Yes, on Tuesdays and Wednesdays we take only medical problems. Some genetic problems, children, adults, everybody!

Swami Radha: I am speechless.....

Mr. Iyengar: Yoga can do wonders, definitely! Provided you know each and every fibre of your body - in each pose, how each fibre is working. It is tremendous reflection in action. It does not mean just quietly staying in the pose. That is different. No, you have to dynamize inside; then only we know what we can give, and what we cannot give.

Hatha yoga is a completely revolutionary subject. If today this art, which is called hatha yoga, has been accepted, the credit goes to me, because it is I who have removed all the prejudice about this art. I studied very hard to remove the prejudice.

Swami Sivananda: What prejudice?

Mr. Iyengar: The prejudice that hatha yoga is only physical, that it has nothing to do with spiritual life. And today I think, without any advertisement - I never go anywhere, I never go to seminars, I never have seminars - but still I can say that I have tremendously sincere followers and that is enough for me. You will see that all my pupils become very sincere. They are integrated, sincere and whatever little they know, they will teach honestly. That is what I have given them. I am happy that I have created a very good purpose in my students. Whether they reach God or not is immaterial; the seed is very, very good, and so I am very happy. No pupil of mine will hide the art of teaching. That is how I have given. so there is no dissatisfaction for me.!(laughs)

Swami Radha: When people came back from their training here, I asked them, "How was he?" They replied, "He's tough!" I said, "Then he is a good teacher." One of my students said, "I don't know if I could have taken all this if I had not been to the Ashram." I understand, because my students tell me that I'm tough. Yoga is very demanding - I demand a lot of people, otherwise it's not worth it.

Mr. Iyengar: I say to people, "I never invite anyone. When you come, you have to just obey. There are only two ways to learn - you are to learn with me or you are to get out!" There is no middle path for me at all. That is the problem with me. I am merciless to the mind and merciful to the soul! (great laugh) That is why people say, "He loses his temper, he is very angry, he hits!" I say, "Yes, I do, to tame the mind."

Student: Mr. Iyengar, you said you are going to stop your classes in 1983?

Mr. Iyengar: Only the three week intensives, because people exploit these courses, saying, "I have been to the intensive, now I can teach." I have told them that from now on they can come to the local classes, the beginners classes, to prove that they are unfit to be even beginners. That is what I want to

teach them. That is the only way to teach humility, there is no other way. (chuckles)

The local people in the morning class today also said, "Gurudev is very tough!" I said, "Where am I tough? I am laughing and talking, where is the toughness? When I can do it, why can't you?" So I follow them I make them do yoga with me, so that I can ignite inspiration in them. I never sit on a platform, I never wear my dress. If I am there, I am there totally. So I create interest. I tell them, "No guru is coming next to you to do yoga." Twenty times I have shown each pose, to twenty people, standing next to them, so they can learn: "See my alignment, see your alignment. Where is your head, where is your hand? Where is my leg, where is my chest? How much have I lifted? So when I can do it, why can't you learn?" But I don't say, "Do it this way - it's all right, tomorrow you will get it." Tomorrow may never come, who knows? I may not be here tomorrow, so why should I wait for tomorrow? (laughs)

Swami Radha: Yes, you have strong principles, strong principles indeed! Do you make any discrimination in regard to realization between men and women? Indians have sometimes said to me, "You can't do this because you have to be born a man."

Mr. Iyengar: No, no!

Swami Radha: Why would they say that?

Mr. Iyengar: The idea comes from a later period. In the earlier period great women had far more wisdom than men, and they also were the teachers for many, many people, which we cannot forget. The present modern-day way of talking is quite different. They say that the man has the aggressive power, the will power and that women are poor in will power. But this is all imaginary, you know. For the honest person, it makes no difference in Self-realization whether you are a woman or a man.



Swami Radha spoke to a gathering at Radha House recently. She spoke about when she began her life as a spiritual teacher, 35 years ago and how good it was that she could be a role model to women on the spiritual path. However, at that time she didn't realise how difficult it would be to work with women! So many are caught into the illusion of being physically appealing to men. They spend money on breast implants, face lifts, make up, their hair - yet they don't want to investigate their own mind.

I remember in 1973 first doing the workshop of the mind with Swami Radha. I began an investigation that continues on to this day. Kundalini classes continue as I work through the book at a snail's pace, 19 years from the time of this workshop in 1973. I continue to be amazed at the power of the book (Kundalini Yoga for the West) and its relevance to me and my every day life.

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YOGA CALENDAR

The word - perspective - brought up a lot. I remember trying to master perspective in art classes. The artist shows one point of view. So it is in my life. my perspective depends on where I am.. If I can step back from a situation I can get a bigger picture, a broader perspective or point of view. However, it's still mine. I can see more, but not everything. It's still relative to me and my vantage point. The "higher" I go the better I can "see".

Memory, of course, is also only mine. It can't be more or less than my own experience filtered through my emotions and diffused by time and other similar memories.

All this reminds me that I can't know what it's like to be someone else. I don't have their perspective, their memories. So I can listen, I can reflect, I can ask questions to clarify. But how can I judge?

Thank you to Swami Radha for your teachings.

JUNE:

5-7: Weekend Yoga Retreat led by Shirley Daventry French at the Saltspring Centre on Saltspring Island.

6-7: Rose Ceremony at Radha House.

JULY:

2-5: Canadian Iyengar Yoga Teachers meeting on the Sunshine Coast. Contact Gioia Irwin 604-734-7696.

6-11: Iyengar Yoga Intensive at the Y with Liz McLeod and Shirley Daventry French, Guest Teacher: Derek French (see ad this issue).

24-Aug 2: Teacher training and a weekend workshop with Ramanand Patel at the Yoga Centre in Winnipeg. Call 204-783-8040 for details.

SEPTEMBER:

11-14: Workshop with Ramanand Patel at the Y.

19: Teachers meeting at the Y

25: Yoga Centre Gathering at the Y.

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The Society Newsletter is published regularly, providing current information on events concerning yoga in Victoria and area and at the Yasodhara Ashram. Published by the Victoria Yoga Centre Society.

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DEADLINE FOR JULY-AUGUST ISSUE: JUNE 25th, 1992.

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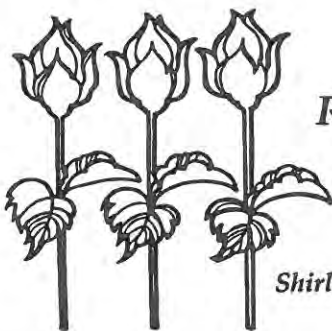
Newsletter



LIZ MCLEOD REMEMBERED

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July/August, 1992



Reflections

by
Shirley Daventry French

LIZ McLEOD REMEMBERED

"Hi Shirl, what's new?" Several times a month I would answer my phone to hear these words on the other end of the line. I do not usually respond to that abbreviation of my name, but in the case of Liz McLeod I made a rare exception. The warmth, friendliness and informality of her greeting made it difficult to object. I would ask myself: is it really that important? No! What is important and valuable is the friendship and working relationship, Liz and I developed over the years. I came to regard her greeting with affection in the same way that it was offered, and I shall miss it. After a short but devastating illness, Liz McLeod died in hospital in Edmonton on Monday, June 15th 1992.

Her death has sent shock waves reverberating throughout the Canadian Iyengar Yoga community, and around the world where her fellow yoga students came to know and respect her devotion to her teacher, B.K.S. Iyengar, her commitment to his work and her expertise as a teacher of his method of yoga.

I first met Liz in Pune in 1979 when we were both students in an intensive course with Mr. Iyengar. We became friends and although she lived in Edmonton which is 1,200 kms. from my home in Victoria, our common interest in Mr. Iyengar's work drew us together often and in many different places. We worked side by side as students in workshops, visited each other's communities to teach, shared rooms at conferences, travelled to

India for further study, and when we stayed at home kept in touch by telephone. It was rare to receive a written communication from Liz, and when you did - say at Christmas - it was difficult to read her writing which, like Liz herself, was unique.

When I learned of the terminal nature of her illness, I flew to Edmonton to offer what comfort I could, to say goodbye and wish her well on the next phase of her spiritual journey. Friends and family gathered from east and west, and as we kept our vigil we talked of our connection with Liz.

Her local yoga students realising the loss they were about to sustain, were reflecting on what a great teacher Liz was and what a void there would be on her death. As I listened and talked with them, I felt encouraged. It says a lot for Liz that she imbued in her students the sense of responsibility to carry on the work along with confidence and independence to find their own way in their own time.

Liz had three sisters and one brother, who had come from New Brunswick and Ontario to be with her. In the way of so many families in Canada, spread out across this vast land, it was the first time the five of them had been together for many years. They knew Liz as Betty, and her brother spoke to me one day of how she always wanted to be different and how her decision to put that childhood name behind her and call herself Liz was part of the fulfilment of that desire. He also told me how as a schoolgirl she had beautiful writing which was clear, readable but, in her opinion, ordinary. Apparently she took great pains to change it into something out of the ordinary, added some swirls and twirls and produced a flowing script which he too found hard to read.

Liz need not have worried. She was different. Everyone recognised this, and ordinary was the last word anyone would use to describe her. As a yoga student and teacher, even if you tried, you couldn't put her into a box. Just as it seemed I had some things figured out about her, she would behave in a completely unforeseen way and teach me a lesson

about stereotypes. In some areas she was very conservative. We had very different opinions on politics, sociology and certain aspects of philosophy and psychology, and we observed a tacit agreement not to discuss these matters. But where the work of yoga and the teachings of B.K.S. Iyengar were concerned, we were of one mind - to learn as much as possible in as direct a manner as possible, and it was this desire which took Liz to India so many times even though she was not a great fan of the country itself and hated Indian food. Nevertheless, she made this journey alone and in the company of friends like myself again and again so that she could work with her teacher and learn.



Anne Gregory, President of the Vancouver Iyengar group at that time, who had travelled to Edmonton as their representative. While taking good care of Mr. Iyengar, Liz allowed as many others as possible to have contact with him. This was her nature: generous and spontaneous.

I had the greatest respect for her dedication as a student, and also for her skill as a teacher. Sometimes this was under-rated. At the first North American Iyengar Yoga convention in San Francisco in 1984, Liz was one of five Canadians teaching there, the others being Maureen and Bruce Carruthers, Derek French and myself. We were not well known in the States and there was no great rush to get into our classes. One day I was standing outside a room where a class had just finished. A tall, athletic, young Californian who I had met at Feathered Pipe Ranch, came out with a surprised look on his face. "Boy, that woman was great!" I didn't know who was teaching so I asked him. He said: "An older woman from Canada", and then Liz emerged.

This past winter Liz and I returned to India where we had the good fortune to attend an intensive taught by Mr. Iyengar. I had been prepared to wait another year and attend the Canadian intensive this coming October, but Liz urged me to go sooner. Did she know she was ill and didn't have long to live? Perhaps! When it became obvious to me that for personal reasons the fall of 1991 was an auspicious time for me to return to Pune, I told Liz, we contacted the Institute and the rest is history.

That same year, after the convention, Mr. Iyengar came to Canada for the first time. After his visit to Victoria he was going to Edmonton, and as President of the Yoga Centre it was my pleasant duty to escort him on that leg of his journey. As soon as she knew I was coming Liz invited me to stay with her. I was a little hesitant at first, because I knew Mr. Iyengar would be staying with her and I didn't want to intrude or to make more work. Liz insisted and, knowing she was sincere, I gratefully accepted her offer of hospitality and had the pleasure to spend a little extra time in Mr. Iyengar's presence. Liz also opened her home to

It was a wonderful time which I will treasure. If Liz was already feeling the effects of her illness, it was hard to detect. She was tired after class and didn't want to walk anywhere, but the classes were hard and it was not surprising to be tired. When we did walk, she sometimes got irritated at me for walking so fast (as is my wont), but she had had a calf injury at one time and said this was the problem. This is all speculation. What is clear is that she participated in difficult and demanding three-hour classes daily for three weeks, working to her maximum and learning all she could.

After a visit to her son in Saudi Arabia, Liz returned to Edmonton where she taught up until a few weeks before her death. Her husband told me she kept up her practice until she finally succumbed to the pain and weakening effect of the cancer which was devouring her body and was admitted to hospital where she died about two weeks later. In leaving this life, Liz exhibited the same flair with which she lived it to the fullest.



"Shirl" & Liz

I will treasure many memories of Liz and our shared journey on the yogic path. There is one delightful one from this last visit to India. It is the custom among many of Gururji's Indian students to prostrate and touch his feet whenever he passes them as a mark of respect and devotion. A few Western students have also adopted this tradition and others will do it from time to time, on special occasions. Generally, however, students from the West are more likely to bring the palms of their hands together and incline their head. Of course, there are those who are headstrong and make no such gesture. Mr. Iyengar does not try to force eastern customs on westerners and we are free to pay our respects in whatever way is meaningful to us.

One day, during the course on observing someone from the West prostrate themselves, Liz said to me "I would never do that!" She knew that although it is not my general way of greeting Gururji, I do it on certain occasions, spontaneously, when it feels right. One of those occasions was the last day of the intensive.

On looking back I can see that the intensives have a certain rhythm. The first week Mr. Iyengar is fierce and cross as he confronts our ego and resistance. About the middle of the second week, just as we are being worn down by the hard work and the effort of coping with life in India, there is a change. The energy which was previously used in resistance is freed up to learn and change, and while the work never becomes easy there is a difference. We are more open and ready to learn, and as a consequence are given so much more. By the end of the third week we have begun to realise how fortunate we are to be there and what a great gift it is to receive the teachings directly from a Master of Yoga. This was the feeling throughout the class on that last day. As it ended we all stood there not wanting to move, not wanting it to end. Then one person and another and another prostrated themselves at Mr. Iyengar's feet in gratitude. I was amused and delighted to observe that one of them was Liz. Later as we talked animatedly about our good fortune, she said to me, "I had no idea I would ever do that!" More than anything Liz hated hypocrisy and pretense. She would never do anything just for show. When she finally prostrated herself at the feet of her teacher the gesture came naturally from the heart. Although we did not know it at the time, this was her final leavetaking of Mr. Iyengar. She did it with grace; that was her style.

I am grateful to have been her friend, her colleague and companion on the yogic path. I will miss her, and will always remember her with love. May she rest in peace and in the light.

THE VICTORIA YOGA CENTRE
and THE VICTORIA YM-YWCA
are pleased to announce



YOGA
with
RAMANAND PATEL



A Weekend Workshop
September 11 to 13, 1992
to be held at the Victoria "Y"
880 Courtney Street, Victoria, BC, V8W 1C4

Friday, September 11	6:00 to 8:00 pm
Saturday, September 12	10:00 am to 1:00 pm & 3:00 to 5:00 pm
Sunday, September 13	10:00 am to 1:00 pm

FEES:	\$125.00	Yoga Centre and "Y" Members
	\$135.00	Non-Members

This workshop is for students of all levels with experience of Iyengar Yoga.

RAMANAND PATEL is a creative and innovative teacher who began his study of yoga at an early age under the tutelage of his father. In 1968 he became a student of the Yoga Master B.K.S. Iyengar. His father and Mr. Iyengar have had the greatest influence on his life. Ramanand's workshops are challenging, enlightening and fun, and his annual visit has become a Victoria tradition, eagerly anticipated by those who have worked with him before. If you have not yet experienced the work of this outstanding teacher, take the opportunity this year.

REGISTER EARLY AT THE "Y" MAIN DESK - registration is limited. Cheques should be made payable to Victoria YM-YWCA. Refunds will be made only if space can be filled from a waiting list, less a \$15.00 service charge.

Enquiries: Shirley Daventry French 478-3775, Linda Benn 598-8277 or the "Y" 386-7511.

A CONVERSATION WITH RAMANAND PATEL

Reprinted with permission from the November, 1991, issue of Midwest News, the newsletter of the B.K.S. Iyengar Yoga Association of the Midwest Bioregions, U.S.A.

Toni Fuhrman: How did you come to yoga, or how did yoga come to you?

Ramanand Patel: I was born in Africa, in Dar-es-Salaam, and my parents took me to India when I was very young, less than six months old. The hot climate in India, the dusty atmosphere, and the general lack of sanitary conditions, did not suit me, and I became very ill.

I went back to Africa after the war, and my health was still very bad. I was a very sickly child and considered a weakling. It was generally argued that I was sickly because I was so sensitive. The fact was, I was sensitive because my health was bad.

When I was about 13, my father took me to India to visit my grandfather, who was getting old. It was in that village, where my health was injured so badly when I was a child, that my father first taught me some yoga. We also read the Bhagavad Gita at that time, I could read the Sanskrit even though I didn't understand the language, so I could help my father to memorize Gita.

When I came back to Africa after three months, I continued yoga, and that was the first year I spent in school when I didn't miss a single day. It was at this time that I became a "normal" child in terms of my health. I did not practice all the time, and I'm glad I didn't because there were no refinements or proper alignment instructions at that time.

Years later, when I was living in America and my father was 70 years old, he had a very bad back problem. He came to live with me in San Jose and I

cured his back. So when he met Mr. Iyengar, he said, "This was my student who became your student, cured my back, and became my teacher."

Guruji laughed and said, "Every student is a teacher, and every teacher is a student. When you think you are a student, you are actually teaching, and when you think you are teaching, you are actually studying."

Toni: How did you come to teach yoga?

Ramanand: I was working as a civil engineer in Lancashire, England, when I met the local director of adult education, quite by chance. I asked him if there were any yoga classes and he said, "No, would you teach them?"

I had taken yoga from many friends in England and had taught on occasion when I was taking classes with Alan Oakman in Bath. I ended up teaching three classes a week in Lancashire. My next move was to Leicestershire, where they had a very good, very strong yoga community.

The man who ran the program was a South African, "Chippy" Carpenter. He told me he wanted to put yoga on a really sound basis, and he asked me to go to Brighton, England, for a teacher training session with Helena Thomas. I wasn't particularly interested, but when he offered to pay for a weekend vacation in Brighton, I agreed to go.

Helena Thomas was the best Iyengar yoga teacher I ever met. After the first class she told me, "You are just two arms and two legs. There's not much else in between." I had a little flexibility through my yoga, but I had no awareness, and I didn't have much strength.

Toni: How did you find coming to Iyengar yoga after your other experience with yoga?

Ramanand: I had no problem whatsoever. After my first class with Helena Thomas, I was impressed by what she was able to do and what she got me to do, and the detail that I had never heard before. It used to be, "Now gently do what you can," and that was the end of the instruction. After the week-end workshop with Helena Thomas, I said to her, "I can't go back and teach," and she said, "When you knew nothing, you wanted to teach, and now that you know something, you have to make amends for the mistakes you made." So I went back to my classes and I said, "We know nothing. Let's start over again." I even went back to my friends in Lancashire and showed them this new method.

Toni: When did you meet Mr. Iyengar?

Ramanand: I met Mr. Iyengar in 1968, in Brighton. This was about a month after I started training with Helena Thomas. The very first class I had with him I was immensely impressed because I had an arm that had been paralyzed many years ago, and I was not very strong. Mr. Iyengar could not only see that something was wrong with that arm but he showed me how to work with it, so that I felt that he had x-ray eyes.

At the end of the class, he put me in shoulder stand and did something else to my arm. When I got out of that position, he asked me how my arm felt. I said, "Good," and he said, "No, not good. Tell me something more specific about your arm."

I did not have words, so he said, "It feels full. The joint does not feel empty. It feels full." This impressed me. Not only could he work with my arm but he could also describe the feeling. That was precisely what I felt. I had never felt that full in the joint. The joint always felt like the arm did not quite belong in there.

After the class, I told Mr. Iyengar, "I've always been looking for a good teacher, and now I've got the world's best teacher." So I was sold from the first day I met him, and I never gave up Iyengar yoga after that.

Toni: Has your profession as a civil engineer influenced your practice and teaching of yoga?

Ramanand: I love the science of engineering. It immensely fascinates me, and it has helped me to understand yoga and the postures. When I left Leicestershire to come to the U.S., there was a grand old lady who was a grandmother of the yoga group, and she said to me, "I have never understood how you have reconciled your scientific training with this yoga," and I said, "Mother, if yoga did not make scientific sense to me, I would have dropped it long ago."

Toni: So you can come to yoga from any discipline and it can help you to understand yoga, and yoga can help you understand any discipline?

Ramanand: Absolutely. Like Gururji says, yoga is a fundamental science, a fundamental art. It will enhance anything that you are doing. And the reverse is true; anything that you are involved in will make your yoga better if you apply it properly. It's a matter of creating from the present condition, improving, using great sensitivity and refinement, and working very hard to do it.



Toni: At this point in your teaching, how do you feel about teaching? What is your general philosophy? Your general approach?

Ramanand: If I have an approach, it is that I don't feel I need to plan my classes. My classes evolve naturally, by asking questions in the class, by looking at what people need, by looking at the way they are.

Toni: Does that go back to when you started teaching?

Ramanand: No. Initially, I planned my classes. I would sit down and do my homework. That kind of memorizing was good as an early training. But slowly, as my confidence, my abilities, and my knowledge grew, I began to feel that much more was to be learned by looking at what was in front of me than by going through the mechanical motions of the postures.

Toni: How does a teacher know when he or she has arrived at that place?

Ramanand: It is an internal thing. Like anything else, you will first try with pupils who know you very well, people you are comfortable with, and whose capacities you are more familiar with. You would not do it with a group of beginners. Before you begin to do that with the fresh, new students will be many years. There, you would still systematically plan your class and go through some basic things. But in the beginning you can try on the people you are more familiar with.

Toni: Does that approach apply to your own practice?

Ramanand: Very much so.

Toni: How do you practice?

Ramanand: When I am travelling around, my practice is not good. I get some basic things done that are the absolute minimum.

I used to do a lot of hard practice in the middle of the night, but I don't do it these days, largely because of a "bug" I picked up in Bali last year. I've just about gotten over that. I lost some of my flexibility and quite a lot of my strength that I'm just beginning to pick up on.

I was doing 108 sun salutes and 108 back bends every day, in addition to head balance, shoulder stand. Now, if I do 20 of those, I feel that I am working very hard. So it is going to take a little time to get back to that stage. I can never go without practice, but I can go with less practice.

Toni: For you, what is less practice?





Ramanand: An hour is less practice. An hour is minimum practice.

Toni: What is the difference between your morning and evening practice?

Ramanand: In the morning, I want to wake up more. I do many more backbends in the morning. In the evening I do more forward bends.

Toni: When you practice, do you get an idea that this is the approach I'm going to take today, or this week, or this month?

Ramanand: That used to be the case, while stretching out or doing some Uttanasana, or lying back in Virasana during the first five minutes or so. That doesn't happen any longer. I may decide I'm going to do standing poses, and by the time I'm halfway through I do other things. I don't mix forward bends and backbends, but apart from that I mix almost everything.

Toni: How does your Pranayama tie in with your practice?

Ramanand: It is a totally separate practice, but it has a great influence on my practice, on my sensitivity, on the way I look at the asanas. That part of my practice never falls off. Some time during the day I will catch a minimum of ten minutes, and I prefer to spend as much as 45 minutes on it. I don't remember a single day when that has completely fallen off.

Toni: It seems at some point in one's practice, pranayama comes to the forefront. I haven't experienced that yet, and I'm wondering what happens in your asana practice, and what happens in your pranayama practice to bring that about?

Ramanand: I don't know that I can answer that. I know that it has happened to me, but you might as well ask me, when did you feel like an adult? I know definitely when I did not feel like an adult. I still sometimes do. I know definitely when I did not feel childish, although I have always felt childlike. But I don't know that I can say, this is the point at which it happened. You grow into pranayama slowly. That is why, in the beginning, you just do normal lying-down breath awareness kinds of things.

I went to at least three intensives in India before I began to say, I need a regular pranayama practice. The third time I went, I remember going into a public class with Geeta and I asked her, "Can I come and take the pranayama class?" and she said, "Have you been practicing, or have you forgotten?" and I lied and said, "I have been practicing." She laughed and said, "We know better." I still went to the class, and after that trip I didn't drop the practice.

Toni: You've said that you thought the public classes in India were more important than the intensives. Would you talk about that?

Ramanand: I've seen the frustration Gurji expresses again and again that people don't have certain basic continuity in teaching - what he calls "creating links." They tend to rattle off too many instructions, go like what he calls "express trains."

All these things happen because of two reasons: most people here have learned his method by going to intensives in India, and those who have come back and taught here have taught from that kind of knowledge. So we tend to teach workshops like intensives. Even the senior students who don't teach their classes like a workshop, when they teach a workshop, where most knowledge is disseminated, they teach like the express train.

My intention in my more recent workshops has been to teach some teacher-training classes, some intensive workshop classes, but to teach regular classes also. But I don't feel I have succeeded at that. My habit takes over. As soon as I see people I am not familiar with, or see only on occasion, I tend to drop back into the mode of the workshop rather than teach a regular class. If the idea is to show how to teach normal classes, I have not been successful in doing that.

Toni: How has Mr. Iyengar influenced you?

Ramanand: The thing about Mr. Iyengar that has touched me most is that, as far as his integrity is concerned with regard to his practice, it is untouchable. It is absolutely the best.

I remember his own description of it. He said, "People can say, Iyengar slaps, Iyengar hits, but there are two things people can never say about me. One is they cannot point a finger at my moral character, and second, they cannot touch my yoga."

I do think he has flaws, and like the flaws of all great men, his flaws affect us much more strongly. If an ordinary person makes a mistake, we can overcome that more readily. If a great man makes a mistake, it is usually perceived as a very great mistake.

His impatience and inability to comprehend, in spite of his sympathy, what problems he has created through his need for certification, have created problems. He likes harmony among his students, and

yet this nonsense of certification has created much more disharmony.

Toni: How do you feel about certification?

Ramanand: I think it's useless. I have always maintained that there is only one reason for certification and that is to please him. As soon as he expressed that it was not for his pleasure, I wanted nothing to do with it. I will never have anything to do with it. If you need a certificate, write a letter to him. Get his personal letter. That's good enough. His personal letter is much more effective than a certificate you can hang up on the wall. I think there is a very big problem in people certifying in his name.

Toni: So how do we carry on the Iyengar tradition?

Ramanand: By practicing.

Toni: How do we normalize our practice without some kind of standard?

Ramanand: There isn't any standard. Everything can be compromised and changed. The strength of the Iyengar system lies in the ability to create. He does not want the beginning student of Iyengar to be too eager to create and add to the system. But when there is maturity, he does not object to creativity at all.

He told me, "I don't mind your being creative but I don't want the junior students to do it." Creativity has to be done with a certain inner understanding. It must come out of my experience of the postures. When I am practicing, I feel certain things, and I impart to the students, "This is what I feel."

Toni: I understand what you're saying but I don't understand how, in the long run, we can maintain that connection with Iyengar yoga without some sort of a standard process.

Ramanand: Even with my experience and my background, I cannot say what is Iyengar yoga. But when I see something that is totally off the mark, I know that this has nothing to do with Iyengar yoga.

Toni: Are you concerned about this?

Ramanand: I am aware of this. I see it in India. I see it right under Mr. Iyengar's nose. I see when he's absent from the room what goes on, and I see as soon as he walks into the room how the class changes. Right under his nose.

I think that's human nature. You cannot control it. Any attempt to control it will make you unhappy. You have to say to people, "Be as honest as you can." What else can you ask of people?

It is in the nature of this great man, Gururji, to say, "I am going to do my level best to improve the standard here," and his enthusiasm is like a flower opening. But once he's done, he's done. I don't see him grumbling afterwards. That is an ability I admire immensely in him.

He told me there's an old Indian proverb, you use four or five different things to change a person's behaviour. But when none of these things work, at some point you say, "I did my best," and you become - indifferent.

Toni: You and Mr. Iyengar both have concerns about teaching but.....

Ramanand: His name is on the line.

Toni: If it were Patel-style yoga....

Ramanand: If it were Patel-style yoga I would have much more concern. Heaven forbid. But I have no ambition in that direction whatsoever. I do not want people to look up to me and say, "Let's do it because he's doing it." In fact, I tell people, "Do it because you want to do it. Don't ever do anything because I want you to do it."

Toni: And yet, you have a perspective that very few senior Iyengar teachers have because you are Indian, and you see Iyengar-style yoga being taught and practiced all over the world.

Ramanand: That can be used equally against me also. I have heard people say that I am Indian and I do not understand the West. But when you teach yoga, you are dealing with human beings. And I have to accept that there are some ways in which I will never understand the so-called Western culture. Hence, while I may teach the postures and I may teach my approach to the philosophy, my dearest friends have told me they listen out of respect - because Americans are very polite - but they don't necessarily agree with me.

They have a lot of respect for Eastern art, but they want to teach it by constantly modifying it, so that people will understand it more easily, so they don't resent it. So the teachers in this country, who have studied the Western philosophical approaches, may present yoga with a Western philosophical background.

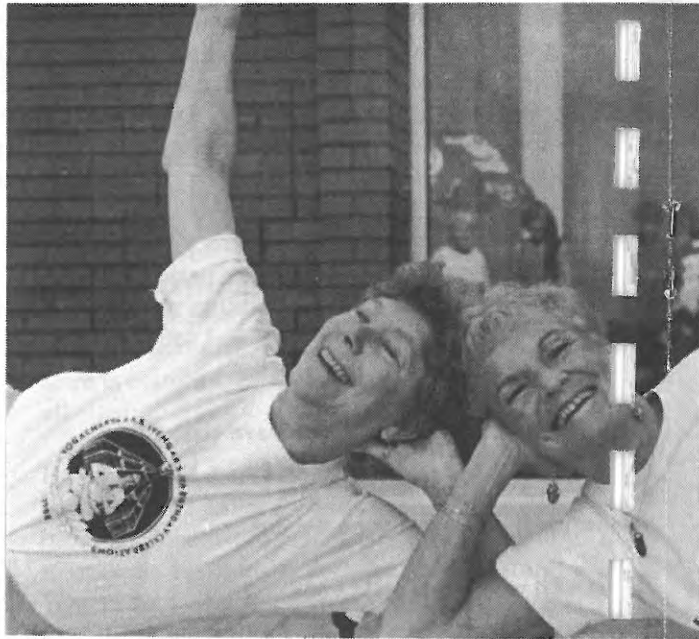
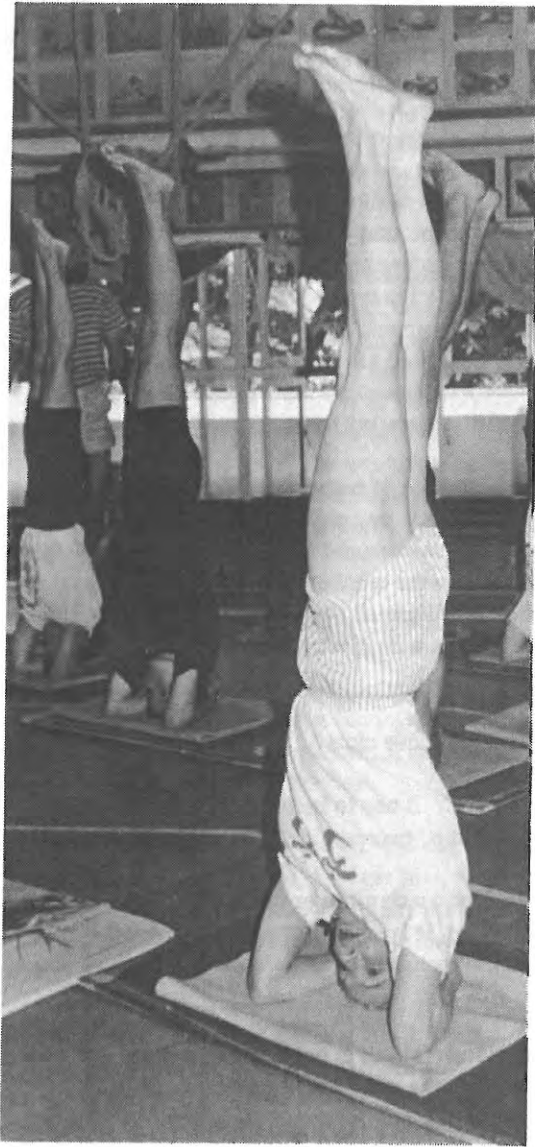
Toni: And that's okay?

Ramanand: It has to be okay. There's nothing un-okay about it, except - it's not Indian.

Toni: You teach all over the world. From your perspective, is Iyengar yoga coming together as a single philosophy?

Ramanand: No, it is not coming together. As time passes, there is more and more diversification. When we first started the Light on Yoga Association in California, Gururji's original intent was that he was not interested in large numbers. He was much more interested in quality. Mary Palmer was influential in this association also and she would back me up on this.

Continued on page 14



Each person with
 memories which
 memories which
 memories which

We'll miss you,



who met Liz has their own memories of her;
 who will keep the spirit of Liz alive;
 who will enrich our lives;
 who will help the light of our lives to shine;
 Liz, but we'll remember you.

But inevitably the association grew. It is a very attractive form of yoga. It helps people with very down to earth problems. My knee hurts. My hip hurts. My ankle hurts. As an Iyengar yoga student, I can address these problems. Other methods don't offer you that kind of benefit. With the result that the numbers grew very, very quickly. With the numbers came the so-called power. With the power came the need to control. And then, it's a downhill story.

But once the floodgates are open, you cannot close them. You cannot turn history back and say, let's have only a few people. There is only one man on the planet who can do that and he is unwilling to do it. I have talked to him in the presence of all the senior teachers in San Diego and said, "Withdraw all the certificates and start over again." He was not willing to do that.

And in some ways, I have to say, he's right, and even if he's not, it's his show. If he feels he would do damage to his name by withdrawing certificates, he's not going to do it, and if I don't like his judgement, the maximum I can do is say goodbye. And in some ways, I have said goodbye, directly to him. I will always be his pupil, and I know I'm loved and I know I'm welcome. But other than that, I don't want anything to do with these politics. Because it's not a controllable thing. The lines of communication are not clear.

Toni: So you think, in a certain sense, that the Iyengar yoga community in this country is out of control?

Ramanand: Yes. This community, like all other yoga communities in the world, including Japan and England, is out of control. In every community there is basically the same problem that I described earlier. There is need for power.

When you look at the power you are playing with, it is pitifully small, but there is that need. And I'm not suggesting that people are only after power. Along with other things, the need for power is a very definite ingredient that I think is inevitable. So that there are people who have gotten fed up and, at some point, they opt out. If you ask these people, however, they will say, "Yes, Iyengar has been the biggest influence on my yoga."

Toni: Will Iyengar yoga survive?

Ramanand: What I feel is that Iyengar yoga will not survive by organization. It will survive by individual practice. If my practice is good, that will be the biggest influence on other people. If my practice is good, if your practice is good, Iyengar-style yoga will survive.



Book Review

PARADOX AND HEALING

by Dr. Michael Greenwood and

Peter Nunn

Reviewed by Derek French

In the May issue of this newsletter, our President, Jim Rischmiller related that he had consulted me about a persistent 'flu' like illness, and that instead of prescribing pills I had advised him to go home, rest and read a book. The book was *Paradox and Healing*, recently published by two Victoria doctors. It is a book that I would like to commend to the Yoga community.

Subtitled *Medicine, Mythology and Transformation*, this book points the way to the future of medicine, and in the process illuminates for all pilgrims the path to the inner healing and unity that is the aim of yoga. Written in clear, elegant prose, it draws upon fairy stories, folk tales and mythology from around the world to illustrate that "When the self is at war with the self, the struggle is illness. The power struggle is there prior to the manifestation of symptoms, and *will still be there* even if the manifestation is somehow masked or removed. It is obvious, then, that any long-term solution to illness must deal with this struggle." (P.235)

It will come as no surprise to the readers of this newsletter that this is not the general view of modern medicine which has struggled for centuries to become scientific, rational, objective, and in the process has become embedded in its own mythology: with illness as the villain invading from outside, doctor as the hero with the magic bullet coming to the rescue in and on the battleground of the patient. Unfortunately, in this process, the battle site can sometimes look rather like the World War II village that had to be destroyed to be liberated.

The authors have the audacity to suggest that the most important element in this triad is the ground, i.e. the patient, who ultimately is responsible for his own illness and has the power for his own healing. This is not to add guilt to the burden of pain. "Laying blame is not the intent of such a belief. Instead, it suggests a restoration of the sense of personal power which an accident, if seen as a 'victimizing' necessarily removes. This sense of personal responsibility, in the sense of power, not blame, is the fuel of the transformational journey." (P.182)

This is not to deny that medicine has had some spectacular successes in the realm of acute illness and trauma, with what the authors describe in their Introduction as "the weight of scientific authority, vast pharmacies of drugs, armies of specialists and researchers, and increasingly sophisticated equipment and techniques". They go on to say: "What we have learned through the years, however, is that chronic pain or illness are catch-22 situations. Faced with the uncomfortable truth that there seemed to be no adequate explanation or treatment for their pain, we watched many patients confront the fact that medicine cannot cure many illnesses which are not 'rational', because scientific medicine can only deal with the rational." (P.1)

Modern medicine, improved nutrition, housing and sanitation have controlled many plagues like childhood illnesses, cholera, smallpox and tuberculosis. Unfortunately, new plagues of chronic pain and disability, chronic fatigue syndromes and chronic stress illnesses, seem to have arisen. In British Columbia, where the inhabitants are better fed, better housed and living longer than at any previous time in history, visits to the doctor increased by 5% last year. Furthermore, in many of these patients, examinations, blood tests, C.A.T. scans, referral to specialists, fail to reveal any signs of disease. What is going on?

The authors suggest that "What the chronically ill really face, we discovered, is paradox." (P.1)

"All of us sooner or later face a situation which defies a rational solution, a totally unsolvable problem which leaves us no option but to come to terms with the fact we *just don't know*. If we are always sick or in pain, we are sooner or later challenged to accept the unacceptable - to reconcile ourselves with the great mystery of our existence. No wonder many of us, rather than grapple seriously with the problem, look for an easy way out!

The simplest way to avoid paradox is to deny its existence by denying half of its self-contradictory proposition. We may be chronically ill, but someone somewhere must have a cure. Denial is the easiest and most attractive response. It allows us to continue to think that we have rational control of our lives, and avoid the real issue posed by the contradiction we face - the unpleasant thought that there may be nobody who can cure us, and no way to get rid of our illness, that it is in fact a real part of us, however unlikeable.

At the root of our modern Western society and of our medicine, unfortunately, is exactly this sort of collective denial. But such denial carries severe penalties. Denying half of reality results in the sacrifice of half of who we are. Further, since the rejected half is hidden by a wall of denial, few of us ever realize our loss, and so condemn ourselves to living limited lives, with no awareness of our larger potential. We are, of course, only fooling ourselves. Such limited solutions cannot last. Sooner or later, life corrects the imbalance." (P.2)

The limits of the modern paradigm of medicine and a suggestion for ways towards unity and healing were anticipated many years ago by the young German romantic and mystic poet, Novalis, who wrote in 1800 :

"When pure statistics and measured features
Are no more keys to living creatures,
When dancing and bursting into song
Proves our most learned scholars wrong,
When all the world is fresh and new
And once more Nature to herself is true,
When light and darkness merge their love,
Into a higher unity above
When fairy tales and legends old
Tell the true history of the world
Then, but a single, secret phrase
Shall put to flight our mixed up ways."

These thoughts are echoed by D.H. Lawrence writing in *More Pansies* :

"I am not a mechanism, an assembly of various sections.
And it is not because the mechanism is working wrongly, that I am ill.
I am ill because of wounds to the soul, to the deep emotional self,
and the wounds to the soul take a long, long time,
only time can help
and patience, and a certain difficult repentance
long, difficult repentance, realisation of life's mistake, and the freeing oneself
from the endless repetition of the mistake
which mankind at large has chosen to sanctify."

Will the paradigm shift soon, to an understanding that illness arises because of "wounds to the soul", and that healing occurs when the paradox is transcended and "light and darkness merge their role"? Perhaps, as Lawrence said, "it can take a long, long time".

Max Planck, the pioneering quantum physicist, once observed that "A new scientific truth does not triumph by convincing its opponents and making them see the truth; but rather because its opponents eventually die and a new generation grows up that is familiar with it." Rather like our conversion to the metric system!

Continued on page 18

MICHAEL GREENWOOD • PETER NUNN

"When You Stop Fighting to Get Better – Real Health Begins"

If you suffer from chronic pain or other illness, then this book is for you. *Paradox & Healing* provides fascinating and sometimes startling new insights into the problem of illness.



Beautifully illustrated by Miles Lowry, *Paradox & Healing* weaves science and mythology together in

a way that enhances conventional medical thinking.

Using myths in their traditional role as teaching tools, *Paradox & Healing* is a lucid and heartfelt advocacy by two physicians of

the power of transformation and holistic thinking to heal our minds, bodies and spirits.

"Paradox & Healing takes us beyond our usual concepts of right and wrong, good and evil, joy and suffering, pain and pleasure, love and hate and shows us that the true healing must involve a joyful reconciliation with the poles of opposites that make life a meaningful experience."

Deepak Chopra, M.D.,
Quantum Healing, and Unconditional Life.

Paradox & Healing is available at bookstores for \$20.28 (includes GST)

Or mail \$24.03 (includes postage & GST) to:
Meridian Holistic Health Centre, 5575 West Saanich Road,
Victoria, British Columbia, Canada, V8X 4M6, Tel: (604) 727-3451



Nevertheless, all new ways require prophets, and this wise and intelligent book fulfils that function. I would like to put aside the old saying and honour Dr. Michael Greenwood and Dr. Peter Nunn in this their own land, for their important contribution.

Derek French is a physician in general practice in Victoria and a longtime student of yoga.

LIGHTEN UP

by Caroline Meggison

There are times when I feel I am in a strange time warp, like I'm re-living what I thought had already past and gone. I see hippies who look the same as when I was 20, youth admiring the music of my high school years and abortion once again being hotly debated in the headlines. As a midwife I see the same legal and emotional battles that involved me 10 years ago and as a yoga student, the same debate about Iyengar versus hatha yoga. The difference now is that I've grown and changed even if the same old issues keep coming up. I am still a midwife but a more mature one compared to 10 years ago and I remain a yoga student, only one with a little more flexibility and a lot more understanding.

I do confess a few years ago I called Iyengar Yoga "jock yoga", a phrase I stole from a friend of mine and one I used to protect me from taking all this physical precision in the asanas too seriously. I followed the instructions of teachers as I was told, feeling all the while a little perplexed by their obsessiveness to detail. I did it the same way I memorised my times tables as a kid; one day this will be useful but it is boring now. But just like a kid, I got older, started exploring other areas of my life and finally felt a thread that has tied yoga to my whole life.

Edgar Cayce, the 'sleeping prophet' from earlier this century had a phrase which was repeated in many of his psychic readings: Spirit is the life, Mind is the builder and Physical is the result. In this particular formula, the physical expression is at the bottom of the hierarchy but this equation can also be reversed. Cayce believed our body is the soul's physical symbol for itself. With this in mind (the builder) it only makes sense to pay great attention to my body in the yoga asanas. My body in the asanas becomes the best teacher that I have.

In *The Tree of Yoga*, Mr. Iyengar states: "the body cannot be separated from the mind, nor can the mind be separated from the soul. No-one can define the boundaries between them." take this to mean that unless there is balance between them all, no one aspect can be clearly felt. I don't do yoga to feel blissed out or be 'at one' with everyone in the room. I do yoga to be all that I can be in that moment, whatever the asana. It's so simple. I can't believe how much energy I've spent fighting it.

A few years ago I was in a beginners class of Shirley Daventry French and she had us walk around the room with slouched shoulders, like Charlie Brown. "Now try and feel alive and happy while you walk like this", she said. Of course, it was impossible and the energy in the room changed dramatically when we walked in *tadasana* posture. A simple lesson in Iyengar Yoga.

My rebuttal in the hatha versus Iyengar yoga debate is, lighten up, it's all so simple. Iyengar Yoga simply asks you to be all that you can be. Iyengar Yoga demands you to pay attention to your body in all its wondrous detail. Our bodies perform actions consistent with certain attitudes. Iyengar Yoga encourages an attitude of oneness with our body and mind. And then we can "glimpse the soul".

What more could one ask of Yoga?

LETTERS TO THE SCHOLARSHIP COMMITTEE

Dear Marlene and Derek,

I was thrilled to receive your letter which informed me of the \$100.00 scholarship awarded to me. It was a lovely, unexpected surprise! Enclosed you will find cheques both for the Iyengar Yoga Intensive and accomodation.

Thank you for your thoughtfulness.

Sincerely, Danielle.

Danielle Lavoie,
Gatineau, Quebec.



Dear Marlene and Derek,

I am writing to confirm my application for a bursary towards the Intensive July 6-11. I hope to increase my teaching to include Level 1 asana classes as well as Easy Does It next fall. I'm looking forward to learning more about teaching at the Intensive.

Sincerely, Vivian Switzer

After that day.....

Thank you so much for the bursary! It is much appreciated. V.S.

Vivian Switzer
Gabriola Island, B.C.

Dear Marlene, Derek, Shirley and the
Scholarship Committee,

I can't seem to begin this letter without feeling tears of appreciation come to my eyes. When I received notice on Friday that you had awarded me with a \$100.00 scholarship for the Iyengar Yoga Intensive, I was surprised at my own response! I was flushed with a feeling of deep gratitude; I sensed that the financial help was symbolic of support and encouragement on my yogic path.

It got me to thinking about how I came to be a part of the Victoria Yoga Centre. While at the Ashram (in Nelson) last year, I read the Yoga Centre's newsletters and was continually impressed with the sense of community in Victoria. Radha House was certainly reaching her arms out to me, but I had fear about studying Iyengar Yoga and was shy to present myself to those who were already steeped in its teachings.

My awkwardness didn't seem to stop the process from unfolding though; the classes at the Y were not at all an altercation from my work with Hidden Language. Rather than experiencing a separation, I began to enjoy the compatibility of the two methods of Yoga. I feel now that I have been doubly blessed!

It is with a sense of heart-felt gratitude that I would like to thank you for your help and support. I look forward to the Intensive and to continued involvement with such an excellent Yoga Community.

Sincerely, Margaret Feehan.

Margaret Feehan,
Victoria, B.C.

YOGA CENTRE GATHERINGS

I have been at most of the Friday night gatherings during the past year. Each one has been an enjoyable experience, a new way for me to 'wind up' after a busy week - also a very different way!

After a yoga session led by one of the yoga teachers, we enjoy a satisfying, tasty supper provided by the people who attend. The dishes are as different as the yoga sessions. Having different people lead the sessions, that is not only the teachers whose classes I regularly attend, has broadened my perspective. I have received the benefits of how other people practise yoga and why they do yoga.

The supper dishes have also broadened my perspectives - mostly of how imaginative vegetarian dishes can be. We are hoping to publish some of the recipes from future suppers.

When the meal is finished, everyone gathers around and opinions are shared. I heard ideas

new to me, expansions on my own ideas, constant affirmation of self-exploration. The topics vary and the atmosphere is open and energising, often inspiring.

I would like to offer my thanks and appreciation to all the participants of the gatherings, especially to the people who led the yoga sessions and discussions.

The Victoria Yoga Centre is planning another series of Friday night gatherings. Shirley Daventry French will be leading the yoga session and the discussion on September 25th. I encourage you all to come along - for the yoga session, for the potluck, for the discussion - or for the whole evening. We meet in the Yoga Lounge at the Y, the dates are published in the Yoga Centre newsletter.

See you there - bring a friend!

Jennifer Rischmiller.



YOGA CENTRE GATHERING
AT THE 'Y' LOUNGE
WITH SHIRLEY DAVENTRY FRENCH

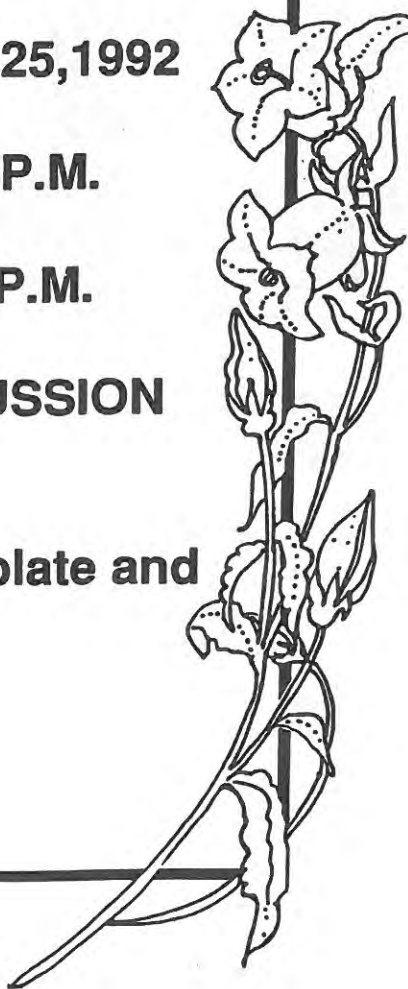
FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 25, 1992

PRACTICE AT 6.00 P.M.

POTLUCK AT 7.00 P.M.

FOLLOWED BY DISCUSSION

**Please bring your own plate and
cutlery**





salt spring Retreat 1992

The Yoga Centre of Victoria Newsletter Advertising

If you have products or services of interest to Victoria's yoga practitioners, this is your advertising vehicle.

Because our rates are so low, all advertising material must be supplied camera ready - that is, exactly as you want it to appear in the newsletter. If not, the copy will simply be typed and inserted. If you wish, we can arrange to have an advertisement prepared for you, but we must charge extra for this service.

Our policy in accepting advertising is that all advertisements must not conflict with the aims of the Centre, as stated elsewhere in the newsletter.

If you wish to buy an ad or require further information,
please contact our Advertising Manager, Carole Miller:

721-3477

1807 Forest, Victoria, B.C. V8N 1H5

RATES per ISSUE

Full Page	\$36.00
1/2 Page	\$18.00
1/4 Page	\$12.00
Business Card	\$9.00

YOGA CALENDAR

SEPTEMBER:

- 14: Workshop with Ramanand Patel at the Y. See ad this issue.
- 19: Teachers meeting at the Y
- 20: Yoga Centre Gathering at the Y. See ad this issue.

OCTOBER:

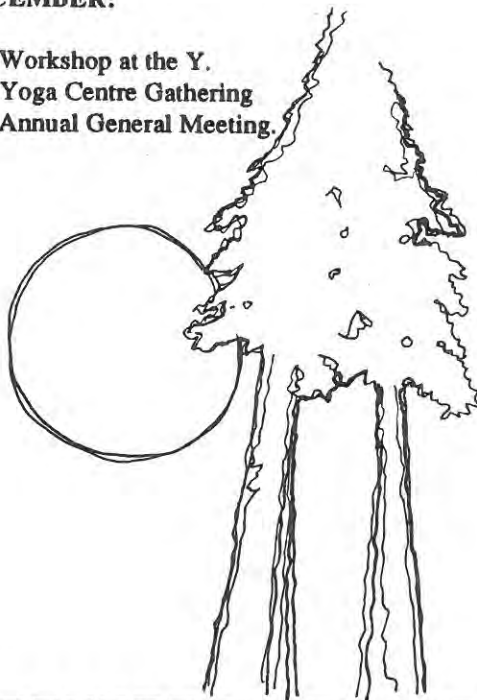
- 18: Workshop at the Y.
- 24: Teachers meeting.
- 31: Yoga Centre Gathering at the Y.

NOVEMBER:

- 1: Workshop at the Y.
- 27: Yoga Centre Gathering at the Y.
- 28: Teachers meeting.

DECEMBER:

- 13: Workshop at the Y.
- 19: Yoga Centre Gathering Annual General Meeting.



MEMBERSHIP/SUBSCRIPTION FORM

It's time you joined the Yoga Centre of Victoria! As you read this newsletter, you are receiving one of the benefits of membership. As you attend your yoga classes or a workshop, you are receiving the benefits of membership. These take time and money and your membership fees and participation really help.

Please fill out this form and send it with your cheque or money order to:

YOGA CENTRE OF VICTORIA, 3918 Olympic View Drive, R.R.#4, Victoria, B.C., V9B 5T8

Membership/subscription fee is only \$20 per year.

Name: _____

Street: _____

City/Prov: _____ P.C.: _____ Phone: _____

I am enclosing a cheque or money order in the amount of: _____

Please do not mail me the newsletter; during class sessions, I'll pick one up at my "Y" class. []

The VICTORIA YOGA CENTRE SOCIETY is a non-profit society incorporated under the Societies' Act of the Province of British Columbia whose purpose is, "to encourage the physical, mental and spiritual growth of its members and other interested members of society at large by the study and discipline of Yoga". The Society owes its inspiration to Swami Sivananda Radha and Mr. B.K.S. Iyengar.

The Society Newsletter is published regularly, providing current information on events concerning yoga in Victoria and area and at the Yasodhara Ashram. Published by the Victoria Yoga Centre Society.

Anyone wishing to contribute articles, photographs, drawings, information or suggestions to the newsletter may contact the Editor, Jennifer Rischmiller, 4489 Lindholm Road, R.R. #1, Victoria, B.C., Canada, V9B 5T7. Telephone: (604) 474-5630.

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DEADLINE FOR SEPTEMBER ISSUE: AUGUST 15th, 1992.

VICTORIA YOGA CENTRE SOCIETY
3918 Olympic View Drive, R.R. #4, Victoria, B.C., Canada, V9B 5T8



VICTORIA YOGA CENTRE

Newsletter



IYENGAR YOGA INTENSIVE VICTORIA, 1992

Please subscribe

September, 1992



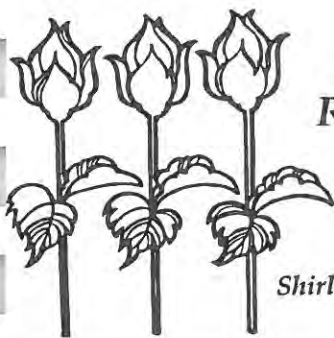
YOGA

VICTORIA YM-YWCA
880 COURTNEY ST.
VICTORIA, B.C.
386-7511

OUR PROGRAMME OF CLASSES IN THE IYENGAR APPROACH TO YOGA TERM I BEGINNING THE WEEK OF SEPTEMBER 14th

<u>NO.</u>	<u>DAY</u>	<u>TIME</u>	<u>INSTRUCTOR</u>
<u>INTRODUCTORY</u>			
401	Monday	9:30 - 11:00am	Linda Benn
402	Monday	7:30 - 9:00 pm	Anne Forester
403	Tuesday	5:00 - 6:30 pm	Linda Shevloff
404	Wednesday	9:00 - 10:30am	Shirley Daventry French
405	Wednesday	7:00 - 8:30 pm	Jim Rischmiller
406	Thursday	1:15 - 2:45 pm	Leslie Hogya - Terms II to V only
407	Thursday	4:30 - 6:00 pm	Linda Benn
<u>GENTLE YOGA</u>			
408	Tuesday	10:30 - 12:00pm	Linda Benn
<u>SIXTY AND BETTER</u>			
409	Wednesday	10:30 - 12:00pm	Shirley Daventry French
410	Friday	10:30 - 12:00pm	Linda Benn
<u>YOGA - LEVEL ONE</u>			
411	Monday	11:00 - 12:30pm	Linda Benn
412	Tuesday	7:00 - 8:30pm	Ann Kilbertus
413	Wednesday	5:30 - 7:00pm	Jim Rischmiller
414	Friday	9:00 - 10:30am	Linda Benn
<u>ALL LEVELS YOGA</u>			
415	Thursday	6:00-7:30pm	Linda Shevloff - Terms II to V only
<u>WORKSHOP SERIES - LEVEL II</u>			
416	Thursday	10:00 - 12:00pm	Shirley Daventry French
<u>WORKSHOP SERIES - LEVEL II/III</u>			
417	Monday	5:30 - 7:30pm	Shirley Daventry French
<u>TWO NOON HOUR YOGA CLASSES</u>			
418	Tuesday	12:05 - 12:55pm	Linda Benn
419	Thursday	12:05 - 12:55pm	Lauren Cox
<u>CHILDREN'S YOGA</u>			
420	Thursday	3:30 - 4:30pm	Leslie Hogya - Terms III to V only

*All classes are Co-ed and take place in the Lounge. Please see the 'Y' brochure or phone
Linda Benn at 598-8277 for further information.*



Reflections

by
Shirley Daventry French

Imagine you are a yoga teacher. You are teaching a large class. Your teacher, B.K.S. Iyengar, is in town. It's an opportunity for him to observe your teaching and offer feedback.

When he enters the room, the class is in headstand. Most of the postures are alright (although, of course, all of them could become better). However, over in a corner there is one student who is definitely not O.K. She has come down and when your teacher goes up to her and asks why, she says her neck hurts. "Why are you continuing to teach the class without helping her?" your teacher asks you.

It could be worse. Perhaps he discovered a student still up in a very bad position which could cause her bodily harm. "Do you want her to hurt herself? Why didn't you see this and do something about it?" asks your teacher.

"But, I can't see everything," you silently say to yourself

- I would have got around to her eventually
- I can't do everything at once
- Why did he have to walk in at that moment
- I have already corrected dozens of students
- Most of the class were O.K.

The potential for self-justification and excuses is inexhaustable and feeds resentment. "Why did he pick on the one thing I wasn't doing and not notice my good presentation to the others?" Do you want praise, or do you want to learn? If you know you're doing a good job, why do you need to hear it from someone else?

Why is it so hard to take criticism, even when you can learn from it? Why is it so hard to listen to someone else being criticised? And why are we so eager to comfort them? When the person who was criticised is making an effort to deal with it, "caring" friends can interfere with and delay this process.

The first time I went to India, on about the second day of classes I became the object of Mr. Iyengar's wrath when I didn't understand one of his instructions to move my pelvic rims. He reacted to my lack of understanding by repeating his request again and again, louder and louder and finally tugging on the front of my shorts to show me exactly what he meant. I was confused because I thought he was talking about the back of the iliac crest; instead he meant the anterior superior iliac spine at the front.

Another teacher might have asked me nicely or taken time to explain exactly what this instruction meant, but another teacher wouldn't be Mr. Iyengar and if I want to learn from him (which I do), I have to adjust to his ways. While all this was going on - a time which seemed interminable to me, but was probably only a few seconds, the rest of the class waited in Virabhadrasana II. When the posture ended, I struggled with varied emotions.

The work I had done previously with Swami Radha was a great help. I knew that pearls of wisdom from masters of yoga are not always gift wrapped. I was aware that I had a choice. I could give in to my emotions, or let them go and learn from this man. Part of my problem was pride, knowing that forty or so people had observed this incident. Tears of self-pity pricked my eyes, but I resolved not to give in to them, a resolve made more difficult by a "kind" friend who was standing behind me. When she got the opportunity she bent over and patted me sympathetically. No doubt she meant well, but I didn't need sympathy, I needed to be left alone to struggle with this challenge.

Before I started yoga I received a few jolts from a man with whom I did a series of encounter groups. It was the sixties! I loved the opportunity to express my opinions as we encountered each other, until one day this man decided to encounter me, which he did fiercely, shouting and calling me a bully for the way I used my emotions to control others. I was very angry about this, felt he had been unjust, and tried to justify myself and discredit him.

Several years later when I was taking the teachers' course at Yasodhara Ashram, I learned about the destructive power of unbridled emotions and understood why this man had done what he did and felt grateful. Feedback from another which is at first viewed as negative, unwarranted and unfair, is often seen later as a valuable lesson and a pivotal

point in your life. When I finally understood the compassion (true caring) in this man's actions, I wrote and thanked him. I have not seen him again, nor do I expect to, but will never forget him.

Having faced and survived such an onslaught, I became stronger and was ready for yoga and to work with Swami Radha. Having faced and survived various onslaughts from Swami Radha I was ready to work with Mr. Iyengar. Not that it became easy, it never will, that is the nature of change.

To learn, grow and change you must take some risks. Once, in a workshop with Swami Radha, there was a young woman who was driving the rest of us crazy by asking what we thought were inappropriate questions. Swami Radha tolerated her interruptions for a while and then turned on her and in no uncertain terms told her how disruptive, manipulative and childish her behaviour was. This was a yoga course and if she didn't want to listen and learn she should go home. The rest of us sat there with self-satisfied expressions on our faces, thinking that this young woman was getting just what she deserved. Then Swami Radha turned to the rest of us and said: "But she will learn because she takes risks!"

When we try to play it safe, it doesn't work. Even if we manage to avoid challenge for a while, what we need to learn will be served up in another way, perhaps a less palatable way, at another time. Yoga strengthens us and prepares us to meet our challenges head on, to face and conquer our fears.

What prompted these reflections was a recent discussion in which some teachers revealed their fears about teaching in front of Mr. Iyengar. It would be unusual not to be nervous, but it is not in the nature of yoga to give in to your fears. It is

also inherent in the tradition of yoga that you are accountable to your teacher. When that opportunity presents itself, if you are open, you will have an opportunity to learn.

When B.K.S. Iyengar observes his pupils teach or practice, anything can happen. Who knows what karma is involved, created in this life or another. Maybe there is some past history between master and pupil which will influence his interaction with that pupil. Perhaps they have asked for and then ignored his advice on previous occasions. Perhaps he senses an unhealthy attitude which is inhibiting the flow of creative energy in that individual so that they are guarded and withdrawn, and he provides a jolt to get them moving again. Perhaps they are teaching all sorts of superfluous stuff which has nothing to do with the purpose of yoga but suits their own purpose.

The speculation about what exactly is going on can be endless. All that really matters is that those directly concerned understand, or at least make an attempt to understand. And even if some of the criticism is unjust, learning to accept unjust criticism is a fundamental part of yoga sadhana.

Those who are fearful of presenting themselves face to face with a yoga master such as Mr. Iyengar or Swami Radha can take courage from the example of many people who have had this experience, and while it was difficult at the time, now see it in a very positive light.

In India last winter, when we were about half way through the intensive, one of my fellow students, a Dutch woman about my age, came up to me and said she felt sorry for me because I was getting so much attention from Mr. Iyengar. I laughed, and told her that I felt really fortunate. Not only did I not mind being singled out, but delighted in it - it is an incredible opportunity to learn directly from a living Master. If you get the chance, grasp it.

RESTORATIVE ASANAS BREATHING AWARENESS and RELAXATION

with

Shirley Daventry French

**Saturday, October 24th
1.30 - 4.00 pm at the "Y"**

**"Y" & Yoga Centre Members:
\$25.00**

Non-Members: \$30.00

The renowned Yoga Master, B.K.S. Iyengar has devised ways of practising asanas with support, which are ideal for those times when we are lacking in energy, whatever the reason. Restorative asanas are indispensable when we are ill or recuperating from illness, but they are also an ideal preventative measure to avoid being overwhelmed by the stresses and strains of modern life. Breathing awareness and deep relaxation are a fundamental part of a restorative practice.

Ensure yourself a place in this relaxing workshop by registering early at the "Y" Main Desk - registration is limited. For further information phone Shirley at 478-3775

THE VICTORIA YOGA CENTRE
and THE VICTORIA YM-YWCA
are pleased to announce



YOGA
with
RAMANAND PATEL



A Weekend Workshop
September 11 to 13, 1992
to be held at the Victoria "Y"
880 Courtney Street, Victoria, BC, V8W 1C4

Friday, September 11	6:00 to 8:00 pm
Saturday, September 12	10:00 am to 1:00 pm & 3:00 to 5:00 pm
Sunday, September 13	10:00 am to 1:00 pm

FEES:	\$125.00	Yoga Centre and "Y" Members
	\$135.00	Non-Members

This workshop is for students of all levels with experience of Iyengar Yoga.

RAMANAND PATEL is a creative and innovative teacher who began his study of yoga at an early age under the tutelage of his father. In 1968 he became a student of the Yoga Master B.K.S. Iyengar. His father and Mr. Iyengar have had the greatest influence on his life. Ramanand's workshops are challenging, enlightening and fun, and his annual visit has become a Victoria tradition, eagerly anticipated by those who have worked with him before. If you have not yet experienced the work of this outstanding teacher, take the opportunity this year.

REGISTER EARLY AT THE "Y" MAIN DESK - registration is limited. Cheques should be made payable to Victoria YM-YWCA. Refunds will be made only if space can be filled from a waiting list, less a \$15.00 service charge.

Enquiries: Shirley Daventry French 478-3775, Linda Benn 598-8277 or the "Y" 386-7511.

ON GROUNDING THE FEMURS AND OTHER THOUGHTS ON YOGA WHILE SITTING IN VIRASANA

The following is a transcript of a talk given by Ramanand Patel at the beginning of one of the classes in a workshop at the Victoria "Y" in September 1991. I hope that reading this will encourage you to attend the weekend workshop with Ramanand this year. We are very fortunate that he returns to Victoria annually.

Leslie: It seems like even the simplest thing you taught in the last few days like grounding the femurs is a challenge. I need to feel the elephants there.

Ramanand: Elephants there, yes. That's the correct feeling as opposed to somebody who doesn't sense anything. It's better, and it will continue. There is no end to that feeling. It continues to get deeper and deeper and deeper. Of all the senses that we use, the most important sense that I would like you to be in contact with is the sense of touch. The skin is the largest sense organ. The inner sense of touch allows you to come into contact with various parts of the body.

The body and spirit are not really separate. Everything that happens to you as an ego, as an entity, affects the body, and the body in turn affects your attitudes, your ego. With deep practice we can get in touch with lots of places in which we are holding tension or where we may not be cleansed, especially our blood circulation and energy flows.

I think that it is wonderful to be able to do magnificent looking postures, but yoga is not about doing those postures. Yoga is primarily about learning about yourself. Yoga is anything that allows me to get in touch with myself at a

The class commenced with the Invocation to Patanjali. Ramanand patiently encouraged us to feel the resonance of the sanscrit words and to feel gratitude for the ancient wisdom of the yogic teachings. We were sitting in Virasana (the hero's pose) grounding our femurs.

Linda Benn

deep, deep, deep physical and hence mental level. Choose two or three things and keep harping away at them every single day. Look at how it affects you, because it doesn't just change you physically, it also changes you psychologically. That's the change that is healthy, that's welcome, that comes from my work on my own self.

Grounding the femurs is a very fine thing; a lot of therapeutic work has to do with the grounding of the femurs. It brings to the surface emotions and things that you normally do not want to deal with. And it's O.K. if you decide as an individual that at this time in your life, in this situation you don't want to get in touch with or deal with that. That's your choice and you have every right to make that choice. But at some point, for your own benefit, for your own knowledge about yourself, begin to work on that as deeply as you can. If it becomes uncomfortable stop it for a while and then go back. After all, the biggest thing we have to learn while we are on this amazing little planet is just about ourselves.

We spend so much time learning about other people. I know so much about everybody else, and it never ceases to amaze me. At one point in my life I began to ask myself why I know so much about all these people. I know a lot about my son, my wife, my father, my mother and all these friends. And then there are those yoga teachers that I don't like, I know even more about them.

(laughter) Gradually what dawned on me was that there is a primary underlying factor and that factor is time. I spend a lot of time with all these people, and hence I know more about them. I ended up asking the question, "Who do I spend most of my time with?" Obviously with myself! And the uncomfortable question arose, "How much do I know about myself?" It is a big zero. And that's how much I know about other people. If I honestly look at myself, what do I really know about Ramanand? It's very, very, very little. And yet the same ego presumes that he knows so much about everybody else. He's got to be an idiot. (laughter)

So somehow get there by hook, crook, or any other way. Life becomes so much simpler when you recognise that you are an idiot. (laughter) Until them, it's very, very, very complex. (laughter)

I don't have any answer, and I don't know if there are any solutions, but at least let me recognise what the problems are. I may have no answers whatsoever, but at least if I understand what the problems are I might begin to look at some of them more closely. And they've all got to do with me! It's fun to learn about myself. I like to work through postures like yoga, but it's not the only way of working. I like to explore in this way because along the way I receive many bonuses. Yoga makes me feel physically good and mentally alert.

The simplest things are the most amazing things. After ten, twenty years of practice, of trying to work in very complicated ways with problems with knees or backs, suddenly I come across something that's so obvious and so very simple. I consider myself reasonably intelligent, yet why did this never occur to me? The simplest things escape us very fast, because we are all looking for complicated solutions. But, if we didn't do that, who would pay yoga teachers?

Shirley: You could perhaps have a bowl . . .

Ramanand: Yes, and with my head shaven clean and a saffron robe it would be even better. I'll do it one day.

Linda: Not in Winnipeg in winter! (laughter)

Ramanand: Oh, I don't know. Do you know the story of Mahatma Gandhi's visit to King George V of England? He went to see the King at Buckingham Palace wearing his loincloth. He was told to dress better, but he refused. The King looked at him and said, "Mr. Gandhi, you are rather scantily dressed." Gandhi looked at the King and replied, "Your Majesty, you are wearing enough for both of us." (laughter)

Isn't *Virasana* fun when you are telling jokes like this? (laughter)

I like yoga, but I do not like the manner in which some people work. They become so serious that you feel like they're carrying the load of the planet on their shoulders. Don't make yoga like that, please!

Make sure you are seated on the front of the sit bones. As you sit in the position for a while, there will be more automatic grounding of the femurs. See if you can take advantage of that automatic grounding by releasing the skin everywhere there is tension on the skin. Make the femur bones heavy, and make the body lighter. Without pushing the floating ribs forward, move the back armpit towards the frontal armpit. The lumbar region is vertically lifted, yet there is no harshness. There is a happy inner lift. Releasing the lower pelvic organs into the floor, cut the lower spine forward so as to create a little more length, a little more vertical height in the lowest pelvic girdle. Breathing freely, inhale and on exhalation come to *adho mukha svanasana*, downward dog. Breathe, breathe, breathe.....

YOGA CENTRE GATHERING
AT THE 'Y' LOUNGE
WITH SHIRLEY DAVENTRY FRENCH

FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 25, 1992

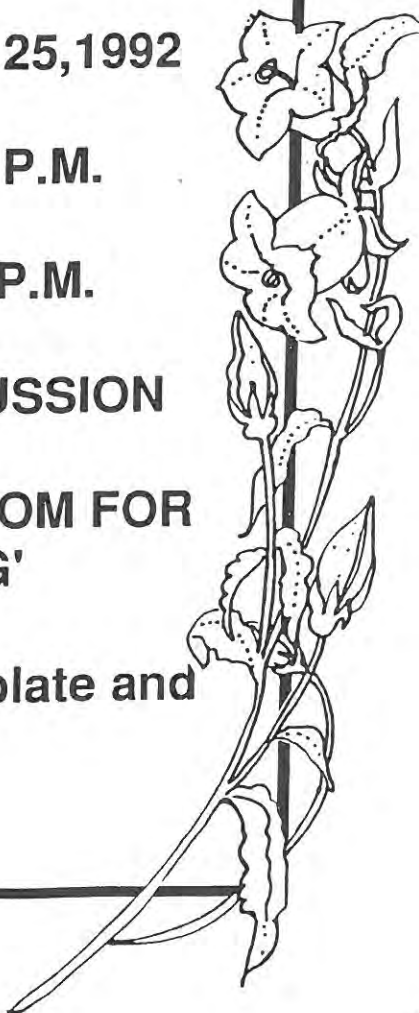
PRACTICE AT 6.00 P.M.

POTLUCK AT 7.00 P.M.

FOLLOWED BY DISCUSSION

**YOGA: 'ANCIENT WISDOM FOR
MODERN LIVING'**

**Please bring your own plate and
cutlery**





**IYENGAR YOGA INTENSIVE
VICTORIA, 1992**





NORMA BIDS FAREWELL TO GABRIOLA

On a beautiful summer afternoon the Yoga Community of Gabriola Island gathered at the studio of Norma Hodge to honour her work and wish her happiness as she prepares for her well-earned retirement.

As the group chanted to the soft strains of OM each individual was able to pay tribute and appreciation to her personally. Wearing a garland of freshly made flowers, Norma was surrounded by blooms of every colour and size and she looked very happy.

I can remember when the studio opened back in September, 1980. The cement floor had hardly dried when the first scheduled class commenced. In the ensuing twelve years many students passed through the doors. Some of these now form the nucleus of the Gabriola Yoga Centre, others left the Island for different parts but each and every one of us was left with "a little touch of Norma."

Norma had more than her fair share of ups and downs in this life, but the manner in which she handled "the downs" was an example for us all. She gave herself tirelessly to her work even when her energy was at its lowest. Her teaching was impeccable and her knowledge was shared generously.

After the tea some of us remained to wash up the 40 or 50 bone china teacups which had been left out for the occasion and then they were immediately packed up in cartons ready for shipment early the next morning. The moving van was very late and when Norma was finally ready to leave, she looked in on an asana class which was just ending. To know that the work of B.K.S.



Iyengar will be carried on, growing from the seed she has sown, will please her greatly.

Until the new owners tell us otherwise, the Gabriola Yoga Centre will continue to operate out of the studio. If we have to move the three remaining teachers will endeavour to do their best to maintain Norma's high standards and quality of work.

As Norma moves to Comox to be near her son and grandchildren we wish her every happiness. We will miss her greatly - but Comox isn't that far away, is it?!!

Om Namah Sivaya.

Phyllis Wood.



TWO PRACTICE CLASSES

ALL LEVELS

September 2nd led by Jim Rischmiller

September 9th led by Leslie Hogya

- Wednesdays, 5:30 - 7:00pm -

Everyone: \$5.00

Fees for Yoga Equipment

Victoria 'Y' Lounge

The Yoga Centre of Victoria Newsletter Advertising

If you have products or services of interest to Victoria's yoga practitioners, this is your advertising vehicle.

Because our rates are so low, all advertising material must be supplied camera ready - that is, exactly as you want it to appear in the newsletter. If not, the copy will simply be typed and inserted. If you wish, we can arrange to have an advertisement prepared for you, but we must charge extra for this service.

Our policy in accepting advertising is that all advertisements must not conflict with the aims of the Centre, as stated elsewhere in the newsletter.

If you wish to buy an ad or require further information,
please contact our Advertising Manager, Carole Miller:

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Business Card	\$9.00

YOGA IN METCHOSIN
with Shirley Daventry French

Ongoing Asana Classes

*morning and evening classes
plus an afternoon class for
people with special problems*
Classes commence September 22nd
\$75.00 for eight week session

Pranayama

*for experienced students -
Saturday mornings*
October 17th, November 7th,
December 5th
\$20 per class

A Day of Yoga

Asana, Pranayama, Philosophy of Yoga
November 21st \$45.00

Shirley is a student of B.K.S. Iyengar
and an experienced teacher of his method of Yoga
Information: 478-3775



FAREWELL TALK GIVEN BY SWAMI RADHA

Swami Radha left Radha House, Victoria earlier this year to support the opening of Radha House, Vancouver. During the open house given in her honour she answered questions from the people who were there to wish her well. We are presenting part of the discussion; the remainder will be printed in the next issue.

How did the Kundalini System begin? I don't know. Probably several thousand years ago. The material has been collected over many generations, tried out, added to, refined, perfected. And the results were probably collected by many, many disciples of teachers, and many who became teachers in their own right, based on their own experience.

Just three weeks before I was leaving India, Swami Sivananda said, "What is the secret message of the asanas?" I had never even heard about it. The swami who was teaching us in Rishikesh never mentioned a word about a secret message. And when I asked him about it, he didn't know what he should say.

So I went back to Sivananda and I said, "I don't know. Gurudev, I have only three weeks left before my visa runs out and I have to leave. What is it that you want me to know? Can you at least tell me about one asana? And then I will know what I should be looking for."

So he talked about the asana that is described in Kundalini Yoga for the West: the headstand. Many in Western medicine will say, "Well there is no great benefit you can get from doing it, except you draw a little blood to your head and your circulation, but nothing else." This is just not so, if you interpret it and see it from the point of view of the Kundalini System.

If you stand on your head, there is very little that you can do. You can't run around (laughter), you can't play, you can't carry anything, you can't touch anything, you cannot engage in a love affair, and you have to balance. And if you open your eyes and look around your familiar room, you see your world upside down. And if you take it a step further, you try to see your world upside down in your other affairs - in your thinking, in your perception, in your convictions, in your cherished beliefs. Now you have taken one very important step: you have challenged yourself and your cherished beliefs. Because they look different when they are upside down - very different. And you see things that you have never really seen before. You begin to understand things to which you had never given any thought.

Now Gurudev said, "Before you go, tell me about five more asanas."

In three weeks? How would I do that? That brought something else out, because in such circumstances you become single-pointed. There is no distraction in your mind, in your emotional responses. You are just right there, particularly with an Indian teacher who is very authoritarian, so there is just no way to say no. So you have to hurry up! (laughter).

And so I came with the other asanas. And he said, "Yes, this one you can still take a step further. This one, and that one."

Now I knew what to look for. But he permitted me only to discuss the headstand publicly, in a class, or even individually. Because if it's not worth your while to find out about it yourself, you don't deserve to know about it. Why should you? If you don't want to learn to write the alphabet, or learn your multiplication tables, why should anybody give you an education? For what purpose? You will not be sufficiently interested.

That is a question you will have to ask yourself for the rest of your life: What's the purpose of your life? Where do you want to go from here? And do you really want to move ahead, want to advance, want to attain Realisation? Because the attainment of even a small degree of Realisation means that you remove yourself from ignorance. But if you like to be ignorant, then what you invite is pain, disappointment, tears, and all sorts of emotional upheaval and devastation, because you have lived under the presumption that things will happen according to your fancy. Don't you already know that this is not the way life is? So how far do you want to go? What do you want to do? You decide. Nobody can decide for you.

You see, in daily life you always object to having anybody tell you what to do. But when people on the yogic path are invited to become independent, they don't want to. Because suddenly they realise what it entails.

All the things that I brought up in Kundalini Yoga for the West are really only basic. That's why you find on the last page, "Now you can look for a guru." Because now you know what that relationship means. Before, you just wanted to be a little bit of a better person, you may have wanted to be liked more and accepted more. But that's not enough. That has nothing to do with awareness. That's all just self-gratification. Practising discrimination about what you are doing is one of the major messages of the Kundalini System.



RADHA HOUSE

Victoria

1500 Shasta Place, Victoria, B.C. V8S 1X9

604 595-0177



1992 Fall Calendar

September

- 13: Open House
- 13: Guru Puja
- 18-19: Kundalini Overview
- 21: Classes begin
- 25-27: Life Seal

October

- 17: Saturday Morning on the Mountain

November

- 7: Divine Light Invocation
- 21: Saturday Morning in Shavasana
- 28: Last day of classes
- 28: Rose Ceremony, Part 1
- 29: Rose Ceremony, Part 2

Radha House Victoria is a spiritual centre in the city, a place to find how spiritual life can be applied daily in a concrete way wherever you are. Swami Sivananda Radha immersed herself in the yogic teachings in India 30 years ago, and practised them intensely in her own life before bringing them to the West, and adapting them to the Western mind.

Radha House follows in the tradition she established: it teaches self-investigation conducted with clarity and compassion, it offers the tools to bring about the changes you now find necessary to make in your life, and it points the way to establishing an intimate connection with the Divine.

Swami Radha is that rarity who is able to bridge two worlds and interpret each to the other: the West and the East, the spiritual world and the world of daily life, the concrete and the abstract. Her approach is simple and direct, and she reminds us that each one of us can do what she has done, if we choose to.



Swami Sivananda Radha

About the Teachers



Jessica Sluymer, director of Radha House, has taught yoga for over 20 years. She holds a Yoga Teachers Certificate, and a Hidden Language of Hatha Yoga certificate.



Guest Workshop Leader

Swami Padmananda

is president of Yasodhara Ashram, and former director of Radha House Victoria. Her commitment to spiritual life and selfless service is a shining example for us all. We are fortunate to have her back for the Life Seal workshop.

Burnaby

Classes and workshops will be held in the new Radha House Burnaby, beginning in September, including:

The Story of Your Life

November 20-22, with Swami Jyotirmayananda

For more information, please call Janet Gaston at 433-3495.

Workshops and Events

Open House

Sunday, September 13, 3-5 P.M.

We invite you to join us in this informal gathering as we start a new year. This is a wonderful opportunity to greet old friends and to meet new ones. Looking forward to seeing you then.

Guru Puja

Sunday, September 13, 8-9 P.M.

Swami Radha has dedicated her life selflessly to help others find their inner strength and life's purpose. She is an example of the highest order. We honour the guru in a satsang of gratitude.

Kundalini Overview

Friday, September 18, 7:30-10:00 P.M.; Saturday, September 19, 10 A.M.-6 P.M.

Explore the key challenges and characteristics of each chakra or level of consciousness in the kundalini system of yoga, and see how these levels function in your daily life. This is an important starting point for regular weekly classes.

Fee: \$65, \$15 deposit. 20 percent reduction for those going on to the class to be formed following this introduction.

Life Seal

Friday, September 25, 7:30-10:00 P.M.; Saturday and Sunday, September 26-27, 10:00 A.M.-6:00 P.M.

This workshop, taught by Swami Padmananda, is an in-depth exploration, based on your own symbolic drawings. No artistic ability needed.

Fee: \$150, \$25 deposit

YOGA CALENDAR

SEPTEMBER:

- 11-14: Workshop with Ramanand Patel at the Y.
See ad this issue.
19: Teachers meeting at the Y
25: Yoga Centre Gathering at the Y. See ad this issue.

OCTOBER:

- 17: Pranayama with Shirley Daventry French. See ad this issue.
18: Workshop at the Y.
24: Teachers meeting.
24: Restorative Asanas, Breathing Awareness and Relaxation, a workshop at the Y with Shirley Daventry French. See ad this issue
30: Yoga Centre Gathering at the Y.

NOVEMBER:

- 15: Workshop at the Y.
17: Pranayama with Shirley Daventry French. See ad this issue.
21: A Day of Yoga with Shirley Daventry French. See ad this issue.
27: Yoga Centre Gathering at the Y.
28: Teachers meeting.

DECEMBER:

- 5: Pranayama with Shirley Daventry French. See ad this issue.
13: Workshop at the Y.
19: Yoga Centre Gathering
Annual General Meeting.

MEMBERSHIP/SUBSCRIPTION FORM

Its time you joined the Yoga Centre of Victoria! As you read this newsletter, you are receiving one of the benefits of membership. As you attend your yoga classes or a workshop, you are receiving the benefits of membership. These take time and money and your membership fees and participation really help.

Please fill out this form and send it with your cheque or money order to:
YOGA CENTRE OF VICTORIA, 3918 Olympic View Drive, R.R.#4, Victoria, B.C., V9B 5T8

Membership/subscription fee is only \$20 per year.

Name: _____

Street: _____

City/Prov: _____ P.C.: _____ Phone: _____

I am enclosing a cheque or money order in the amount of: _____
Please do not mail me the newsletter; during class sessions, I'll pick one up at my "Y" class. []

The VICTORIA YOGA CENTRE SOCIETY is a non-profit society incorporated under the Societies' Act of the Province of British Columbia whose purpose is, "to encourage the physical, mental and spiritual growth of its members and other interested members of society at large by the study and discipline of Yoga". The Society owes its inspiration to Swami Sivananda Radha and Mr. B.K.S. Iyengar.

The Society Newsletter is published regularly, providing current information on events concerning yoga in Victoria and area and at the Yasodhara Ashram. Published by the Victoria Yoga Centre Society.

Anyone wishing to contribute articles, photographs, drawings, information or suggestions to the newsletter may contact the Editor, Jennifer Rischmiller, 4489 Lindholm Road, R.R. #1, Victoria, B.C., Canada, V9B 5T7. Telephone: (604) 474-5630.

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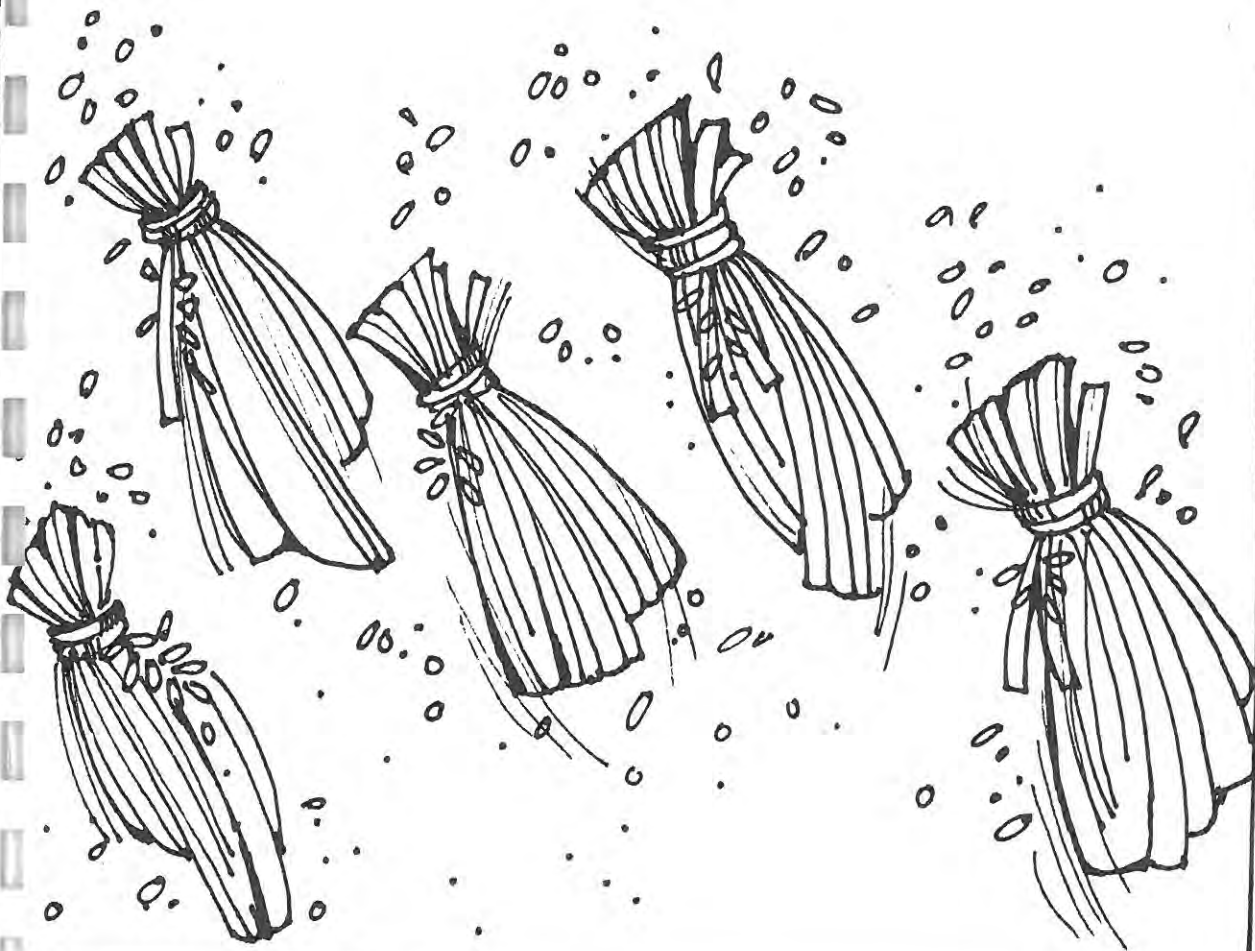
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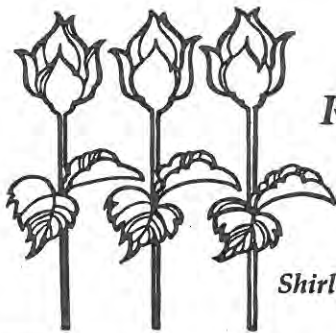
VICTORIA YOGA CENTRE

Newsletter



Please Subscribe

October, 1992



Reflections

by
Shirley Daventry French

Fall is here, the perfect time to write an inspirational message to carry us into the darkening days as winter approaches; a message about the light, love and joy which permeate your life if you practise yoga. After all, this is true! Yoga is a door which, as it opens, reveals your potential to become a loving and joyful human being, a being full of light, who can channel that light towards uplifting endeavours for the good of your soul and the benefit of mankind.

Notwithstanding such high aspirations, when this door is opened it also releases negative emotions and reveals resentments and attachments which have been suppressed, possibly since early childhood. Perhaps once upon a time we were more open and comfortable with this dark side, but learned that such feelings are not welcome in our society, either by ourself or others, and as life progressed we learned to deny their existence. A good example is a young child whose mother has just given birth to a sibling and the child, while fiercely jealous and resentful of this intruder, soon learns that mother doesn't like these feelings.

I will always remember my second child, Stephanie, shortly after the birth of my third child, Adrian. When we went shopping, with him resplendent in his pram, Stephanie would approach any adult close by and, pointing at her brother, say in the most sickly, sweet voice: "This is my little brother, isn't he cute?" Invariably the adult in

question would think how cute she was too. At three years old she had learned to dissemble, and disguise her true feelings because this achieved a better response from the grownups. Fortunately for her, she was unable to conceal them entirely as shown on another occasion.

At this time, I was having a problem with allergies and although I have always suffered from hay fever it was the wrong time of year for this. I had some tests which showed a sensitivity to cats and dogs. We had a springer spaniel called Sophie who shed hairs abundantly all over the house, and it was suggested that we get rid of her. We were reluctant to do this, but a good friend offered to take her and we decided to accept. As we were in the car driving to our friend's home to hand over the dog, I explained to my two small daughters that "Sophie is going to live with Audrey because Mummy is allergic to Sophie." There was a pause and then Stephanie said: "What would happen if you were allergic to Adrian?" Wishful thinking on her part, but also a congruent and healthy connection between thought, word and feeling.

Later I discovered that what I was really allergic to was having three young children four years and under, a husband busy coping with the demands of single-handed medical practice, no other family support within thousands of miles and a dog. I don't have any problems with dogs now! If I had been able to be more honest with my feelings, perhaps I could have found a better solution than an

allergic reaction, but this would have necessitated admitting I was having difficulty coping, which was not my style.

Sooner or later, those feelings which we are denying or dissembling will break through our defences whether we like it or not, in allergies, illness or irrational behaviour such as unexpected anger, depression, resentment. Yoga is often called skill in action, and part of this skill is learning to channel the energy, which is liberated through the practice of yoga, away from our negative aspects which are only too ready to absorb it. From lack of energy they gradually lose their power over us and fall away. First, however, they have to be brought out into the open and faced. We cannot let them go until we have admitted we are holding on to them, and examined the purpose they serve in our lives.

At this time of year I frequently find myself struggling with a strong emotional response to the grandiose claims and misrepresentations made by some yoga teachers in the promotional material for their fall yoga classes. When I see, as I did recently, what I perceive to be a deliberate distortion of the truth, it triggers off a bout of righteous indignation! Why? Because I hate the thought of unsuspecting yoga students being drawn into this web of deception when they could attend classes with myself or one of the many teachers who are, in my opinion, more ethical. *Satya* or truth is after all one of the *Yamas* or universal vows which form the basis for right living and the foundation of any yoga practice.

is anathema in many yoga circles to admit to the feelings I have described in the previous paragraph. If I were to talk about it, there would most likely be someone there who would make excuses for the dissemblers, suggesting that they didn't mean to imply what it is patently evident they are implying. This may be followed by the sentiment

that "everyone has something to teach", "we have to be open to all" and "must learn to get along with others." Or better still, said sweetly: "Oh, do you feel like that?"

This drives me crazy! It is wrong to make false claims, embellish one's credentials and practise deception - but is it my place to put this right? As my husband reminded me the other day when I got worked up about this: I am not the policeman of the yoga community. Nor am I the conscience of this other yoga teacher. What she does is between her and her teacher, or - if she doesn't have a teacher, which is often the case - between herself and her Higher Self. What I must do is get on with my own work.

So what protection do potential yoga students have? They can do some research before signing up for a class, and check out the teacher's credentials. Find someone who in the tradition of yoga maintains contact with their own teacher and receives ongoing guidance and feedback. Look for a teacher who gets together regularly with their peers to study, practise and learn. Choose someone who, while aspiring towards the light, is dealing with their own darker side rather than denying and suppressing it.

There is a story, frequently told in yoga, of a man who spent years and years up in the Himalayas meditating in a cave, and he became very holy. Word of his saintliness attracted vast numbers of pilgrims who made the difficult trek to his cave to be in his presence and receive his blessing. One day, he decided to leave the mountain and return to town. As he entered the marketplace teeming with people, someone jostled him and, instantly losing his equanimity, he protested angrily.

When we are practising our yoga in the marketplace as a householder, rather than as a renunciant in a cave or ashram, we will frequently be jostled, sometimes quite forcibly. If our yoga is of any

benefit, it will teach us how to deal with these jolts and we will begin to see them as valuable opportunities to learn a needed lesson.

And what about the dilemma - to act or not to act? The practice of yoga will guide us here too, so we have the courage to speak out and act when necessary, the ability to surrender and let go when appropriate, and the wisdom to make this decision. If we are at all unsure of our motives, then it's better to wait and do nothing.

Yoga demands both effort and surrender, action and inaction. It has always been easier for me to act, and what I find most difficult is to surrender and do nothing. This is one of my great lessons in life, and life serves up an endless stream of opportunities to learn this lesson.

Om Namah Sivaya.

B.K.S. IYENGAR - NEXT YEAR IN TORONTO

Start saving your money and your holiday time. Next summer, Mr. Iyengar is returning for his third visit to Canada. His previous visits were to the West: Victoria, Vancouver and Edmonton. Next summer it is the turn of the East to host this celebrated teacher. A conference is being planned from August 16th to 20th to be held at Glendon College in Toronto. A brochure with full details will be available soon. For further information, if you live in eastern Canada phone Donna Fornelli in Ottawa at 819-685-0491 or Yoga Centre Toronto 416-482-1334. For those in the West contact Hilda Pizarro in Vancouver at 604-325-4350 or Shirley Daventry French at 604-478-3775.

YOGA IN METCHOSIN **with Shirley Daventry French**

A DAY OF YOGA

Asana and Pranayama

November 21st

\$45.00

PRANAYAMA

Saturday mornings

October 17th, November 7th

December 5th

\$20.00 per class

Ongoing Asana classes

daytime and evening

plus an afternoon class for people with special problems

Shirley is a student of B.K.S. Iyengar
and an experienced teacher of his method of Yoga

Information: 478-3775

The Victoria Yoga Centre.

We have a computer in our office whose screen plaintively asks, "Is there anyone out there?", when it's not in use. As I write I could be forgiven for asking that question myself, but I don't because I know that I am connected to all of us. Who is 'us' you might ask. I think it's all who are being conscious in their daily lives. How are we connected could be your second question. We are connected by sharing our experiences. For instance, if you see a beautiful sunset and I see a beautiful sunset, then I/we know that experience. The same thing happens in Yoga. We strive in our own way to do triangle pose but each of us has some idea of the efforts each other makes. Often times we use words to try and share our experience but in the end we have to just do it. So I am not like the computer because more than words are at work. In varying degree we come together, some by thought, some by yoga practice and some by joining in the Yoga Centre.

The Victoria Yoga Centre is again running Friday night gatherings once a month when we practice, we eat pot luck and we discuss. We are also running Sunday workshops so that we can all take a little extra time for ourselves. We are also busily planning our next year's program and because we are approaching our financial year end Oct 31, we are thinking about next year's board of directors. So we need program planners, workshop organisers, newsletter crew and direction. If you feel connected give me a call at 380-2113 or 474-5630.

In Rischmiller, President of Victoria Yoga Centre.



A DAY OF YOGA

Asana and Pranayama
in the Iyengar Tradition
with
Shirley Daventry French

**SATURDAY,
November 21, 1992**



10 am to 4 pm in
The Yoga Room
3918 Olympic View Drive
R.R. 4, Victoria, B.C.

FEE \$45.00

Shirley is a senior student of
B.K.S. Iyengar and an experienced
teacher of his method of Yoga.

This workshop will be limited to 12 people
with previous experience of Iyengar Yoga.

For information and registration.

Phone 478-3775

OCTOBER WORKSHOPS

This month, in addition to regular yoga classes, two interesting workshops are being offered: one for women and one for members of both sexes.

First, on **Sunday, October 18th**, is the **YOGA FOR WOMEN** workshop with **Celia Ward**. As Geeta Iyengar, Mr. Iyengar's daughter, tells us by the title of her book, *Yoga is A Gem for Women*. In the first chapter of this book, she says that: "An Indian woman's life is a veritable tight-rope walk. Her status in society, the problems she has to face due to social and economic pressures, the burdens nature has imposed on her - all these result in stress and tell upon her health. The more I thought about my sisters - women and their particular problems - the more I was convinced that Yoga was the answer. This book considers how women can achieve fulfilment in their lives through the practice of Yoga." In the West, while there are cultural variations, the demands on women are not so different from those in India. The basic needs are the same: strength of body and mind, relief from stress, the ability to juggle ever-increasing demands, a sense of personal worth and fulfilment. East and West, yoga teaches women to fulfil their own unique potential. In this workshop, Celia will focus on how the practice of yoga can teach women to become more fully themselves. To register, phone Celia at 388-7839.



The second workshop is **RESTORATIVE ASANAS, BREATHING AND RELAXATION** with **Shirley Daventry French** on **Saturday, October 24th**. During the past year Shirley has derived considerable personal benefit from the practice of these asanas in helping her deal with certain stresses and strains in her life: a motor vehicle accident, a severe bout of 'flu, the death of a close friend and another accident, when the chair she was using for backbends collapsed. Shirley's nature is more inclined to an active practice of yoga, but circumstances have conspired recently to teach her an appreciation of the passive and relaxing approach of recuperative and restorative postures. These asanas can help us recover from illness or accident, combat the effects of undue stress and strain, help us recover from lack of energy whatever the cause, and teach us to become generally more relaxed. For a healthy person, restorative asanas do not take the place of an active practice but offer a complementary and beneficial alternative when the need arises. This workshop is open to both men and women, who are invited to benefit from Shirley's experience, and learn more about the value of restorative postures. Registration at the "Y" main desk, phone 386-7511

Celia and Shirley are both students of Yoga Master B.K.S. Iyengar and experienced teachers of his method of yoga.



VICTORIA YOGA CENTRE

presents

YOGA FOR WOMEN

with

Celia Ward

**Invite your strength and nurture your
beauty in this special workshop for women**

Through the practice of yoga asanas, breathing and relaxation, women have the means to take charge of their physical and emotional health and well-being.

This workshop will include: –

- poses to strengthen body and mind
- poses to release stress, bringing calmness and equanimity
- poses to practice during menstruation
- relaxation and breathing.

Sunday, October 18

Victoria YM-YWCA, Yoga Studio
10 – 1 p.m.

Fees

Yoga Centre Members – \$20.00
Non-members – \$25.00

Registration

Phone Celia at 388-7839
Refreshments / Beginners welcome

Celia Ward has been teaching yoga for 10 years and teaches at the University of Victoria and Gordon Head Recreation Centre. She is a student of B.K.S. Iyengar and has on three occasions studied at the Iyengar Yoga Institute in Pune, India.



RESTORATIVE ASANAS BREATHING AWARENESS and RELAXATION

with
Shirley Daventry French

Saturday, October 24th
1.30 - 4.00 pm at the "Y"

"Y" & Yoga Centre Members:
\$25.00

Non-Members: \$30.00

The renowned Yoga Master, B.K.S. Iyengar has devised ways of practising asanas with support, which are ideal for those times when we are lacking in energy, whatever the reason. Restorative asanas are indispensable when we are ill or recuperating from illness, but they are also an ideal preventative measure to avoid being overwhelmed by the stresses and strains of modern life. Breathing awareness and deep relaxation are a fundamental part of a restorative practice.

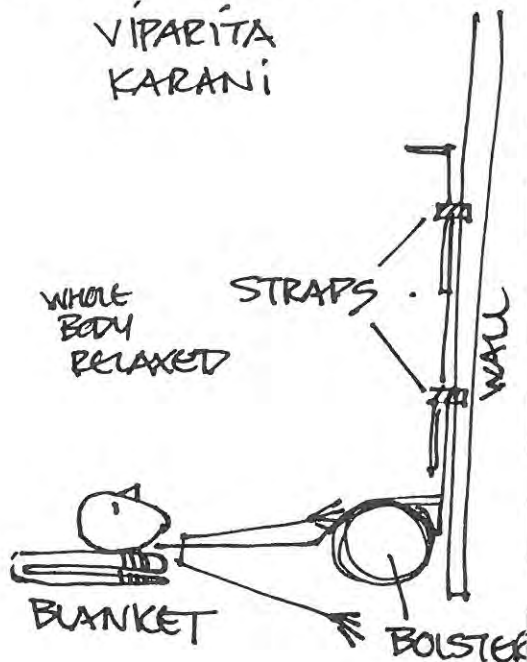
Ensure yourself a place in this relaxing workshop by registering early at the "Y" Main Desk - registration is limited. For further information phone Shirley at 478-3775



Shirley Daventry French

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VIPARITA
KARANI



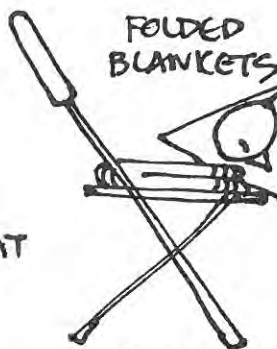
Notes from a Restorative Class

DOG STRETCH
w/ ROPE &
BOLSTER



HEELS AT
WALL

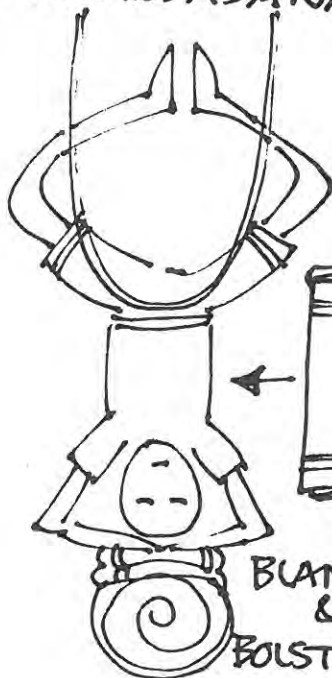
FOLDED
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SUPPORT'D
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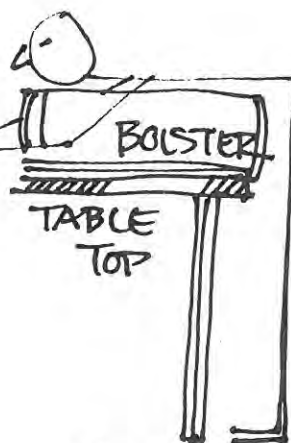
- FEET HIP WIDTH
- TOES POINTING IN
- CUT THE KIDNEYS

ROPE SIRSASANA



FOLDED
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VERTICAL
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WALL

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&
BOLSTER



GOOD FOR
HEADACHES



VICTORIA YOGA CENTRE

invites you to our

FALL ASANA PRACTICE SESSIONS/DISCUSSIONS

Friday, October 30: Gay Meagley

Gay has been teaching yoga for 17 years. She now resides on Salt Spring Island, B.C., organizing and giving yoga retreats in her home. Her teachers include Swami Muktananda, B.K.S. Iyengar, and most recently, Angela Farmer.

Discussion: *'Chanting'*. Gay will lead a group chanting session.

Friday, November 27: Jessica Sluymer

Jessica is director of Radha House, Victoria, B.C. She has taught yoga for 20 years and currently teaches, *The Hidden Language of the Body™*. This method was developed by Swami Radha, founder of Yasodhara Ashram, Kootenay Bay, B.C.

Discussion: *'Discovering the Hidden Language of the Body'*.

Format for Each Session

Asana Practice – 6 - 7 p.m.

Pot Luck Supper – 7 p.m. onwards
and
Discussion

Location

Victoria YM/YWCA, Yoga Studio
880 Courtney Street

– *Everyone Welcome* –

Bring Food

Donations Welcome



FAREWELL TALK GIVEN BY SWAMI RADHA

Swami Radha left Radha House, Victoria earlier this year to support the opening of Radha House, Vancouver. During the open house given in her honour she answered questions from the people who were there to wish her well.

Student: What's kept you going, Swami Radha? You have taught many, many students and I am sure that not every single one has totally realised their potential. Yet that doesn't seem to have slowed you down.

Swami Radha: I already said gurus are usually an authority that you feel you cannot challenge. But when you are a devotee of the Divine, then you don't challenge the Divine. When you agreed to an assignment (that means the particular purpose of your life), you cannot do so unless you have a certain degree of awareness, however small, so you know what you are letting yourself in for. Not entirely, but you have an idea.

Perhaps my best example is an experience I had with Swami Sivananda when I came into his office one morning. He was going over his correspondence, signing letters, checking addresses and so on, saying "Om Namah Sivaya" to any address that he was calling out.

He said suddenly to me, "There is someone on the hill who is dying of thirst. Are you going to take him some water?"

I took this literally and said, "Where in the Ashram can I find a bucket?"

He said, "He can't drink a whole bucketful. One cup. One cup."

The implication of this was that up in the hills there

is someone who is dying of thirst- uphill. Life is uphill against all odds and obstacles.

Perhaps another example can bring that home to you better. Let's say you have a friend you have helped, but your friend keeps on doing things the wrong way. Maybe an alcoholic or drug addict. You say, "Oh it's no use, I give up."

If you really want to help, if you have made a commitment to the Divine, you can't say, "I give up."

I think those who have lived with me for many years know that I have never really sent anybody away. I have not left people. They have left me. Their karma will be affected. It's like being given a million dollars and you decide to squander the entire amount. Then you go begging again. But you will not get any more.

So the Divine, too, will not give you more if you are not grateful for what you have received.

I think 1982 was the year lots of people who had left the Ashram got in contact with me again. I think 1992 is almost similar. There are still many who left, got married. I said to them, "Are you happy now?"

"I wouldn't do it again. I just wish I would have listened to you."

You see, getting married is not wrong, but we focus on each other, instead of focusing on what our life is all about. When I found the site for the Ashram in the Kootenays, the name of the land on the original survey maps was Yasodhara. Yasodhara was Buddha's wife. Yasodha was Lord Krishna's foster mother. So I said, "Women will come." I was very happy about that because I thought there was something wrong with me: there was always a bunch of fine young *men*, but no women. Was there anything wrong with me?

Little did I know how difficult it is to help women. They are so hooked by their enormous need to be accepted by a man. They will go into all sorts of troubles and tribulations. Not only do women pay billions for cosmetics, but they go into face lifts, into breast implants, into changing the shapes and forms of their bodies, all to be accepted by men. That's not why they were born. That's not what they took birth for.

Many a man has said to me in a workshop, "Just get her off my back!"

He cannot be responsible for a woman's happiness, good moods, or whatever she wants. He can be responsible for other things - yes.

A man has said to me, "All she wants is a bigger house, another luxury car, and lots of jewellery."

I said, "Yes. Do you know why? She wants something from that marriage. Because you as her husband or lover have not given her a place in your life. Nobody wants a relationship just for nothing. You wouldn't either. So she provides some convenience to you."

So you see, all these things need to be thought about.

Most of the time women are sleepwalkers. I'm sorry to say that. But I want to wake you up, to shake you out of this drowsiness, and routine life, and routine

thinking, and hypnotic sentences that you have lived with throughout your life.

I never thought I would write a book on aphorisms. What I did was write about 60 sentences - short sentences - to help women get out of these self-hypnotic statements: "I can't do it, I am not good enough, I am not intelligent." Little did I know that one of these women was an editor. She sent it back to me and she said, "I edited your English a little but these are wonderful aphorisms, and you should publish them."

We call them now *Seeds of Light*.

But I can give you only the tools. If you put them there and just look at them once in a while, nothing is going to happen. It's not that there's something wrong with yoga. There is something wrong with the attitude. If a woman wants to be free, she can be free. If she can say to her man, "I love you but I can live without you," then he can trust that love. If she says, "I love you," almost every day of the week, then she is just trying to convince herself because she is fearful of her emotional dependence.

So it's very difficult to help women. I have done my level best. I have said, "Well, if I can help at least 10 women in 35 years, perhaps that's not asking too much. If, with the technique of the Light Invocation, they can bring the Light to 10 others, then *maybe* we can make a change in the world. But not any other way."

I remember a rabbi who came and said, in spite of his spiritual vocation, he couldn't help but divorce his wife. But before he did so he wanted to send her to me to see if I could help her. So I said to him, "You are quite young. You are only in your early 40s and you have two children, so you will be having another family. Can you really look after *two* families? My suggestion is that before you consider a divorce, send your wife to university to get a degree. Then she can make a life on her own.

His wife decided on becoming a lawyer so she went to law school. At the end of her term she was doing so well that she got a marvellous offer from New York.

Then the rabbi came to me and said, "I don't want a divorce." I said, "Why not? You were so keen on it." He said, "You know, Swami, I didn't realise that through their action and behaviour, and their often very childish emotional responses, women contribute to the loss of their husbands' respect."

However, now she insisted. She had seen something else, and she didn't believe a change was possible, so they did get a divorce eventually.

But in many other cases the couple started a new life.

So as a woman you have to be responsible for the respect you invoke in the man you are with, and in your children. If you have to tell your children the same thing 10 times, they don't listen. Why should they? Because you will say it 10 more times. You won't act. But if you say, "Tonight no dinner, no dessert, or no chocolate, or no movie, no TV," they know you mean it. And you have to mean it also on the spiritual path for *yourself*. You want to enter the spiritual path. You want to become aware. The number of hours you spend in meditation is not the important thing, it's not 1,000 mantras. That will help you to control your mind but it won't necessarily give you awareness. It will only show you what a ragged monkey your mind is. You will become aware through your practices where you really stand. But you have to take the action, you decide the woman you want to be in the future.

Student: Taking risks is very, very difficult: to move out in the world and be confident in the decisions that I make. My spiritual practices help in grounding me and stabilising me, and in redirecting my mind. But the fears still creep up. They're like little bubbles that come up the surface and there's an instant panic. I wonder if that's common for a lot of women.

Swami Radha: Absolutely. For anybody. For men too. But do you want to wait until destiny drops a ton of bricks on your head? Or will you start before that ton of bricks comes down and consider that there are many options? What would you do if you couldn't continue? What will you do if your husband walks out? Will you wait for that moment? Or do you want to make yourself emotionally independent and make decisions for yourself? Sometimes you can even pull a relationship together and say, "Well, I will do my share, so then together we can have a better life."

You have to take some sort of initiative. Otherwise you remain subservient. If you don't want to be that, you better face up to it.

You see, destiny takes matters in hand. What do you think a war is? What is the purpose of an economic breakdown. To force people to start thinking and not continue to be sleepwalkers who, day after day after day, do the same thing. That will not help evolution, particularly not individual evolution.

So there is fear. Everybody has fear. I had fear. When I went to India in 1955, women didn't travel, particularly my generation. They hadn't learned that kind of independence.

Student: One fear is of making a mistake. I think, if I do this, what happens if it's a mistake.

Swami Radha: Sure! Then you make a mistake! So what? Do you know anybody who never made a mistake? You have to remind yourself that you only learn by trial and error. But if you are too hung up on this, then what prevents you from developing is your pride, so nobody can say you made a mistake. Then you are ruled by your pride. That's your choice. Again, it's your choice.

In the classes that we have established, people learn from each other. There is usually somebody in the class who is courageous enough to say, "Yes, I am suffering from a lot of jealousy and I don't know

how to deal with it." You will never see that the rest of the class look down on that person. Instead, they say, "Oh, she is so courageous. I wish I had the courage to say what my problem is."

So the example is set in the class. But if you don't accept it, again that's your decision

Student: So when I make a mistake, is that because I haven't followed the divine law?

Swami Radha: Well, you would have to give me an example. Before you make a mistake, you can always see that you get some advice. There are lots of situations where there are changes; if you go to university, and you think you will become a doctor, and then you find out that you can't stand the sight of blood, or you can't deal with sick bodies, you change your area of study. You have options. So spend some time: "This is what I want to do. If it turns out to be a mistake, why could it be a mistake?" Think it through. Think in depth. Discuss it with somebody.

But the best thing you can do is write down what you think you might like to do, and what you fear could be a mistake, and why could it be a mistake and could you avoid it? Think in depth! Don't rush into things. Be thorough.

One of the workshops we give is called the Straight Walk. You can always come and ask, "When is the next Straight Walk?"

You see, I have given many workshops for businessmen. In fact, in New York, I started a group for men, all over 45. That was in the early sixties, when men at the age of 45 couldn't find a job. They were considered too old. So I taught them how to brainstorm. I said, "No, you are already judging. Brainstorming happens when I ask you, "How can you turn a wire clothes hanger into x number of toothpicks?" If you say right away, "It can't be done," then you throw everything out, including

your creative thinking. In other words, you decide beforehand there is no solution."

Unfortunately, they carry that over onto the spiritual path; If I don't know the result of my practice, I won't do it. Because the result is different for each person. Judging something before you do it is not helpful.

Suddenly, somebody comes to you who has been perfectly healthy and says, "I have cancer." Now what? Is that the end of everything, because you never anticipated it? You can say, "Well, if I lost a job, if I got divorced, if I lost a child, what would that mean to me?" Start thinking in depth. Don't skip around the surface like a leaf blown by the wind.

You see, as women, because of our dependence on the authority of parents, and then the husband, we are never taught to think in depth. So it's not necessarily a character fault. You just never knew that you could permit yourself to act in a different way.

I say there is no point in marriage if people don't help each other. He has to help her to recognise that she has the same intelligence and ability to think that he does. And she has to help him see that it is just as much a right for a man as for a woman to cry or to have an emotional response. So she can help him to develop his finer feelings and he can help her to develop trust in her own thinking: "Yes, you can do that. Why don't you try?"

I have met a lot of women who knew that their husbands had an affair. I said, "Will you wait till he leaves you? Or will you try to find out how you can rescue your life after he has gone? Because you never know the influence of the new woman. You may think he will support you generously, but he may not at all, because she makes sure that the old wife doesn't get too much. So are you going to take a course to find out, or go to the vocational school,

or to university? Think about what you could do. Take an aptitude test. Or will you wait till you are on the street?"

That is all her decision. Women are sometimes baffled about this. They have never thought about it. The situation is so common: "I have a husband who is an alcoholic. I have three children."

O.K., he has no sense of responsibility. Will you take up the responsibility as a mother for these children? Or have you left it to him? Are you satisfied just to be at the kitchen sink? That is up to you to think about."

The classes are there to start you thinking and encourage you to think and to come into your own. Sure, it takes time, because so many years of your life have passed before you came across the possibility that you have the right and the ability to think for yourself.

You have to find out what your values are, how you see things. I have often said, "Well, I don't know. I don't really think that way. I don't have to accept what my mother's judgement was. Hers was a very different generation. Now what do I think about it?" And then I adopted my thinking because I am me and not my mother. It doesn't mean my mother was wrong. In her time and in her circumstances and social conditions, her thinking was correct, but I am not living in those times, and I am of a different generation. So you have to learn to think about these things.

Student: I have been in relationships, and the issue of commitment has come up, and loyalty to the relationship. What I have come down to is that my commitment is myself is a number one priority, and that the relationship with my partner would be an outflow of that. But there is always the question, "Should I walk out of this relationship? And have I really been committed if I walk away from it? What about my loyalty?"

Swami Radha: But a relationship is a two way street. First, you have to ask yourself, Why do you want a relationship? What do you get out of it? What are you willing to give to the relationship? One-sided loyalty doesn't work. Then you have to ask, What's the purpose for a woman in this life and what is it for a man? Why does a man have difficulty being loyal to his wife? I think you see lots of this in very high office.

Because Nature designed men and women for a different purpose. We have turned procreation into sexual pleasure. So the man is a seeder. You were told that already in the Old Testament. So if he finds a woman that he is with is no longer attractive, he doesn't think consciously in that way, but the sociobiologist will say he is ruled by his genes. He wants to propagate his own genes.

But we deny that because we want to live in an illusory world. There are six stages of human development. The first three stages of mineral-man, vegetable-man and animal-man make up the major population anywhere. The first step is to become an aware being. You don't even need to use the word spiritual, but to understand what human life is. That will perhaps shift the power of mineral-, vegetable- and animal-man.

When you become an aware being, you see the naked truth, which is very brutal because it is stripped of illusion. In the same way, when you hear you have cancer, you are suddenly forced to look at the fact that your body isn't what you thought it was. When you become aware, you are spiritual. You may even never go to church and never meditate, but you are aware. And that step into awareness is the fourth dimension.

Then you realise what true compassion really is, and you want to help others free themselves from self-induced pain. Self-induced pain comes from wanting to hold on tenaciously to illusions and assumptions. Life teaches you just the opposite.

It is revolutions, it is war, it is terrorism, it is upheavals that shatter all those things. If we didn't hold onto so many illusions, there wouldn't be any necessity for war.

This applies to both sexes. The male wants a son? Why do you want a son? When he is 12 years old, you already see him as increasing competition for your strength, and you are not really a friend. Many a man in high office has told me, "I have never even sat on my father's lap." But the idea of his own sex being relived in a son is another illusion. In China there are millions of men. If you want to force China into a democracy, then everybody can have as many children as they want, and they will be boys, because boys are a glorification of men's own sex. But who can see that? Only those who have enough awareness.

The time of reflection is important. If your relationship is based on friendship, and if you can be your own person, without having to please, the relationship will last. What does loyalty mean to you? You have to find that out, too.

I have met battered women who, because of their loyalty to their marriage vows, felt they had to go back. No. They were kidding themselves. That idea of loyalty is an excuse, because they are fearful. They would rather be beaten up than stand on their own two feet. And it's extremely difficult to help these women.

If you look in the animal kingdom, any mammal can take care of its young, and so could the woman. In many tribes she is the one who takes care of the children and decides how much land is needed to feed them all. When there is not enough land, she won't have any more. So you see, you have to study a little bit. You have to find out how things develop. Once you have gone through that development, where do you want to go now? Don't misunderstand me, I'm not saying a relationship is totally wrong. But you have to maintain your emotional freedom, and your economic freedom.

Student: I find as soon as I get caught up in the emotional aspects of the relationship, I lose a sense of independence, of self.

Swami Radha: You already try to use something like loyalty as an excuse for that. Don't do that.

Student: What about commitment?

Swami Radha: Your commitment is to your own awareness, to the purpose for which you took birth. What people do in the Ashram and in the Radha Houses is take time to reflect. What has transpired today, or yesterday? There you take responsibility and you make a commitment to your development. Let me tell you, he, too, will benefit from that.

Student: I just want to express my gratitude for what I have learned from you, and what you have been saying tonight about commitment and the relationship. I feel that I was so fortunate to come to the first workshop when I was in my twenties. This work has helped me maintain that strength of my own individuality through my marriage. We celebrated 26 years of marriage. It is because of the work I have done here that I have maintained my individuality and my relationship.

Swami Radha: So, in other words, you have become friends. You see? Love is freedom. Emotions are possessiveness. Keep that in mind.

Student: I have just started working with the Kundalini System and it's very true; I'm learning how to think, right down to the depths of what my thought patterns are, and getting out the real emotions and the real feelings, and getting down underneath them, and thinking about them.

Swami Radha: For you as a man it's also necessary to understand woman's nature. Unless it comes to a man's attention, there is very little he can do to help his wife or his companion. Because Nature has formed her for the purpose of being a mother, even if she isn't. Just even for a nurturing life. So then she takes actions that are detrimental to what he wants, and what his needs are. He will say, "Why are women this way? Why do they have to do this or that?" Because men seldom realise that over the centuries women have been formed by men, because of their control over women.

I once met a man in my workshops and I said, "Why did you marry her, if it is all so terrible." "Oh," he said, "when I married her she was a lovely sweet girl." I said, "What have you made out of her? Where has the sweet girl gone?" Little did he realise that he was the creator of the woman he was with now. So the power can be used rightly or wrongly.

So I hope you come more, to learn more.

Jessica Sluymmer will soon be here to take Ian's place. Padmananda has particularly trained her and groomed her for this. We have found her to be an excellent person, a woman with grown-up children who is able to change and grasp new ideas and make them her own. It was remarkable, absolutely remarkable. We couldn't think of anybody better to come here.

I have to stay away from classes and workshops, otherwise my books don't get written. (Laughter). That was the order of my own guru, to update the teachings and bring them to the West.

The very best to you. Keep going.

ESPECIALLY FOR WOMEN

Aphorisms of Swami Radha

(excerpted from the book *Seeds of Light*)

The strongest hold on most of us is emotional security, looking outside ourselves for that which can only be found within.
There is no security that we can really find in another person.

Most people need approval, acceptance and appreciation from others. Dependence on these needs prevents us from being free to be ourselves and to develop our own talents.

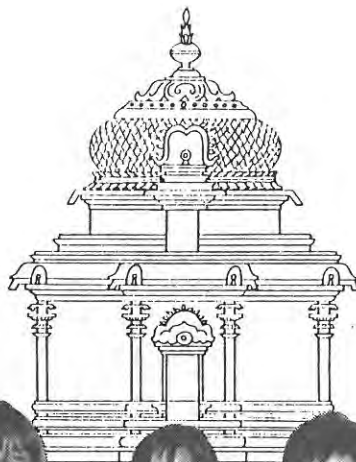
To come into their own women must establish their own values and bring up their children accordingly without attacking men.

When women dare voice their true thoughts to themselves, they have the freedom to shift total devotion from husband and family to higher goals.

INDIA BOUND

This month, six Vancouver Island teachers will be studying at the Institute in Pune as part of a Canadian Intensive: five from greater Victoria and the sixth from up-Island. For Marlene Miller, who teaches on the Saanich peninsular and occasionally at the "Y", it is her third trip to Pune. For Linda Shevloff and Leslie Hoggia, regular teachers at the "Y", it is their second visit. For Ann Kilbertus, another of the "Y" teachers, it is her second visit to India but first to the Institute in Pune. For Linda Benn, "Y" teacher and co-ordinator of all the classes, it will be her first time in India. They will be joined on their journey by Vicky Catchpole from Cumberland, also a first time visitor to India.

These five teachers are part of a regular stream of students of Mr. Iyengar who make the pilgrimage from Canada to India to study with him, his daughter, Geeta, and his son, Prashant, and return to teach and maintain the spirit of his work here in this very different culture and country. We wish them God-speed, a safe and pleasant journey, and a healthy and rewarding stay in India.



Linda - Leslie - Marlene



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marlene



vicki

ann



Linda





Leslie

It wasn't the Himalayas or even Mt. Baker - but I did climb up into an alpine lake area of Vancouver Island and swam in a pocket lake of snow melt, eye level with a glacier. I went on a guided five day hike carrying a modest pack no more than 25lbs. It was beautiful and, for me, challenging. I had never done anything like it.

At one point we stood on the edge of what, to me, looked like a never ending cliff and found I was to go down - down to an unseen valley floor below. I blanched and said, "I can't." With the help of the guide, some calming words and a little support from a rope I did get down. Everyone congratulated me. I wondered why are they congratulating me when they all come down without so many problems. Ursula, a fellow hiker said, "But that's what courage is: having a fear and facing it."

My knees and quads let me know after I returned how much I had pushed myself. Time under an ice pack, some gentler swimming, yoga, a trip to the chiropractor and I was fine. Invigorated, in fact, because of the fun we'd had, the incredible breathtaking beauty and quiet that we lived in for five days, plus the physical challenge.

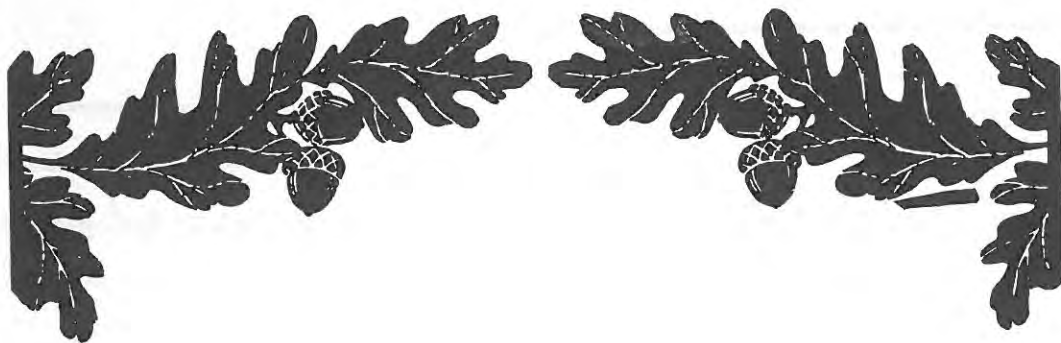
Going to India to study at Mr. Iyengar's institute is something like that. I know I will be challenged to my limit and I will have to face fears and blocks in myself. It would be easier to stay at home (and a lot less expensive!). I resist the challenge. I stand

at the edge and balk. Yet, as I remember back to how I felt seven years ago when I was preparing to go to India, I feel quite differently about the upcoming trip. I know a little about what to expect. This adds to both sides, the trepidation and the eagerness. I'm eager for the classes, for the teachings, the gifts of shared knowledge and feel more prepared to absorb what will be told to me. I feel trepidation, I know there are those cliffs inside myself that I must face. I fear I haven't the stamina or strength to do what I'll be asked to do.

The actual physical reality of India also brings up both dread and excitement. I remember the warmth and welcome of the people, the peace and serenity found where spiritual harmony is a life goal of so many. Then there's the delicious and unusual foods, the sights, smells, colors and textures of India. There's also the tedium of line ups, beaurocracy. I dread the roads, both the pollution from belching diesel trucks and the chaos of speeding lorries, careening motorized rickshaws dodging darting pedestrians and meandering livestock.

I'm grateful for the opportunity to go. Thank you especially to Shirley Daventry French who keeps us inspired by her own creativity and dedicated work in the world of yoga.

by Leslie Hoggia



Leslie & Friends ...



RADHA HOUSE

Victoria



1500 Shasta Place
Victoria, B.C. V8S 1X9
(604) 595-0177

Workshops and Events

Saturday Morning on the Mountain

Saturday, October 17, 9:30 A.M. - 12:30 P.M.

This is a Hidden Language Hatha Yoga exploration of tadasana, mountain pose. This three-hour workshop is followed by a potluck lunch.

Fee: \$25



The Yoga Centre of Victoria Newsletter Advertising

If you have products or services of interest to Victoria's yoga practitioners, this is your advertising vehicle.

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YOGA CALENDAR

OCTOBER:

- 7: Pranayama with Shirley Daventry French. See ad this issue.
17: Saturday Morning on the Mountain. A Workshop at Radha House. See ad this issue.
8: Workshop at the Y with Celia Ward. See ad this issue.
24: Teachers' meeting.
24: Resorative Asanas at the Y. See ad this issue.
30: Yoga Centre Gathering at the Y.

NOVEMBER:

- 7: Divine Light Invocation. Workshop at Radha House. See ad this issue.
5: Workshop at the Y with Jim Rischmiller.
17: Pranayama with Shirley Daventry French. See ad this issue.
21: A Day of Yoga with Shirley Daventry French. See ad this issue.

- 21: Saturday Morning in Shavasana. A Workshop at Radha House. See ad this issue.
27: Yoga Centre Gathering at the Y. See ad this issue.
28: Teachers' meeting.
28-29: Rose Ceremony at Radha House. See ad this issue.

DECEMBER:

- 5: Pranayama with Shirley Daventry French. See ad this issue.
13: Workshop at the Y with Shirley Daventry French.
19: Yoga Centre Xmas Gathering and Annual General Meeting.

MEMBERSHIP/SUBSCRIPTION FORM

Its time you joined the Yoga Centre of Victoria! As you read this newsletter, you are receiving one of the benefits of membership. As you attend your yoga classes or a workshop, you are receiving the benefits of membership. These take time and money and your membership fees and participation really help.

Please fill out this form and send it with your cheque or money order to:
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Please do not mail me the newsletter; during class sessions, I'll pick one up at my "Y" class. []

The VICTORIA YOGA CENTRE SOCIETY is a non-profit society incorporated under the Societies' Act of the Province of British Columbia whose purpose is, "to encourage the physical, mental and spiritual growth of its members and other interested members of society at large by the study and discipline of Yoga". The Society owes its inspiration to Swami Sivananda Radha and Mr. B.K.S. Iyengar.

The Society Newsletter is published regularly, providing current information on events concerning yoga in Victoria and area and at the Yasodhara Ashram. Published by the Victoria Yoga Centre Society.

Anyone wishing to contribute articles, photographs, drawings, information or suggestions to the newsletter may contact the Editor, Jennifer Rischmiller, 4489 Lindholm Road, R.R. #1, Victoria, B.C., Canada, V9B 5T7. Telephone: (604) 474-5630.

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DEADLINE FOR NOVEMBER ISSUE: OCTOBER 15th, 1992.

VICTORIA YOGA CENTRE SOCIETY

3918 Olympic View Drive, R.R. #4, Victoria, B.C., Canada, V9B 5T8



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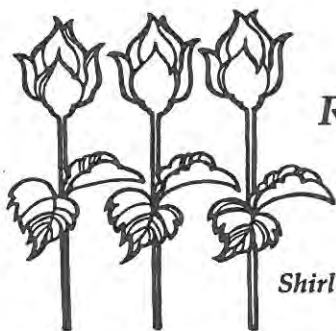
Newsletter

Welcome Home



Please Subscribe

November, 1992



Reflections

by
Shirley Daventry French

Among the plethora of articles which have appeared in the newspaper recently about Canada and its problems, I read an interesting one entitled: "Bus stop encounter symbolizes national malaise". The writer, Ethan Faber, described an incident at a crowded bus stop in Victoria where a group of strangers were waiting for a bus, ignoring each other in the way of the western world. One man, however, began to speak out loud. His tone was hostile and derogatory, he was a little drunk, and his words were directed at a black man minding his own business in the corner of the bus shelter. Despite a slurring of his speech, everyone in the bus line could hear quite clearly the insulting and racist tone of his outpouring. The victim of this tirade ignored him - so did everyone else, although it continued for about ten minutes. The article went on to question why no-one stood up and spoke out against this injustice, and examined the connections between this incident and the feelings of powerlessness and anger experienced by so many Canadians in our current political climate.

Mr. Faber, and probably many of the others, felt angry but did nothing. He speculates that like him they may have complained later to their family about the incident. But why, he asks, didn't they do something at a time when it would have counted?

Why did the people at the bus stop keep silent? From fear, from apathy, from not wanting to draw attention to themselves, preferring to remain an anonymous grey blob on the landscape? Mr.

Faber says that Canadians have "a notorious reputation as complainers", yet at the same time "most of us are agonizingly reluctant to take direct action against obvious examples of injustice."

It's not just Canadians who behave in this way. It is fairly prevalent in most of the English speaking peoples. Don't make a scene! Don't make a spectacle of yourself! Maintain a discreet distance! Be decorous when someone else is making an exhibition of themselves! I have lived among Italians and Arabs, and I know that it is not in their nature to remain silent in the face of a perceived injustice.

The recipient of the insults seems to have conducted himself well, using what Derek and I call the "Ah so" technique. This comes from a Zen story demonstrating the practice of equanimity in the face of injustice. I can't remember the name of the book in which I read this story but there are many such parables in Eastern and Western spiritual teaching. Jesus, after all, taught us to turn the other cheek.

The Zen story is about a holy man in a small village who discovered a young woman, abandoned by her family, living in abject poverty and starving. He took her in, gave her a home, and came to love her. One day, it became obvious that she was pregnant and she told everyone that the holy man was the father. He was condemned and ostracized by the rest of the village and, although he had never touched the young woman and her accusations were quite false, he simply replied "ah so", and accepted the child as his own. This pleased the young woman for a while, but she soon got fed up with this arrangement and went away, leaving the child behind with the holy man. He said "ah so", and carried on with the upbringing of the child. Some years later the woman returned with a handsome young man with whom she had fallen in love and who wanted to marry her. This young man, she said, was the real father of her child and she took the child back leaving the holy

man alone. Although he loved the child very much, his only response was to say "ah so" and let them go.

When should we speak up? When should we remain silent? We were discussing this recently at our family Thanksgiving dinner, and as is so often the case it was hard to get a word in to express an opinion. I mentioned a Buddhist saying I once heard, that before speaking we should ask ourselves three questions about what we are about to say:

- Is it true?

Will it hurt?

Is it necessary?

If we did this, we would be silent more often than not.

My mother-in-law, who usually has little to say at these family gatherings because she is not as adept at getting into the fray as the rest of us, said that she thought the most important of these three was the one about it not hurting. But, as was quickly pointed out to her, the necessary truth often hurts! However, we all agreed it is not easy to be clear about when to speak out and when to remain silent. Not surprisingly, my mother-in-law finds it more difficult to speak out in difficult circumstances than to be quiet, while the rest of us are more comfortable with action and find it harder to shut up.

Each week there are instances where I want to speak out or act against perceived wrongs, but even as I discuss this with Derek I know he is going to suggest practising the "ah so" technique instead. Otherwise my energy could easily be dissipated from rushing hither and thither trying to put the world in order. This is how I lived much of my life before discovering yoga and learning about choices.

There are occasions, though, when "ah so" is not enough, when the lack of action is not a positive act of renunciation, but an avoidance of unpleasantness. Such a situation exists in our yoga community at present.

For some time I have been irked by the appearance in my classes and other classes at the "Y" of brochures promoting the work of teachers who do not reciprocate by passing out our brochures and newsletters to their students. In the best of all possible worlds, a yogic world, we would support each other's work in the true spirit of yoga. We have accepted these brochures, given them out in our classes and posted them on our notice board. But this has become complicated by the claims of some of these teachers that they have found a better more internal way of working than the Iyengar Yoga that we teach. Why would we want to propagate this notion? As I have stated again and again, Mr. Iyengar is a Yoga Master whose work, I know from experience, penetrates deep within, putting us in touch with our higher self. You can't get much more internal than that.

Others may choose other ways of working which, they believe, are better for them, and it is important for me to respect their choice. Unfortunately those making this choice are sometimes ex-students of mine, who then find it necessary to diminish Mr. Iyengar's work or, at best, give it a lukewarm acknowledgment.

When my students decide to take a different path, I have to learn to say "ah so" and let them go. But if, in moving on, they undermine the work of my teacher, I must speak up.

I discussed the matter of the brochures with Jim Rischmiller, our Yoga Centre President, and his response was that it's quite clear: if they don't give out our brochures, we don't give out theirs. It is not quite as clear as this to me. Perhaps I could contact these individuals, and ask them if they would hand out our promotional material in return for passing out theirs, but unless this is done with good grace and mutual respect - what would be the point? Is it worth an attempt to establish communication and explore this possibility - or is this another case where it would be better to simply say "ah so", get on with my own work and let it speak for itself?

In the fourth chapter of the *Bhagavad Gita*, where Lord Krishna is teaching his disciple, Arjuna, about Karma Yoga or Yoga in Action, he states:

"They who see action where there is inaction, and inaction where there is action, live in wisdom. Their consciousness is unified, and their every act is done with complete awareness."

(*Bhagavad Gita for Daily Living* by Eknath Easwaran, Chapter 4, Verse 18)

Herein lies one of the central lessons of my life!

RESTORATIVE ASANAS

As promised, there will be another Restorative workshop at the 'Y' in the new year, on Saturday, January 30th 1993 from 1.30 to 4.00 pm. Make a note of this date, and register early - the last workshop filled up quickly. For details see ad. this issue.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Dear Ms. Rischmiller,

Thanks to you and your colleagues for an excellent program offered through the Y in Victoria. I'm really happy to be involved once again in the study of Iyengar Yoga; as a new resident to Victoria it's a great discovery to learn of such a strong membership.

I extend my appreciation to Linda Shevloff and, because I cannot forget my first and only other Iyengar Yoga instructor, I wish to acknowledge Claudia McDonald of the Britannia Community Centre in Vancouver, B.C. for inspiring me with the desire to return to the practise after neglecting it for three years.

Sincerely,
Karen Rothenberger.
Victoria.

Dear Shirley,

I have been a grateful recipient of the Victoria Yoga Centre's newsletters and your Reflections column for many years. The newsletter exposes and broadens friends of individuals repeatedly mentioned. You folks are (or might be) unaware of people like myself who feel you are our friends. I also wish to send you my appreciation and thanks for your work and sharing in the newsletter, particularly your Reflections column which I enjoy immensely.

(Extracted from a letter)
from La Vern Magarian.
Maryland, U.S.A.

Dear Shirley,

Just a little note to say how sad we all were to hear of the death of Liz McLeod. Although we had never met her (except for Jeanne I think) we do feel that we know you well at the Victoria Yoga Centre through the newsletters. It is always very sad to lose a friend and more so when you have worked together, and working in Yoga always makes friendships more meaningful and lasting.

Best wishes
Ethel Calverley.
England.

P.S. Since we opened our new Institute in June this year we have your newsletters in our reception room and they are very popular. We have great difficulty in stopping students and teachers from taking them away! I feel this is a good link between us. E.C.

1993 CANADIAN IYENGAR YOGA CONFERENCE with B.K.S. IYENGAR

Mr. Iyengar is coming to Canada next year, and the Canadian Iyengar Yoga Teachers' Association is planning a conference in Toronto from August 16th to 20th. Iyengar Yoga groups from coast to coast, including the Victoria Yoga Centre, are being asked to provide seed money for promotional expenses and fares for Mr. Iyengar and his entourage. Hopefully, our fund-raising workshop on December 13th will help with this.

It is a great privilege and inspiration to be in the presence of a living Master of Yoga. Mr. Iyengar has been honoured throughout the world for the integrity and brilliance of his work. Three years ago he came to western Canada, and many students from the East supported this visit. Now it is our turn to reciprocate. Even if you can't attend the conference in person, you will benefit when the teaching is brought back to our community by those who were there.

We invite you to support the yoga centre in supporting this visit. Come to the benefit workshop. Take out a newsletter subscription. Send us a non-taxable donation. Best of all, save your money and holiday time and attend the Toronto conference.

Brochures will be available shortly. Meanwhile, for further information, if you live in eastern Canada phone Donna Fornelli in Ottawa at 819-685-0491 or Yoga Centre Toronto 416-482-1334. In the West contact Hilda Pezarro in Vancouver at 604-325-4350 or Shirley Daventry French in Victoria at 604-478-3775.

A DAY OF YOGA

Asana and Pranayama
in the Iyengar Tradition
with

Shirley Daventry French

**SATURDAY,
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10 am to 4 pm in
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FEE \$45.00

Shirley is a senior student of
B.K.S. Iyengar and an experienced
teacher of his method of Yoga.

This workshop will be limited to 12 people
with previous experience of Iyengar Yoga.

For information and registration.

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VICTORIA YOGA CENTRE

invites you to our

FALL ASANA PRACTICE SESSIONS/DISCUSSIONS

Friday, November 27: Jessica Sluymer

Jessica is director of Radha House, Victoria, B.C. She has taught yoga for 20 years and currently teaches, *The Hidden Language of the Body™*. This method was developed by Swami Radha, founder of Yasodhara Ashram, Kootenay Bay, B.C.

Discussion: *'Discovering the Hidden Language of the Body'*.

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Asana Practice – 6 - 7 p.m.

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IMPRESSIONS FROM PUNE

BY LAURIE BLAKENEY

The following interview was conducted by Shirley Worth who is herself a teacher and is also a student of Laurie Blakeney.

What's different about going to Pune as opposed to having Mr. Iyengar here in a convention setting?

Well, he's at home. Seeing him at the convention is like seeing a snapshot - really important, exciting snapshots that anyone should expose themselves to if they can. But, being in his school, in his classroom, on his turf, the relationship is different. I was a guest rather than a host, a personal student rather than a convention participant. In his school, he's at his best.

Classes in India are serious but they are not sullen. I think that because of the way the system is taught there is a misconception of what his classes are like. He is an academic author, very definitive, so from his books we assign this academic, definitive personality to him. But he's unpredictable - very principled but not rigid. I've seen him give very different answers to similar questions, very personal and psychological, because he sees very subtle aspects of each case.

His classes are upbeat, there's a lot of spontaneity, gaiety and emotional response. They have peaks and rests and silences and crescendos and surprises and recurring themes. They are full of fluidity, rhythm, breath awareness. They are really full experiences that touch your hear, your humour, your psychology, and touch your spirit.

Pedagogically, his genius is being able to teach so many different people at so many different levels and actually getting kind of an in-tune group, like an orchestra that comes up to the same level although the players aren't all at the same level. The method is extremely creative and innovative. There is no way we can do the method well without being somewhat creative. Each person is so very different - we are not to just plug this equation onto each and every person. He wants us to view each and every student as an individual and help the student develop creatively into a beautiful pose, but not all the same pose. Like the orchestra - even when everyone is playing the same tune, each is still playing a different instrument.

What about living in India, the cultural differences, customs, shopping, eating....?

Yes, the whole experience of being in India where you have to make yourself respect another culture, and behave humbly and politely - as you would when anyone's guest. I've stayed with the same family on several of my six visits, so I am over the shyness or worry they will misinterpret me. They probably accommodate my habits more than I've learned to be polite on their level. I try to be respectful and learn the rules but they really make allowances. Everyone in the family has taken classes with Mr. Iyengar and Geeta and Prashant. There's a lot of love and respect and excitement and acceptance - we're all in it together because of this wonderful topic and this great master teacher.

Can you identify one major point from this experience that you want to share with your students?

I think my students will all probably agree that it has a lot to do with arms and elbows and shoulders, chest and upper back. That's what I've come home reevaluating and reinvestigating

- not only in backbends, but in all the poses. Although when I think of the personal corrections I got, they generally had to do with my legs!

A lot of what was taught had to do with using the outer margin of the body to protect the spine. For all the incredible amounts of backbends we were doing, I was not working directly on the spine, but on hips, thighs, deltoids, shoulders, elbows. Incredibly hard, burning, aching work in those areas but my spine was always just fine and safe. So the part I've felt most comfortable giving over to students is developing the support structure of the arms and legs.

I've always learned and taught backbends from arms and legs, but arms and legs mean something different after having been to this intensive, even though the language is almost the same. They seem to go in deeper in the body - and they keep the work off the spine. I knew that intellectually and I felt I even knew it experientially, but I know it on a much deeper level now. I think you can get even beginning students to work more deeply that way.

This work with the legs and arms has really gone into every group of poses, not only the backbends. It started happening even before this trip to India - learning to work through the bones has made the work seem more intense and yet less fatiguing. It's a way I want to teach people with less experience than myself so they don't have to bully themselves through things in a dangerous way.

Working through the bones - how does that relate to the working of the inner muscles that attach along the length of the long bones?

Mr. Iyengar made a point of that issue. Conscious control of the inner muscles does not usually develop until late childhood or early adolescence. Pre-pubescent humans will work

spontaneously from the outer body, and yet the inner muscles follow in a harmonious way that won't bother them. He had his grandchildren doing the backbends. He pointed out how they can more naturally flow into the pose in a non-injurious way. Around early puberty, people lose that and it takes a much more specific, penetrating instruction to get someone to move in a non-injurious way. It was neat to see all these Iyengars demonstrating the poses. We had the grand master himself and then we had these little children who would do it, as he said, "in nature's way," Geeta who is the most senior student doing it in the mature, well-disciplined, highly practiced way - and all the rest of us somewhere in between.

You are a student, a teacher, and a teacher of teachers. How do these different roles affect the way you learn?

I learn as a student, from my students, from my own practice, and from what I call desktop learning - sitting and reading, going over things. They're all very different.

Certainly in India when I am not teaching I am learning mostly in an experiential, student way. I have grown to crave those annual or biannual shots because they are like quantum leaps. The responsibility of a daily personal practice intermeshed with an everyday American life is gone. You eat, you sleep, you do yoga.

I'm fortunate to be teaching as much as I do. I learn an incredible amount from watching the way my students respond to the way I suggest they do poses. They do poses exactly the way I tell them to. I don't feel like I correct people, I correct my teaching. I talk a lot when I teach so I have a lot of chance to correct myself.

It's not only changing the directions but changing how I keep people involved, adjusting to different students. In Mr. Iyengar's class there's not a moment of daydreaming. It may be hard work but you're engaged. That is a relaxing place to be even though you may be working harder than you have ever worked before. Because you are engaged, really alive, you feel good. Put that into concentrated backbends and then you are really up there on the outer edge! Some groups are easy, others not. You need the students in front of you to practice teaching. Teacher forums help, where you can do some role playing for ten minutes then get feedback on whether it worked or not. It helps to get comfortable enough to stop midstream and correct the way you're teaching. Mr. Iyengar does that. He'll teach a certain way, look out and if he sees we're not doing it he immediately assumes personal responsibility. He'll say, "I'm not getting it across, let me try a different way. It's so difficult, how to get it across?" and rub his eyebrows. He makes thinking about how to do the pose his job. He'd stop people and say, "Don't think. It's not your job, it's my job. I'm supposed to be thinking, you're supposed to be responding and doing."

Then there's desktop learning, looking at pictures of people doing poses, learning the names of poses, writing out sample sequences, reading literature, learning philosophy. Trying to connect yoga through things that are not asana is very helpful for me, and I can't prevent myself from doing that. My interest in yoga started when I was nineteen. Now twenty years later it has permeated into every aspect of my life. If I'm having a problem tuning a piano I find some kind of yoga explanation or reason. It's a point of reference in parenting, now in going back to college, and in simple things like dealing with banks.

Geeta and Mr. Iyengar and Prashant all constantly refer to other levels of life when they are teaching. It's not like yoga stays in the asana room. They talk about your real life, your other life, the life that is supposed to be enhanced by your yoga, not shoved away because you have gotten fanatical about it.

How did this Backbend Intensive bring your own practice deeper? Did it reach you more at the level of your teaching, or at the level of your own practice?

It's only been two months. That's barely enough time to tell. I am still remembering things that happened in my first trip and my fifth trip. I don't know how this backbend stuff will come back.

It's experiential - and Mr. Iyengar made a point of saying, "Don't think, do what I'm teaching you. Don't stop your learning through thinking."

In the question-and-answer periods we certainly could think and be cognitive, and when he had us stop and look at other people do poses. But he seemed impatient with people who appeared to be thinking when he wanted them to do. I think I'm still recovering from doing and I haven't really stopped to think yet. That's where it comes back into teaching, because once you start to articulate to a third party you start to think.

Laurie Blakeney is a teacher from Ann Arbor, Michigan, who attended a three week backbend intensive taught by Mr. Iyengar in Pune last winter.

Reprinted with permission from the newsletter of the B.K.S. Iyengar Yoga Association of the Midwest Bioregions entitled Midwest News, March 1992 issue.

SOME THOUGHTS ON MEN AND YOGA

by Shirley Daventry French

When I announced the *Yoga for Women* workshop to a class last month, one of the two male students said he felt funny about us having a workshop for women only. I told him, never mind, there would be a workshop for men in November. Alas, that isn't going to happen - for several reasons. First, the man who was going to lead that workshop is too busy and too stressed to spare the time to organise and present it. Secondly, even if he had the time, he has doubts about the desirability of such a workshop because he thinks (probably correctly) that very few men would come.

These sentiments were expressed by Jim Rischmiller as he sat talking to Celia Ward and me after the *Restorative Yoga* workshop last Saturday. They had come to help me teach this workshop, and with a full house I was very glad of their help. As people arrived, Jim made one of his typical throw-away remarks about this being "yoga for wimps", seeking a reaction from me. Unfortunately this is how many people see yoga in general, let alone a workshop which announces it will be supportive and relaxing. Twenty two women attended this workshop and four men; there was a waiting list consisting entirely of women. Don't men need to restore and relax themselves?

Apparently in some places they do. A woman from Los Angeles recently dropped into one of my daytime classes. We worked hard in that class, even to the point of perspiring, and I commented on the common misconception of yoga that we simply lie around on the floor, breathing quietly and stretching ever so gently. I also remarked that this is probably why we have so few men in our classes. Our American visitor said that this was not the case in L.A., where she attended huge classes and more half the students were men. "There," she said, "they are all so stressed out that

they really need it!" Probably that's true. I would guess that life in L.A. is more stressful than life in Victoria, but even here, there's a lot of it about.

It is well recognised that exercise is a powerful tool for reducing stress and promoting health, and large numbers of Victoria business men spend their lunch hour exercising. It is also recognised these days that stretching is an important component of an exercise program. Sometimes I watch the noon-hour runners forcing themselves to do about two or three stretches before taking off for their run, and it makes me weep. I see hamstring stretches with bent knees, collapsed chests, rigid and rounded backs, tight abdomens and diaphragms, and they are usually either holding their breath or gasping! What use is that? The majority of them look tight and stressed before leaving for their run, just as tense when they return, and relaxed is not a word I would use to describe them when they have showered, dressed and are rushing back to their job. Perhaps there are some benefits to this approach, but it's hard to an uninitiated observer to see what they are.

Men sometimes come to yoga classes when they have been forced to slow down through injury or illness, because their doctor (who, in most cases, also knows nothing about yoga other than it consists of a few gentle stretches) has recommended it. It is not easy to teach these men who bring their old competitive aggressive habits with them. They find it difficult to see so many women, young and old, who are "better than them". They find it hard to accept their stiffness. They find it difficult and unpleasant to look at their limitations. Because of their health problems, they will have to work slowly at first, and they find it difficult to believe that anything so gentle could be of any benefit or that it could eventually lead to a strong,

vigorous practice. In common with the majority of students, male or female, they rarely stay around long enough to discover that this is true.

Before there is a flow of letters to the editor (what an optimist!) pointing out that all of the above can apply equally to women - I know, this is true, but women do come to yoga in much larger numbers than men, and stay in yoga in much larger numbers than men. Apparently Los Angeles is one exception to this, and it is different in India, but I have given workshops across Canada, in the U.S. and in England and in all of these places there was a preponderance of female students. When a male student does struggle and persevere, he will usually be quite dedicated.

Jim, our one male teacher at present, has thought of offering Aerobic Yoga as a means of attracting more men, but unless the students knew some of the basics of Iyengar yoga, this could also do more harm than good to knees and backs already poorly aligned and stressed from running, squash and other activities. Alignment, proper breathing, good posture, concentration and awareness are fundamentals which are ignored at your peril.

My husband, Derek, came into yoga after a back injury. He watched me practising and thought it would be good for his back - and found it was. As he practised, he developed an understanding of his own back problem from an internal and yogic perspective which has allowed him to help many others in his work as a physician. One of the obstacles which he had to face in overcoming the pain and discomfort of his injured back, was the pain and discomfort of change, and the pain and discomfort of coming face to face with how stiff he was - frequently the stiffest person in the class. And who was making this judgment? In his youth he had been an outstanding athlete in several sports, winning many individual championships and being selected for many representative teams. It was a



humbling experience to be what he felt was the "worst in the class". (I have checked these statements with Derek to avoid misrepresenting him.)

Although yoga is frequently slow in the beginning, many beginning students will testify that Iyengar Yoga is also physically demanding, but, in common with most other activities, you are discouraged from attempting actions for which you are not prepared. For instance, when you begin to ski, even when you have mastered rudimentary techniques which keep you safe on a gentle slope, if you have any sense at all, it is a while before you go to the advanced runs. And to progress, a good skier, swimmer, rower or player of any sport will constantly examine their technique before intensifying their training. There is a process which cannot be hurried, and progress will vary according to the effort put into the training and the ability of the athlete. No coach worth his or her salt, will push an athlete, no matter how much natural talent they have, into an intensive training program before teaching them how to take care of themselves.

If you decide to take up Iyengar Yoga, and if you get past some of the obstacles I have mentioned

above, you will sometimes work so hard your heartbeat is elevated and you are actually sweating. You will become strong as well as supple. But that is not the main purpose of doing yoga which is to learn skill in action, explore the meaning and purpose of your life, get to know who you really are, and become free from all limitations. Now, who wouldn't want that?

I am interested in exploring how yoga can help me to realise my potential as an individual human being who happens to be a woman. From talking to many men, I know that we face many of the same obstacles on the spiritual path, but there are also separate issues. What does it mean to be a woman? Why am I spending this lifetime in a female body? Who are my mentors and role models? Where can I find the feminine face of God?

Echoing the question asked by Jim Rischmiller, in last month's newsletter: Are there any men out there asking similar questions? Are there any men who would like to contribute articles from the male perspective? This would help those of us in female bodies to end our speculation.

Most of the people who read this article will be women. Why not give it to your husband, son, father, brother, lover, friend or any man you care about and see what response you get? To those men who already value yoga, as a woman I welcome your participation. As I work to balance the male and female energy in myself it's delightful to have both male and female companionship on the path.



Lastly, I'd like to express gratitude to those few men who quietly practise kanna yoga before and behind the scenes and help to keep the yoga centre running. Jim Rischmiller, who served as Treasurer for several years, is now our President and teaches weekly classes at the "Y". Derek French, who is a founding member and has served on the executive ever since, who teaches yoga to those patients who are willing to listen, and gives special workshops from time to time. Michael Shevloff, who also served on the executive, who used his computer skills to establish our membership and mailing

lists and keeps them up-to-date. Dave Rocklyn, who distributes the newsletter each month and has done so for many years. Don Benn who provides photographic services, computer graphics and printing expertise for the newsletter and brochures. Thank you all!



MICHAEL



JIM



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REUNION WITH A REMARKABLE WOMAN

by Shirley Daventry French

When I heard that Clara Buck would be giving a workshop in Vancouver and discovered I had no other commitment that weekend, I sent off my registration immediately.

I had met Clara during my first visit to India, where she was one of the students in an intensive course taught by Mr. Iyengar. It was mainly a Canadian group but there were a few people from other parts of the world, and one of them was Clara. Mr. Iyengar called her "the Duchess", and the mutual respect and affection between them was fairly obvious. She had a problem in one of her shoulders, and the way Mr. Iyengar worked with her and her trust of him is imprinted in my memory. It was the first time I had seen anyone working through intense pain in this way, and I was impressed with the courage of this woman. Her bearing was indeed aristocratic - so much so, in fact, that one day she was promoted by Guruji from Duchess to Empress! After class I spoke to her occasionally and learned that she travelled regularly to Pune, that she was Hungarian by birth but had lived in London for many years, and that she taught yoga there. She was staying with an Indian family, and obviously loved the country as well as the yoga.

Many years later, when I travelled to India for the celebration of Guruji's 70th birthday, I met Clara Buck again, first at the Institute and later at the home of the Palkhivala family in Bombay, where we were both guests. Here was an opportunity to get to know her a little better, and discover the generous spirit, full of life and full of humour. A born storyteller, witty and articulate, Clara entertained us with many tales from her life's journey. At this time she was in her late seventies!

Instinctively I knew that a workshop with her would be a great joy as well as an opportunity to learn something about yoga and about life in general from someone who lives life to the fullest. I was right. The two-day workshop was a delight and an inspiration. Clara taught from her own considerable experience with a clarity which was befitting for someone with her name. There was no attempt to impress or show off; her presentation was simple, direct and clear, but the aristocratic bearing was still very much in evidence. Unlike many people of her age, Clara was obviously living and learning in the present rather than dwelling in the past. In the workshop she told some stories, as I hoped she would, but there was a purpose to her stories, to illustrate a point of yogic teaching.

Clara Buck was fifty six when she first tried yoga looking for a remedy for the arthritis which was gradually crippling her. She was fortunate to find good teachers in England, Silva Mehta and Angela Farmer, and with their encouragement went to Pune to study with Mr. Iyengar, returning every year for ten years and at regular intervals from then on. Now, at eighty, she is a wonderful inspiration to young and old alike to persevere in the face of difficulties, to be willing to suffer a little or even a lot, to live life to the fullest.

I had hoped to interview Clara for this newsletter, but my daughter decided to have her baby so the interview had to be postponed until the next time Clara comes this way again. Instead she gave me her permission to print the following article

PREVIOUSLY PUBLISHED IN THE NEWSLETTER OF "YOGA CENTERS", BELLEVUE, WA. WHO KINDLY SUPPLIED THE PHOTOGRAPH OF CLARA BUCK,



THE CHOICE IS YOURS

by Clara Buck

In the West little is known of the vast subject that Yoga represents. In fact some people imagine that it consists mostly of standing on your head when actually it teaches you how to stand on your feet. When speaking of Yoga in the West, we are not dealing with religion or mysticism, but with a physical discipline which brings well-being to the body and co-ordination to the mind of those who practise it regularly.

Looking after your health is not a self-indulgent fad; you are the most valuable asset you have and keeping yourself in good health is one of your major responsibilities. Some of us are born healthier than others, but most of us could develop better health if we were willing to submit to some discipline in our daily life.

My experience, as a teacher, is that you need not spend a lot of time, in the beginning, doing Yoga postures. Most of my pupils come to me once or twice a week and most of them do not practise at home, or very little, but all of them change for the better within a year or two.

It is said that marriage is like a Spanish Inn: you find in it what you bring into it. Well, to a great extent it is the same with Yoga, for it is a discipline from which one benefits according to the degree of dedication one brings to it. Yoga is - among other things - a slow evolution towards bettering oneself. But today people are used to short cuts. They want immediate results - from instant coffee to instant Yoga. Alas, it does not work that way: just as when you sow a seed you have to wait for its germination, it grows, blossoms, brings forth fruit in its own good time, so also Yoga changes a person's body, mind and spirit in an evolutionary manner. In doing the postures the body is attended to inch by inch, bringing about a total involvement of both body and mind. Postures executed this way become meditative and affect the doer accordingly.

Many people think that they can read a book on Yoga then practise it at home alone. Not only is this method not advisable but it can even be dangerous. If you have a car you put into it the

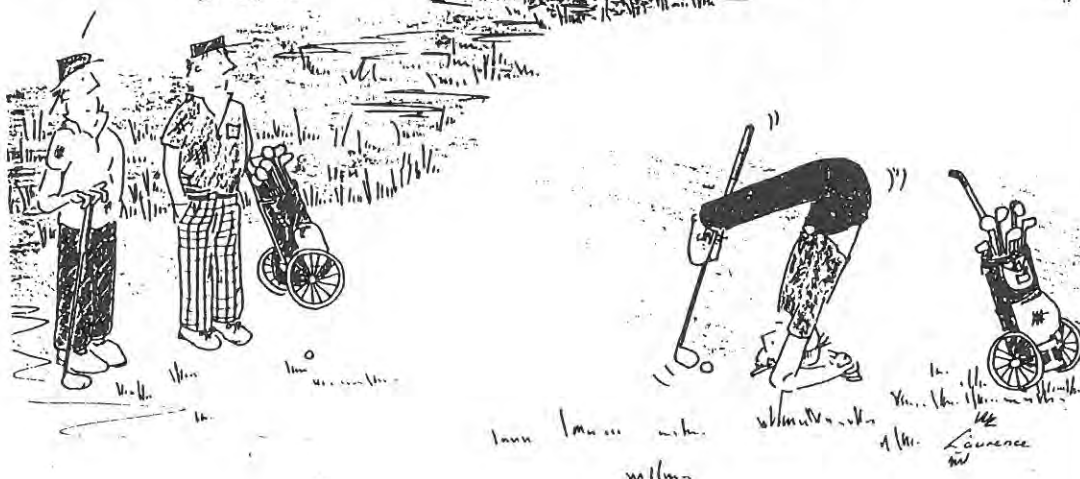
best fuel available and take it to a garage for maintenance by experts. That priceless instrument of precision which is your body, surely deserves expert knowledge to keep it in top condition. I believe the saying that what we are at birth is God's gift to us, and what we become later is our gift to God. Why not be generous and offer to God the very best of our ability?

To keep your body fit and your mind alert is like putting money in the bank or like taking out a life insurance for your old age - we tend to forget that family and friends are directly or indirectly subjected to our influence. Growing old in a youthful manner is doing them a favour as well as to ourselves. It is self evident that a healthy person would be more jolly, kindly and affectionate than one who is suffering from various ailments and who would be inclined to be grumpy, moaning and dissatisfied with life. Which way would you prefer to "grow old"?

THE CHOICE IS YOURS!



*Well i don't know about
Yoga... but it's
certainly cured his
died.*



In the Light of Yoga.

Jim Rischmiller

I am sometimes asked by my students what is different about the yoga we teach at the YMCA compared to the other styles available. At the Y our yoga teaching is based on the work of BKS Iyengar who has an institute in Pune' (Poona) in India. My experience of other methods is very limited so I can only comment on what I teach and what I receive.

As a yoga teacher I appreciate the care for his students that led Mr Iyengar to develop safety precautions in his method. All those blocks, straps, ropes, blankets, backbenders etc help us individually by allowing us to work within our limitations. They also allow us to catch a glimpse of our potential as we release muscles that are in spasm because of an unexpected stretch. In a class situation they help prevent students exceeding their limitations, particularly if the teacher is helping someone else at that instant. Mr Iyengar also demands that we focus on the moment. This means bringing our intellect and emotions in touch with our physique because when this really happens then time ceases to exist and we discover our souls.

Its a new language for me, the language of experience.

I for one am very attached to rational thought and expectations. I have often treated sensations from my body as uncomfortable messages from somewhere else instead of as an opportunity to refine my integration of mind body and spirit. Its hard work but being human is hard work.



Mr Iyengars method is taught in nearly every major city in the world which is a testimonial to its integrity. Next year BKS Iyengar is coming to Canada again. How that happens is that we teachers organise a conference, this time in Toronto, where we can have classes that Mr Iyengar will visit. Each yoga centre across Canada contributes funds to cover some of the costs of planning and booking the event. The Victoria Yoga Centre is a non profit society so we are organising some fund raising and benefit workshops so that we can do our part toward the conference.

The first of these workshops is at the Y on Sunday December 13th, taught by Shirley French. Shirley is a senior teacher who has a very close relationship with Mr Iyengar and has benefited from much 'hands on' experience from him. Shirley will be passing on Mr Iyengars message with the skill and intuition that many years as a student and teacher have given her. I encourage you to book early to make sure you have a space.

YOGA CENTRE OF VICTORIA

CHRISTMAS GIFT SUGGESTIONS

BOOKS

YOGA, THE IYENGAR WAY - Silva, Mira & Shyam Mehta (1990)
- \$27.00

THE RUNNER'S YOGA BOOK - Jean Couch (1990) - \$25.00

BACK CARE BASICS - Mary Pullig Schatz (1992) - \$26.00

YOGA SUTRA OF PATANJALI - Translation and commentary by
B.K.S. Iyengar (1987) - \$11.00

YOGA VRKSA, THE TREE OF YOGA - B.K.S. Iyengar (1988) - \$15.00

YOGA, A GEM FOR WOMEN - Geeta S. Iyengar (1983) - \$25.00

IYENGAR, HIS LIFE AND WORK - Autobiographical writings and
contributions from many students- \$25.00

70 GLORIOUS YEARS OF YOGACHARYA B.K.S. IYENGAR
- Commemoration Volume - \$25.00

MATS

Non-slip, sticky, washable, Blue Tapas mats - \$30.00

TO ORDER

Please talk to your Yoga teacher or phone Linda Benn at 598-8277
Prices include G.S.T.





JIM



DEREK

RESTORATIVE ASANAS BREATHING AWARENESS and RELAXATION

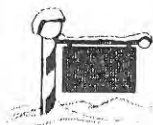
with
Shirley Daventry French

Saturday, January 30th
1.30 - 4.00 pm at the "Y"

"Y" & Yoga Centre Members:
\$25.00
Non-Members: \$30.00

The renowned Yoga Master, B.K.S. Iyengar has devised ways of practising asanas with support, which are ideal for those times when we are lacking in energy, whatever the reason. Restorative asanas are indispensable when we are ill or recuperating from illness, but they are also an ideal preventative measure to avoid being overwhelmed by the stresses and strains of modern life. Breathing awareness and deep relaxation are a fundamental part of a restorative practice.

Ensure yourself a place in this relaxing workshop by registering early at the "Y" Main Desk - registration is limited. For further information phone Shirley at 478-3775



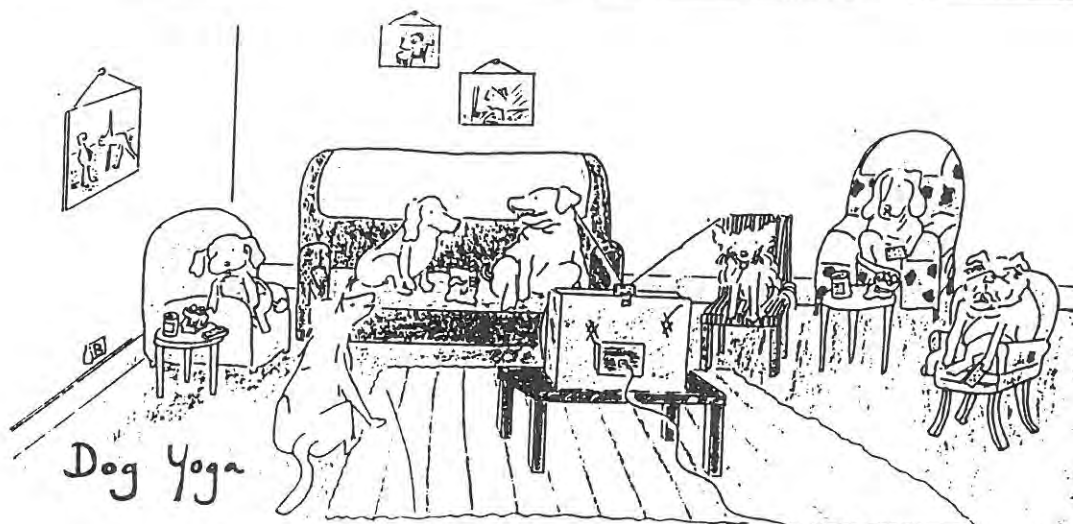
Victoria Yoga Centre Annual General Meeting



Saturday, December 19, 1992 at 6:00pm

Please join us for a brief business meeting.

This will be followed by a
Christmas Potluck Supper and Celebration
Bring you favorite friend, food & beverage
to the home of
Audrey Finch, 947 Monterey Street, Victoria



And now take the chips in
your left paw...

★

VICTORIA YOGA CENTRE

presents

IN THE LIGHT OF YOGA

A benefit workshop
with
Shirley Daventry French

In celebration of the gift of yoga, join your teachers and fellow yoga students at this special fund-raising workshop.

Shirley Daventry French is a longtime student of the Yoga Master B.K.S. Iyengar and one of North America's most experienced teachers of his method of yoga. She teaches yoga nationally and internationally.



Sunday, December 13th, 1992
at the Victoria YM-YWCA
10 – 1 p.m.

Fees

Yoga Centre & Y Members – \$20.00
Non-members – \$25.00

Registration

Phone Shirley at 478-3775
or Linda Benn at 598-8277

Refreshments / Beginners welcome

The Victoria Yoga Centre is a non-profit society registered in British Columbia which recycles its funds through many activities: –

- | | |
|-----------------------|----------------|
| * workshops & classes | * scholarships |
| * monthly newsletter | * gatherings |
| * books & video tapes | * retreats |

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Divine Light Invocation

Saturday, November 7, 10:00 A.M. - 6:00 P.M.

The Divine Light Invocation is a powerful yogic practice for healing oneself and others, and for realising the Light within.

Fee: \$50, \$15 deposit

Saturday Morning in Shavasana

Saturday, November 21, 9:30 A.M. - 12:30 P.M.

This is a Hidden Language exploration of the deep relaxation pose known as the corpse pose. This three-hour workshop is followed by a potluck lunch.

Fee: \$25

Rose Ceremony

Part 1: Saturday, November 28, 8-9 P.M.

Part 2: Sunday, November 29, 8-9 P.M.

The Rose Ceremony is a personal dedication to the Divine, a time to re-establish your commitment to the very finest within, and to reaffirm your ideals.

If you wish to attend, please bring two roses—one for you and one for the Divine. Phone for further information. There is no fee, but you are asked to make a donation to a charity of your choice as an offering of gratitude.

The Yoga Centre of Victoria Newsletter Advertising

If you have products or services of interest to Victoria's yoga practitioners, this is your advertising vehicle.

Because our rates are so low, all advertising material must be supplied camera ready - that is, exactly as you want it to appear in the newsletter. If not, the copy will simply be typed and inserted. If you wish, we can arrange to have an advertisement prepared for you, but we must charge extra for this service.

Our policy in accepting advertising is that all advertisements must not conflict with the aims of the Centre, as stated elsewhere in the newsletter.

If you wish to buy an ad or require further information,
please contact our Advertising Manager, Carole Miller:

721-3477

1807 Forest, Victoria, B.C. V8N 1H5

RATES per ISSUE

Full Page	\$36.00
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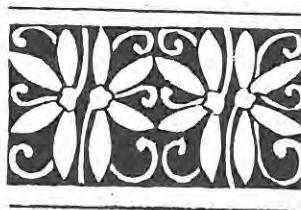
YOGA CALENDAR

NOVEMBER:

- 7: Divine Light Invocation. Workshop at Radha House. See ad this issue.
- 7: Pranayama with Shirley Daventry French. See ad this issue.
- 21: A Day of Yoga with Shirley Daventry French. See ad this issue.
- 21: Saturday Morning in Shavasana. A Workshop at Radha House. See ad this issue.
- 27: Yoga Centre Gathering at the Y. See ad this issue.
- 28: Teachers' meeting.
- 28-29: Rose Ceremony at Radha House. See ad this issue.

DECEMBER:

- 5: Pranayama with Shirley Daventry French. See ad this issue.
- 13: Workshop at the Y with Shirley Daventry French.
- 19: Yoga Centre Xmas Gathering and Annual General Meeting.



MEMBERSHIP/SUBSCRIPTION FORM

Its time you joined the Yoga Centre of Victoria! As you read this newsletter, you are receiving one of the benefits of membership. As you attend your yoga classes or a workshop, you are receiving the benefits of membership. These take time and money and your membership fees and participation really help.

Please fill out this form and send it with your cheque or money order to:
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The VICTORIA YOGA CENTRE SOCIETY is a non-profit society incorporated under the Societies' Act of the Province of British Columbia whose purpose is, "to encourage the physical, mental and spiritual growth of its members and other interested members of society at large by the study and discipline of Yoga". The Society owes its inspiration to Swami Sivananda Radha and Mr. B.K.S. Iyengar.

The Society Newsletter is published regularly, providing current information on events concerning yoga in Victoria and area and at the Yasodhara Ashram. Published by the Victoria Yoga Centre Society.

Anyone wishing to contribute articles, photographs, drawings, information or suggestions to the newsletter may contact the Editor, Jennifer Rischmiller, 4489 Lindholm Road, R.R. #1, Victoria, B.C., Canada, V9B 5T7. Telephone: (604) 474-5630.

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DEADLINE FOR DECEMBER ISSUE: NOVEMBER 16th, 1992.



TED MATHER

2738 GRAHAM ST.
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VICTORIA YOGA CENTRE SOCIETY

3918 Olympic View Drive, R.R. #4, Victoria, B.C., Canada, V9B 5T8
